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***The Kite Runner: Khaled Hussein's Novel (2003) Vs
Marc Forster's Movie (2007)***

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To

My beloved parents,

My brothers and sister,

My nephew Amir,

My best friends Lydia and Anais.

Siham

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Abstract

*The present study deals with the differences between Khaled Hussein's novel **The Kite Runner** (2003) and Marc Forster's adaptation of the same title (2007). Our main interest in this research paper is to explore the changes that occur when dealing with dramatization which means the shift from narrative to dramatic. We have borrowed Gerard Genette's theory of transmodalisation explained in his work entitled “ **Palimpsests** (1982) **Literature In The Second Degree**”, to explore some characteristics of both types such as: the temporality of the story and the loss of textual means. Throughout this humble work, We have noticed that the adaptation of **the Kite Runner** the novel to the movie undergoes changes in terms of characters and themes and this is related to Gerard Genette's theory of transmodalisation.*

Key words: adaptation, novel, temporality of the story, the loss of textual means, characters and themes.

I. Introduction

Between 1990 and 2000 Afghanistan witnessed a military conflict due to economic, political and social differences between the North and the South which led to the civil war. Khaled Hosseini's novel *The Kite Runner* (2003) shows the hardships and the effects of the civil war in Afghanistan. The author took interest in Kabul's history and the civil war that he would later use in the writing of his book.

Khaled Hosseini is an Afghan American author who is considered as one of the best selling authors in the world. His well-known novels include *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007), *And The Mountains Echoed* (2013) and *The Kite Runner* (2003). The latter becomes Khaled Hosseini's best seller and most prominent novel of all time. 7 million copies were sold in The United States. It has been translated into at least 42 languages.

In *The Kite Runner*, Hosseini gave an image of how Afghan people lived peacefully before the soviets invaded their country and their lives became worse when the Taliban took control over their homeland. It is clear that Hosseini's work is inspired by his own childhood as he witnessed the horrors of the Soviet Invasion that forced him to leave. When we read the novel, we understand that the life of the protagonist reflects Hosseini's personal life as he incorporates the time period of his youth which is in turn influenced by social circumstances.

This depiction of social life and culture of Kabul during the civil war and Russian invasion era which was a forgotten and neglected nation contributes in the novel's popularity. After its publication, the novel received many positive reviews and was chosen by Daily Telegraph, Guardian and the Times as a book of the decade. It was adapted into a film in 2007.

The movie *The Kite Runner* Running 128 minutes, is premiered in the United States of America on December 14th, 2007. It is directed by Marc Forster, produced by William Horbey and Walter F.Parks and written by David Benioff. The role of The protagonist Amir is played by Zekiria Ebrahimi and Hassan by Ahmed Khan Mahmoodzada. The movie earned 73.2 million dollars worldwide and was nominated for the Golden Globe Award for the best foreign language film in 2007¹.

Marc Forster (1969) is a German -Swiss US film director, film producer and screen writer. He produced many movies such as: *Monster's Ball*(2001) and *The Thriller Stay*(2005). He is best remembered for his adaptation of *The Kite Runner*(2007) which attracts a large audience all over the world.

The present research paper attempts to explore the changes and modifications that occur when moving from the narrative mode to the dramatic one in both selected literary works: Khaled Hussein's *The Kite Runner* (2003) and Marc Forster's adaptation of the same title (2007).

I.1 Review of the Literature

From our review of some critical points of view written on Khaled Hussein's *The Kite Runner* and Marc Forster's adaptation of the novel, We have noticed that both works received a considerable amount of criticism.

On the one hand, in his book *In World Literature Today* (2004), Ronny Noor provides a vivid description of the recent Afghan history and its division in both America and Middle East. He maintains that the novel is "a complete work of literature that succeeds in exploring the culture of a previously obscure nation that has become a pivot point in the global politics of the new millennium"². In his view, Khaled Hussein's work is considered as

a successful one since it depicts the real history and culture of Afghanistan that has been ignored for years, his novel gives a new image to this forgotten nation.

On the other hand, Harold Bloom argues that the novel can not be considered as a great one. Its importance will go away by time³. Bloom, in his regard, claims that *the Kite Runner* is “gridingly sincere narrative” recalling Oscar Wild’s saying “All bad poetry is sincere”⁴. Actually Oscar Wild’s saying applies not only to poetry but literature in general. What Oscar Wild is trying to say here is that great works come from genuine and real writings; writing about true events and incidents. Moreover, *The Kite Runner* is considered as a work of clichés⁵.

Bloom adds that literary fictions requires “mastery of language and its nuances sustained cognition, skill in characterization”⁶.

In addition, James Obrein, in his review in *The Times Literary Supplement* (2003) deals with the unbalanced and tragic relationship between the two protagonists, Amir and his friend Hassan⁷. Obrein Emphasises the two main themes; Redemption and Betrayal which alter the novel from the beginning till the end⁸.

The adaptation of *The Kite Runner* made by the Swiss film maker Marc Forster has also been handled from different angles. In fact, *The Kite Runner* is viewed as being the best foreign language film and is an adequate adaptation of the book which attempts to present the cultural sights and sounds of the Afghan life.

The Kite Runner received mixed reviews from critics. Linda Hutcheon in *The theory of Adaptation* wrote, “An adaptation is not necessary a direct copy of the original story” but it may consist of “repetition and variation”⁹. She added that “with regard to movie adaptations, it is of importance to understand that both types of media of book and movie

inherently have different qualities that are relevant for telling a story from the beginning till the end”¹⁰. She clarifies the idea that an adaptation should not be adequate to the original story, it is true that the meaning of the story should be kept but some changes must occur.

I.2 Issue and Working Hypothesis

It appears from this review of literature that both works *The Kite Runner* 2003 and its adaptation 2007 made by Marc Forster are subject of criticism and have received much attention from several perspectives. To our knowledge no previous comparative study of the two works has been set and undertaken as a subject matter before. Therefore, the aim of this dissertation is to compare the film and the novel. In fact, We endeavor to show the passage of the novel to the movie version with the changes and transformations that occur in terms of characters and themes based on the characteristics of dramatization. For this purpose, We will apply Gérard Genette’s theory of transmodalisation which is explained in his book *Palimpsestes* (1982). It consists of two transformations: Narrativisation and Dramatization. The latter is the one which conforms to our study.

I.3 Methodological outline

As for the methodological outline, We will divide our dissertation into five sections. In the first section, We have provided an introduction which gives an insight of the whole work. In the second section, We will present methods and materials. In Methods, We will provide an insight on Gerard Genette’s theory *Palimpsestes* (1982) *Literature In The Second Degree*. In Materials, We will provide brief summaries of both literary works *The Kite Runner* (2003) and its adaptation (2007). The third section, will be results. It will shed light on the general findings of our research. The discussion which is the fourth section comprises two chapters. It will focus on characters and themes. To end with, the conclusion

of our dissertation which is the fifth section, will be a restatement of the main ideas We dealt with in our work.

Endnotes

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II. Methods and Materials

This section of our research paper aims to explore the methodological elements and materials that will be applied in our study of Narrativisation and Dramatization in both Khaled Hussein's and Marc Forster's mentioned works. The Method section will include the summary and the explanation of the theoretical approach that will be used in our analysis. The Materials section will provide the biographies of both Hussein and Forster, in addition to an overall synopsis of their works in the present work as well as the historical context that marked Afghanistan during 1970s and 1980s.

II.1. Methods

As We intend to deal with the issue of narrativization and dramatization in Khaled Hussein's novel *The Kite Runner* (2003) and Marc Forster's adaptation of the same title (2007), and for the sake of relevance, We will borrow from Gérard Genette the theoretical aspects of Transmodalization.

Transmodalization is a transformation which alters the mode of representation characterizing the hypotext¹. It is not mainly a change of genre, he says "In the sense in which the *Odyssey* may be said to pass from epic to novel with Giono or Joyce, or *The Oresteia* from the tragic to the dramatic with Eugene O'Neill, or *Macbeth* from the dramatic to the farcical with Eugene Ionesco" but rather it is a change of the mode or a change within the mode².

Genette argues that transmodalization which is a kind of transformation is coined by Plato and Aristotle as the mode of presentation of fiction's work that can be narrative or dramatic³. In fact, there are two types of modal transformation. The first one is intermodal transmodalization which is the shift from one mode to another and it has two variations: a passage from dramatic to narrative that is narrativization and a passage from narrative to dramatic or dramatization⁴. The second type is intramodal transmodalization that involves changes within the internal functioning of the mode and it has two variations: variations within the narrative mode and within the dramatic mode⁵.

The first type which is narrativization seems to be much less common, because it is commercially more advantageous to shift a narrative to the stage or screen than the reverse, though the best example which illustrates narrativization can be Laforgue's "Hamlet"⁶.

The Second type is Dramatization of a narrative text, It is used along history as dramatization of mysteries from the Bible, Miracles from the lives of Saints of the middle Ages and to the Elizabethan theater⁷. Thus, the nineteenth century and the twentieth centuries were characterized by the practice of dramatization from traditional tragedy to the modern use of dramatic adaptation of popular novels that is called today cinematography adaptation⁸.

Dramatization has many characteristics that Genette gives in his *Palimpsests*. The first one is the temporality of the story which means reducing the duration of the action as much as possible to bring it closer to the performance⁹. According to Genette the first dramatic adaptation of this subject is Antonio Ferreira's "Ines of Castro" (1558) which ends with the death of Ines and with Pedro's desire to revenge whereas an interval of twelve years between the two events marked the hypotext of the narrative¹⁰. Twenty years later, a Spanish writer Jeromino Bermudez wanted to present the denouement in the scene so he

divided the story into two dramatics: “Ines the victim” and “Ines crowned” separated by the historical internal cited above¹¹.

Another Spaniard writer Luis Velez de Guevara desired to hasten the death of Alfonso to make his death just after Ines’s death. That’s why it is important to establish a relation of cause and effect between the two deaths. As the king condemns Ines by reason of state against his own will, this act plunges him in a remorse to which he is not able to survive: “with Ines’s death , I feel my own death coming too”¹². The second characteristic is that all speeches are in a direct style except those reported by the character himself since they are all present on the stage and take turns to speak¹³.

The third one is associated with the loss of some textual means which signifies that all what the theater can perform, the story can do too, but the reverse is not possible. Genette says “this textual inferiority is outweighed by a considerable extratextual benefits which Barthes calls theatricality, i.e., “theatre minus the text” that is “play and spectacle acting”¹⁴.

The last one is concerned with thematic transformation. According to Genette it becomes clear that there is no innocent transposition in which the meaning of the original work remains the same without modifications¹⁵. As it is also impossible to bring changes like addition or omission without modifying some psychological resonance, no one can tell the same story according to his point of view. Practices consisting of thematic transposition takes part in the domination which affects directly the meaning of the original work that is to say semantic transformation¹⁶.

Thematic transformation includes two transformations practices which are according to Genette called “Diegetic transposition” and “Pragmatic transposition”¹⁷. The first one is the spatial temporal universe indicated by the story. A story or a play is a

sequence or a continuity of a series of events or actions set in a given place and time. The latter deals with the

“modification of the events and actions in the plot”¹⁸.

According to Gerard Genette the usual mode of the story does not require any difference between the action and its framework. But in practice we can differentiate between two universes: “The world where the action of a film is taking place and the world where that same film is being shown to an audience”¹⁹. He claims that both worlds are related. And in the presentation, the video technique allows to identify them by means of mirror as projection where the screen shows what is occurring in front of the camera²⁰. For the understanding of the show, it is necessary to distinguish between the diegetic spatiotemporal framework of the film and the extradiegetic setting of the auditorium²¹. Genette argues that transdiegetisation, that is one action can be transposed into another or from one era to another, from one place to another or both at the same time, can not go without some changes in the action itself. He said that: “A Faust transferred to modern times could not behave in all respects like Marlow’s Faust”, and that Diegetic transposition necessarily involves few pragmatic transposition²².

II.2. Materials

II.2.1. Biography of the Authors

II.2.1.1. Biography of Khaled Hosseini

Born on March, 1965 in Kabul, Afghanistan, Khaled Hosseini is an Afghan-American author who has emerged as one of the most recognized and bestselling authors in the world. His father Nasser Hosseini was an Afghan diplomat of the foreign ministry, and his mother

Maimoona was a teacher of both Farsi and History at a high school in Kabul. In 1970, as Khaled's father worked at the Embassy of Afghanistan in Iran, the whole family was obliged to move to Iran and live there. Three years later, they came back to their homeland where they stayed nearly three years and left again in 1976 when Naseer Hosseini obtained a job in Paris.

Khaled's family wanted to return to Kabul, but unfortunately they could not for safety reasons because during that time Afghanistan witnessed a bloody communist coup and the Soviet Army Invasion. As they sought political asylum in America, they started a new life in San Jose, California. After graduating from high school in 1984, he earned a Bachelor's Degree in Biology at Santa Clara University in 1988. This pushed him to enter the school of medicine in San Diego at the university of California and get his medical degree in 1993. At the same time of practicing internal medicine, Khaled began writing his first novel *The Kite Runner* in 2001 which was published in 2003 by Riverhead books. It has been translated into many foreign languages and was considered an international best selling.

II.2.1.2. Biography of Marc Forster

Marc Forster is a German-born Swiss filmmaker, film director and screenwriter. He was born on November, 30th, 1969 in a small Bavarian town in Germany. He is the son of Wolf Forster who is a doctor and Ulli a German Architect.

In 1978, during Marc's childhood, his parents moved the whole family to Switzerland for safety reasons so Marc grew up in Davos. When he was 12 years, he escaped home towards cinema to watch his first movie Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* (1979) without informing his parents²³. The first time Marc flew to New York, he was just 18 as he desired to study film making but when his mother advised him, he came back to

his homeland, fulfilled his high school and obtained his swiss high school diplomat from the Institut Montana

Zugerberg which is located near Zug. In 1990, he returned to the United States where he studied at University to achieve his goal. He made many films such as: *World War Z*, *Monster's Ball* (2001), *Thriller Stay* (2005) and his adaptation of the best-seller Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* that earned a nomination for a Golden Globe Award for best foreign language film.

As a child, Forster left his homeland with his family to Switzerland for safety reasons and later he came back, so after reading the story of the Kite Runner he was really impressed by The Afghan history and culture, he related his life to the life of the protagonist and it was this point in common that pushed him to make a movie .

II.2.2. Summaries of the Works

II.2.2.1. Synopsis of *The Kite Runner* the novel

The kite Runner is a novel written by the Afghan- American author khaled Hosseini which is considered his masterpiece, published in 2003. The novel in general is about the Soviets Invasion, Talibans control and Afghan women but the main theme of the story is about the friendship of Amir and Hassan. Amir is the son of a wealthy merchant in Kabul; Baba. Amir and his father are Pashtuns the major ethnic group in Afghanistan whereas Hassan who is the son of Ali, Amir and Baba's servant, is a Hazara boy who belongs to the minority ethnic group in Afghanistan. Amir shared his childhood with his servant Hassan who due to his origins is asked to perform the most difficult and vile tasks. The novel as a whole is divided into three parts; each part deals with the daily life of both boys in different circumstances.

The first part of the novel narrates the childhood of the privileged Amir and his servant Hassan linked by an indefectible passion for kites. Both boys grew up happy in a welcoming city(Kabul).Neither the difference of their conditions nor friend's taunts could stop their friendship until one day, during a kite tournament as it is known in kabul, Amir wins the kite and the hazara boy runs off and gets the kite but unfortunately he is attacked by a group of bullies and raped by a sadistic teenager, Assef .Although Amir witnesses everything, he does not react to help his friend. This act leads to Amir's suffering and living in guilt.

The second part of the book deals with Amir as an adult during the invasion of the soviet union in Afghanistan. Therefore, Baba and Amir were forced to leave Kabul and move to America for safety reasons. Once there, Amir gets married, lives happily with his wife. One day, Amir receives a phone call from Rahim khan, his father's friend from Afghanistan, he tells him that "there is a way to be good again"²⁴.

The third part of the novel depicts Amir's journey back with Farid to the new Afghanistan ruled by the Talibans. Amir's mission is to rescue his friend's and half brother's son, Sohrab, from the orphanage that is managed by Assef. Amir takes Sohrab with him to America and considers him as his son. He trains him to become a good kite runner like his father, Hassan.

II.2.2.2. Synopsis of The Kite Runner the movie

The kite Runner is a 2007 American Drama film. It is set in 1970 and 2001. When Afghanistan witnessed a dramatic change in its politics. The movie was released to cinema on December 14,2007 in US. The story is about Amir, a young Pashtun boy from Wazir Akbar

Khan who betrayed his best friend Hassan, the son of his father's Hazara servant and lives in guilt.

The movie starts with Amir and his wife Soraya watching children flying kites. When they came back home, they found packages of Amir's new novel in front of the door. Suddenly, Amir received an unexpected call from Rahim Khan, Baba's best friend, who obliged him to come back to his country to correct his sins. As a result, Amir went to Pakistan and met Rahim Khan who told him a secret about his relationship with Hassan. However, Rahim Khan told Amir that the only reason of my call was to go to Kabul and rescue your nephew, Sohrab, from the orphanage.

Moreover, Amir's journey started when he entered the Taliban territory in order to search Sohrab and take him back to Pakistan but the task was impossible as he knew that Sohrab was taken from the orphanage by his childhood enemy; Assef. Finally a meeting was set up between the two; Assef noticed that the person in front of him was his childhood enemy Amir but Amir does not recognize him. In fact, the only condition of Assef to release Sohrab was to beat Amir. Therefore, Amir is saved when Sohrab uses his slingshot to shoot out Assef's left eye. At the end of the movie, Amir accomplishes his mission and takes Sohrab with him to America. Once there, Amir trains Sohrab how to be a good kite fighter.

II.2.3. The Historical Background of The Work

Afghanistan came into existence as a nation-state in the 18 century after centuries of invasion and conquests. After the third war against the British forces that were trying to bring the country under their control, Afghanistan retrieved its independence in 1919²⁵.

Afghanistan is multiehnic state whose dominant group is The Pashtuns (Suni Muslims) and its subordinate group is the Hazaras (Shia Muslims). Due to their different

religious belief, Hazara people are subjected to mistreatment and violence by most Afghans. For years Pashtuns controlled the country and thanks to their culture that turns around the Pashtunwali, pre- Islamic code of honor, honor and protection of women, Afghanistan was independent and at the same time violence between its clans spread widely²⁶.

In its history, Afghanistan fought two Anglo-Afghan wars between 1839-1842 and between 1878-1880 and the third war was after world war in which Afghans fought against British interference to seek independence and self-rule in their affairs²⁷.

In 1919, Afghans started to reconstruct their monarchy under the reign of Amanullah who proclaimed himself king and endeavored to modernize and develop his kingdom by introducing a new social reform that consists of social changes. In 1928, when he came back from Europe, he was deeply influenced by Kamal Attaturk; Leader of Turkey, so he added other changes that contradicted the conservatives' beliefs , such as removing the veil for women changing the clothing style for Afghans to the Western one²⁸. Just after the introduction of his new program which was rejected by Afghans, he directly resigned and was replaced by Zahir Shah who ruled with other prime Ministers from 1953 to 1973.

During his reign, Afghanistan remained neutral during the second world war and with the help of some foreigners, the country flourished economically, when General Mohamed Daoud Khan became a president he sought the Soviets for economic and military resistance, five years later, he was killed by the leftist people's Democratic party.

After Daoud's death, the struggle for power started between both leaders of Khalq faction, Nur Mohammed Taraki and Hafizullah Amin who aimed to bring modernization by imposing unpopular features like : equal rights for women. Then, Taraki was told by soviets that the best way to regulate and moderate his program is by changing the prime minister

Amin, when Amin knew about Taraki's plot, his faithful supporters killed Taraki and Amin became president and general secretary of the party. The oppressive rule of Amin led to the invasion of the Soviet Union in 1979 with the aim to withdraw Amin's reign in Afghanistan because their relation with America was at a low point²⁹. The movement ended with the victory of the Soviet

Union. By the 1980 Barak Karmal, leader of the Democratic Party Parcham faction, was installed as ruler, supported by Soviet troops. But anti-regime opposition manifested by various Mujahidin groups fought Soviet forces.

In 1985, the Mujahedin came together in Pakistan to form alliance against the Soviet Union and with the help of U.S, Pakistan and Saoudi Arabia (arms and money supplying) Mujahedin won and took back Soviet troops from Afghanistan³⁰. In 1996, with the introduction of Islam, Afghanistan became an Islamic state under Taliban's rule. As they were opponents of progress and modernity, Talibans imposed strict rules and restrictions based on Sharia, they forced women to wear Burka, they banned some hobbies and activities like kite flying. All sectors were touched by these restrictions like economy became worse art, listening to music and watching tv were banned too.

During Talibans reign, Afghani women were victimized as they were subjected to sexual abuse, forced marriage and prostitution. They were prevented from their basic human rights; they didn't have the right to speak freely and hold opinions, most women were stopped from working outside, girls were prevented from going to school but they were permitted to study Quran at home. Most Afghans considered this act as the one that would weaken the prospects of social and economic outgrowth in Afghanistan. Outside home, women were forced to wear Burqa and go outside with a blood relative and above all their

voices should not be raised in public which was the case of Farzana, in the novel, who was beaten for talking loudly in the market.

Khaled Hosseini's novel "*The Kite Runner*" is directly linked to Afghan history, Taliban's rule, ethnicity, violation of human rights and Soviet invasion. He describes the suffering of most Afghans during the reign of Talibans that the protagonist witnessed when he came back from America to rescue Sohrab from the orphanage. Oppression towards women, racial discrimination are demonstrated in the novel through Amir who represents the dominant class and Hassan, a Hazara servant who is mistreated. Hosseini aims to write about the forgotten period of Afghanistan before the Soviets invaded his country so that his novel will be a piece that helps the readers to understand the peaceful life of Afghanistan from 1930s to 1970s.

Endnotes

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III. Results

Throughout this work, We have noticed that the adaptation of *The Kite Runner* the novel to the movie goes through changes and this is related to Gerard Genette's theory of "Transmodalisation". Khaled Hosseini's novel is written over a long period, four years after its publication was adapted into a movie. Thus, the shift from the narrative work to the dramatic one undergoes many changes and this conforms to Gerard Genette's theory.

In our dissertation, We have tried to shed light on the passage from *The Kite Runner* the novel to the film to highlight the transformations that occur when shifting a literary narrative work to the dramatic one. Our work is about comparing Khaled Hussein's novel *The Kite Runner* and its adaptation done by Marc Forster concerning characters and themes by relying on some characteristics of dramatization that are: the temporality of the story, the use of direct speech, the extensive loss of textual means and the thematic transposition.

The temporality of the story implies a reduction in the duration of the action itself since it is almost impossible for the producer to carry a novel of four thousand and one page into two hours and eight minutes screen, so some details must be omitted and others changed with the aim of keeping the same meaning of the story. It is clear that a movie is played by a group of actors who are present in the stage to take turns to speak, so it is necessary to use direct speeches in adaptations. Another characteristic of dramatization is the loss of textual means which means that in adaptations we can not find all the content of the story of the narrative work, but the reverse is possible. However, this loss of textual means is replaced by the extratextual ones which is play and spectacle. The last characteristic used in my work is the thematic transformation most precisely diegetic transposition that deals with the alternation that affects the events of the story.

As a conclusion, We have been able to say that through the use of some characteristics of dramatization that are explained in Gerard Genette's theory of transmodalization, We have found that although both Khaled Hosseini's novel and Marc Forster's adaptation of the same title tell the same story, a lot of differences in terms of themes and the physical description of some characters exist.

IV. Discussions

In this section of our work, We will deal with the transformations and changes that occur in Marc Forster's adaptation of *The Kite Runner*. In the first chapter, We will compare the novel and the movie regarding characters in terms of their social class, personality and religious background relying on extracts taken from the novel and scenes from the movie. In the second chapter, We will deal with the most important themes that are apparent in the previous mentioned works.

IV.1. Chapter one

Characters in Khaled Hosseini's Novel *The Kite Runner* and Marc Forster's Movie

In this chapter, We will stress on the differences between the novel and its adaptation in terms of characters through analyzing and showing how they are described in the novel and how they are portrayed in the movie. We will show the aim of the author and the film director and their different ways of portraying the characters.

IV.1.1.Male Characters

One of the main characters of the novel, Hassan. He is a young Hazara boy who is Amir's best friend and the whole story turns around their friendship. Hassan is not just a simple friend, he is a loyal boy who sacrifices his life just to keep his friendship with Amir right well as it is mentioned in the novel: "For you a thousands time over"¹. He is known for being a good kite runner as he always knows where the kite falls down.

The first and most noticeable difference between the novel and the movie is that Hassan in the novel is described as a cleft lip boy who belongs to the lower class of Afghanistan called Hazara which differs from the upper class (Pashtun) in terms of their social status, physical appearances, religion and language. As a minority race in Afghanistan, Hazaras are insulted, mistreated and persecuted by Pashtuns that was the case of Hassan who is a frequent target of harrasment by other kids as it is mentioned in the novel : " It also said some things I did know, like that people called Hazaras mice eating, flat nosed , load- carrying donkeys"². So Hosseini portrays Hassan as a Hazara and uses labels to emphasize and strengthen the existence of racial discrimination. He shows to the readers the circumstances of living in Afghanistan during that period especially for Hazaras and the terrible circumstances endured by the characters.

Contrary to the novel, Hassan's role in the movie is played by Ahmed Khan Mahmood Zada who is a child actor with no abnormal physical appearances, he has not got a cleft lip.



Figure 1. The Kite Runner Hassan's Physical Appearance: The normal physical appearance of Hassan. Marc Forster, *The Kite Runner*, (Paramount Vantage, 2007) 00:06:35.

The figure above is a close up shot of Hassan, which demonstrates to the audience the physical appearance of Hassan who does not exhibit any congenital defect, unlike Hussein's description of the same character in his novel.

The reason that clarifies this omission is to shorten the duration of the movie because if Hassan is shown cleft lip, his surgery also must be shown. This omission can be explained in relation to Genette's characteristics of dramatization that insists upon the temporality of the story that is the need to compress the duration to bring it as close to that of the performance³.

The second difference between the novel and the movie concerns Rahim Khan who in the novel is described as Baba's business partner and best friend in Afghanistan. He is the only person who takes care of Amir, he encourages him in writing stories and appreciates

reading them . As Baba shows his hatred towards Amir, Rahim Khan always tries to convince Baba that everyone has his own personality and can not behave as he desires as the author says in the novel: “Children aren’t coloring books you don’t get to fill them with your favorite colors”⁴.

Rahim Khan marks the importance of his role in the evolution of the events through his phone call when he invites Amir back to his homeland after twenty six years to correct his sins as it is mentioned in the novel : “ There is a way to be good again”⁵. Once there, Rahim tells Amir that Hassan had a wife and a son named Sohrab. Unfortunately, Hassan along with Farzana were murdered by the Talibans and Sohrab was taken to an orphanage. Therefore, Rahim Khan reveals that Hassan is not just his friend but his half-brother too. Finally, he tells Amir that he calls him to let him atone his past sins and Baba’s sins by rescuing Sohrab.

Hosseini in his work gives Rahim a big importance as he is the closest friend of the protagonist and being the only person who knows the hidden secret of Amir. The narrator does not give a lot of details about his personal life but rather how he affects other characters mostly Baba and Amir. He stresses the idea that even though Rahim is a minor character his role is quite important.

Contrary to the novel, in the movie we see Rahim Khan during Amir’s childhood and

Amir’s coming back to his homeland so between the two periods his role is not shown because Forster aims to bring the same meaning of the story from the novel to his adaptation. It is true that the film director can not bring the whole story of the narrative work to the stage, so it is of importance to omit some details. Thus, Forster tries to shed light only on the most important events of the story from his own perspective.

The third difference concerns Ali the servant. In the novel, the narrator stresses on the idea that the ethnicity that existed in Afghanistan created imbalances in Afghans' daily life. Like Hassan, Ali belongs to the lower class of Afghanistan, Hazaras, who are recognized in society according to their physical appearances which differ from the Pashtuns (the dominant class). In the novel, Ali is described as a sedulous person who takes care of Baba and Amir despite his illness, Polio and his suffering from congenital paralysis of his lower facial muscles, he never expresses dissatisfactions about something. His physical appearance leaves him unable to smile and gives him the appearance of being unhappy. As a member of a minority group, Ali is a subject of verbal abuse as the author writes in the novel:

Ali's face and his walk frightened some of the younger children in the neighborhood. But the real trouble was with older kids. They chased him on the street, and mocked him when he hobbled by. Some had taken to calling him Babalu, or Boogeyman. "Hey, Babalu, who did you eat today?" They barked to a chorus of laughter. "who did you eat , you flat-nosed Babalu?"⁶

Through this description Khaled Hosseini emphasizes the ethnic discrimination objected on Hazaras to let the reader understand their suffering because as they belong to the weakest and poorest race, they are exposed to all kinds of violence and cruel acts.

However Ali's role in the movie is played by Nabi Tanha who is described as a normal man as it is shown in the upcoming figure.



Figure 2. The Kite Runner Ali's Physical Appearance: The absence of congenital paralysis of Ali. Marc Forster, The Kite Runner,(Paramount,Vantage,2007)00:35:10

Ali has no congenital paralysis, not crippled and has an easy life. He is obedient to Baba and does everything to satisfy him. Marc Forster does not speak about his personal life, his arranged marriage, his childhood and even the mistreatment he received in the street because they are not important, they are just small details.

Forster aims through these changes to compress the duration because it is impossible to bring all the content of the narrative and put it in the dramatic version. All these transformations are related to Gerard Genette's characteristics of dramatization that is the loss of textual means⁷. This signifies that some details of the story Can not be found in the adapted work.

Another difference is also with Farid's brother, Wahid, who in the novel is described as the person who welcomed Amir and Farid in his house to spend the night and to take some rest. Besides, Wahid asks Amir about his personal life and why he came back to Afghanistan after a noticeable absence, as it is mentioned in the novel: So what do you do in

America, Amir Agha? Wahid asked “I am a writer”, I said. I thought I heard Farid chuckle at that. “A writer” Wahid said, clearly impressed. “Do you write about Afghanistan?” “Well, I have. But not currently⁸. Wahid’s main attention is to remind Amir about his Afghan identity and homeland that must not be forgotten.

Contrary to the novel, the movie left out the scene at Wahid’s house, his role is totally omitted because the producer can not keep every detail or character in the movie. It is obvious that the role of some flat characters are omitted that is designated by Genette as the “loss of textual resources” which he explains in his book that what the theatre can do, the narrative can do as well, but the reverse can not occur; that is to say, the narrative can develop the events and make them larger and more extensive by going and describing each detail of the story, whereas when adapting a story to a dramatic version the theatre can not deal with the details and features that have been mentioned in the hypotext. However, This loss of textual means is compensated by extratextual gain which is called by Roland Barthes “Theatricality” that is spectacle and play acting⁹.

Another difference between the novel and the movie concerns Sohrab, Hassan’s son who in the novel plays an important role. The narrator describes him as being an innocent boy whose childhood is stolen by Assef. As a boy of five years, Sohrab lived with his parents until the coming of the Talib officials who came to control the house. They ordered Hassan to leave as soon as possible, then Hassan protested by saying that he was living with Amir and he was in charge of keeping the house until Baba and Amir come back. As the minority group to which Hassan belonged was oppressed, the officials accused Hassan of being a liar and a thief. So Sohrab’s parents were murdered by the Taliban and as a result Sohrab was taken to an orphanage where he suffered from the mistreatment and sexual abuse of Assef. After the call of Rahim Khan, Amir knew that he had a nephew who was taken to

an orphanage . After many difficulties along with Farid, Amir succeeded to take back Sohrab from Assef's dirty hands.

Unfortunately, when Sohrab knew that the process of adopting him was impossible, he attempted to commit suicide as it is mentioned in the novel:

Sohrab! I called, rising from my bed. " I have great news." I knocked on the bathroom door. "Sohrab! Soraya jan just called from California. We won't have to put you in the orphaonage, Sohrab. We're going to America, you and I. Did you hear me? We are going to America!" I pushed the door open. Stepped into the bathroom. Suddenly I was on my knees, screaming, screaming through my clenched teeth. Screaming until I thought my throat would rip and my chest explode. Later, they said that I was still screaming when the ambulance arrived¹⁰.

Khaled Hosseini aims to show the hardships and the effects that the Talibans left on Hazaras' life. Sohrab witnessed the death of his parents, the hard life in the orphanage, loneliness, insecurity and the sexual abuse of Assef that left him traumatized, unable to speak, smile and express his own thoughts, he just thought that he was a dirty boy.

However, in the movie Sohrab is described as an innocent boy who suffers in the orphanage and whose life will be saved by Amir. The filmmakers omit some scenes like Sohrab's attempt of suicide, Amir's inability of adapting Sohrab after his promise and the days Sohrab spent in the hospital to shorten the duration of the movie as it is impossible to give all the details of the narrative in the dramatic which is designated by Genette as the loss of textual resources. The producer of the movie chooses the suitable actor for Sohrab whose sad emotions and good acting let the audience understand both thoughts and psychological troubles. He also aims to keep violence restrained because the Motion Picture Association aims to attract an audience of all ages, adults and children¹¹.

Another character whose role differs in the movie is Assef, the antagonist. In the narrative work, Assef is described and introduced to the readers as being a "Sociopath", a

racist boy from Wazir Akbar Khan who belongs to the upper class in Afghanistan. He can not tolerate the existence of Hazaras in Afghanistan as he wants to get rid of them, he is a boy who idolizes Hitler and considers him a man of vision. According to him Afghanistan is the land of Pashtuns as it is mentioned 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-Nosed here. His people pollute our homeland, our Watan. They dirty our blood¹².

Assef is the main physical villain character in the novel who plays a major role in creating the guilt which Amir lives with. As a boy, he rapes Hassan after the kite tournament, as an adult he rapes Sohrab and other children in the orphanage. He is known for his stainlesssteel brass knuckles that symbolizes his strength and savagery. Later as an adult, he joins the Talibans and becomes a leader. Through this negative description, Khaled Hussein wants to represent the corrupt behavior in Afghanistan and how Hazaras are oppressed and mistreated.

However, in the movie the role of Assef is played by Abdul Salam Yusoufzai. Assef is the son of a wealthy family in Kabul who is known for his savagery. The idea that Assef idolizes Hitler is totally omitted within the movie and he is never shown with his brass knuckles as we can notice this in the upcoming picture. As brass knuckles are sign of violence and savagery, Forster wants to keep them restrained and gives just a glimpse about his behavior in the street to let the audience understand his role in the movie. In an interview with Marc Forster he said that it is clear that Assef is not human but it is quite important to understand his psychological motivation¹³. Forster also aims to compress the duration since it is not possible to bring all the details of the narrative work in the dramatic version, so some small changes must occur. This is related to Gerard Genette's characteristics of dramatization that is the temporality of the story¹⁴.



Figure 3. The Kite Runner Assef without Brass Knuckles. Marc Forster, The Kite Runner,(Paramount Vantage)00:14:32

Another characteristic of dramatization that is associated to this part of our study is direct speech. It is more used in the movie than in the novel since “all actors are present except those who are reported by the character himself”¹⁵. Thus, all the actors present in the stage are asked to take turns to speak, I can illustrate this from the dialogue between Baba and Amir in the movie:

The Mullahs at school say drinking is a sin. They say drinkers will pay when the reckoning comes.

Baba: Do you want to know what your father thinks about sin?

Amir: yes

Baba: I'll tell you but first understand this and understand it now: you'll never learn anything of value from those bearded idiots.

Amir: You mean the Mullahs.?

Baba: I piss on the beards of those self-righteous monkeys¹⁶.

Through this dialogue the audience understands the way Baba sees Mullahs and drinking for him is not a sin. The use of dialogue is a way of making the audience take a glimpse at each

character's thoughts, understand his feelings and have access to his emotions in order to better comprehend and analyse the story.

IV.1.2. Female Characters

The life of Afghan women had changed dramatically when the Taliban took control of the country. As extremist groups, they imposed strict restrictions based on Sharia. In *the Kite Runner*, Khaled Hosseini highlights the restrictions imposed by the Taliban on Afghan people most precisely women who are asked to be subordinate, persecuted, should not be educated and had not the right to choose their husbands. So all the story's main characters are male and women are just minor characters. One of these female characters is Sanaubar, a Hazara woman who is Ali's first cousin and wife. She is known for her beauty and her bad reputation. Although sharing the same family blood, Sanaubar never stops insulting her husband "Sanaubar joined the neighborhood kids in taunting Ali"¹⁷. Hosseini clarifies that the results of her arranged marriage which is an Afghan tradition was that Sanaubar never loved Ali and after giving birth to Hassan, without even holding him she eloped with a group of singers and dancers as it is mentioned in the novel: "Sanaubar had taken one glance at the baby in Ali's arms, seen the cleft lip and barked a bitter laughter. "There", she had said. "Now you have your own idiot child to do all your smiling for you!" She had refused to even hold Hassan, and just five days later, she was gone"¹⁸.

Years later living the life of a gypsie as she desired, Sanaubar came back to atone her sin and to live with her son's family. Hosseini used other female characters like the obedient Sakina just to show that Amir and Hassan had been nursed by the same woman to highlight their fraternity. He spoke about women just to show their position then their role is eliminated.

This idea is explored by Helene Cixous in her text “Newly Born Women”(1986) that is based on the position of women in literature¹⁹. In her theory, Helene Cixous explains that the fact that literature leaves out women as dead or absent , gives the chance to patriarchy to be maintained so Husseinini insists on the idea that the role of mothers(motherhood) can be replaced by fathers(fatherhood) which is the case of Amir whose mother died during his birth and Hassan whose mother eloped with a group of singers. Another character which illustrates the mistreatment imposed on women by the Taliban was Farzana, Hassan’s wife who was beaten for talking loudly,as it is illustrated in the novel:

The other day, I accompanied Farzana jan to the bazaar to buy some potatoes and naan. She asked the vendor how much the potatoes cost, but he did not hear her , I think he had a deaf ear. So she asked louder and suddenly a young Talib ran over and hit her on the thighs with his wooden stick. He struck her so hard she fell down. He was screaming at her and cursing and saying the Ministry Of Vice and Virtue does not allow women to speak loudly. She had a large purple bruise on her leg for days but what could I do except stand and watch my wife get beaten?²⁰

During Taliban reign, women had no right to raise their voices. Husseinini, through his novel wanted to show the inequality and injustice that women suffer from in Afghanistan.

However, Marc Forster in his adaptation omitted completely the role of women because as the story took place during the Taliban rule in which life style had changed and women were prevented from all their basic human rights, it was important for him to keep women away from his adaptation for his safety so that the movie will be released easily. In an interview with Forster he states that before casting, it was important for him to speak with people to gather different perspectives to be more aware and to know more about Afghan culture. In order to show his professional work, Forster brings the same meaning of story with some changes so when the audience watches the movie they will notice that it is the real story of the novel in terms of climax, plot, but some minor changes must occur because the dramatic can not be as similar as the narrative.

To conclude with, We can say that several changes must occur when shifting from any narrative work to the dramatic one .So numerous elements in Khaled Hosseini's novel *The Kite Runner* have been eliminated in Marc Forster's adaptation which is related to Gerard Genette's characteristics of Dramatization that is the need to compress the duration , the loss of textual means and the use of direct speech. Khaled Hosseini's aim was to provide the readers with social, cultural and historical context of Afghanistan even the small details for a better understanding of the story while Marc wants to let the viewer intuit the relationships and situations so he omits some scenes.

Endnotes

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6. Ibid:P9
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IV.2. Chapter Two

Themes in Khaled Hosseini's Novel *The Kite Runner* and Marc Forster's Movie

In this second chapter, We will provide a comparative analysis between the novel and its adaptation, and shed light on the differences between the two previous mentioned works in terms of themes by showing the aim of each of the author and the film director. For this purpose, we have used some characteristics of transmodalisation.

IV.2.1. The Theme of Ethnic Discrimination

The Kite Runner (2003) written by Khaled Hussein is a novel that deals with the turbulent and violent history of Afghanistan from 1970s to 2002s. During that period, the country faced and suffered from foreign interventions like: the soviet invasion in 1979 and some wars and internal disagreement between its ethnic groups. As it is known, Afghanistan is a multiethnic country that comprises many ethnic groups such as: Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras, Uzbeks, Balochis, Aimaq, Turkmens, Nooristanis, Pamiris, Arabs, Gujjars, Brahuis, Qizilbach and Pashai¹. As L.Goodson claims in his book *The Fragmentation Of Culture In Afghanistan* “Afghanistan is a country comprised of various groups with differing cultural traits, including language, religious practices, physical appearance and attire, and customs”². The conflict which is a kind of opposition or clash of ideas, beliefs or actions emerged between the majority ethnic group that dominates the country (The Pashtuns) and the minority ethnic group whose members were discriminated (The Hazaras) . The fact that both groups differ in terms of physical appearances, social status, religious beliefs and cultural practices led to the emergence of ethnicity and racism in Afghanistan.

Ethnic discrimination is a global matter that exists nearly everywhere. It is one of the outcomes of colonialism. This concept, is the belief that makes some people feel superior and others inferior and submissive due to their social, political and religious backgrounds. Thus, it is the main reason that creates inequality and injustice between people.

The theme of ethnic discrimination is present throughout Hosseini's novel *The Kite Runner*, many acts imposed towards Hazaras are highlighted and described by the author to show the misery from which Hazaras suffered. Hazara people who are Shi'a Muslims are oppressed, killed, discriminated and excluded from many social rights by the Pashtuns who thanks to their power could dominate the country as it is mentioned in the novel : “ In it, I read that my people, the Pashtuns, had persecuted and oppressed the Hazaras”³.

In the novel, Khaled Hosseini described Hazara people as Mongol descendents who were insulted by Pashtuns for their physical appearances which look like Chinese people. This happened to Hassan several times while playing outside as it is clearly mentioned in the book: “it also said some things I did know, like that people called hazaras mice eating, flat-nosed, load carrying donkeys. I had heard some of the kids in the neighborhood yell those names to

Hassan”⁴. This is linked to the biological features that led to the creation of human differences through which arises racism. Johnny Marconi claims in his book entitled *Sociology* (2011) that racism is the belief that one racial category is innately superior or inferior to another⁵. Simply, people who belong to the dominant races are expected to be the superior ones whereas the minorities are thought to be inferior. This belief is the main cause that makes Hassan and the group he belongs to incapable of living well without being controlled by the dominant class to which they must be obedient and work as slaves.

In addition, another cause of the conflict between both ethnic groups is their different religious belief. Although both groups are Muslims, they have different attitudes; Hazara is Shi'a while Pashtun is Sunni Muslims and this is clearly mentioned by Khaled Hosseini in his novel: "The book said part of the reason Pashtuns had oppressed the Hazaras was that Pashtuns were Sunni muslims, while Hazaras were Shi'a"⁶. Pashtuns are considered the strongest and wealthiest race in Afghanistan who had all the rights they deserve. Like Amir, the racist boy, who lives in a luxurious big house has the right for education and many good conditions of living, whereas the Hazaras are the weakest race like Hassan, Amir's servant, who is prohibited of getting educated because of his race is the target of oppression because of his ethnicity.

Besides, Baba and Amir never refer to Ali and Hassan as their friends especially in public even though they grew up and lived together, instead they refer to them as servants because in Afghanistan it was a shame for Pashtuns to befriend Hazaras. Through this description, Khaled Hosseini clarifies to the readers that racism imposed towards Hazaras is practiced by the whole society that has a big impact on people's thoughts. That is the case of Amir who is influenced by the way society views Hassan as he never includes him while playing outside with other kids and this is clearly illustrated in the novel:

But he's not my friend! I almost blurted. He's my servant! Had I really thought that? Of course I hadn't. I treated Hassan well, just like a friend, better even, more like a brother. But if so, Then why, didn't I ever include Hassan in our games? Why did I play with Hassan only when no one else was around⁷.

In the novel *The Kite Runner* which is full of details of traditional Afghan culture, Hosseini used both characters Amir and Hassan to represent the different sides of Afghan society; powerful and powerless, Pashtuns and Hazaras, Sunni and Shia. He devoted many pages to show and explain that although Amir and Hassan grew up, lived, played and went

to watch movies together, their different religious beliefs that are difficult to overcome led their friendship to an end as it is highlighted in the novel when Amir says: “Because history isn’t easy to overcome. Neither is religion. In the end, I was a Pashtun and he was a Hazara nothing was going to change that nothing”⁸. From this, it is clear that Khaled Hosseini aims to depict the diversity of cultures and ethnicities in his homeland.

However, the process of adaptation can not remain completely faithful to the original text so some modifications can occur, whether addition or reduction without changing the meaning of the narrative work. There are some written works that contain a lot of details, so due to their condensed form, the movie director finds himself obliged to omit some details in order to arrange the duration of his adaptation.

As it is known, readers have much time to read a literary work whereas the time given to watch a movie is limited. In Marc Forster’s adaptation of *The Kite Runner*, David Benioff and Marc Forster gave a big importance to the themes of redemption, patriarchy, friendship, forgiveness, honor and guilt. Therefore, they gave a glimpse about the existence of racial discrimination in Afghanistan between the majority Pashtuns and the minority Hazaras through the use of the word “Hazara boy” as a reference to Hassan and Sohrab. They also used one scene to show racism when both of Amir and Hassan were confronted with Assef and his friends. Moreover, Forster’s main goal was to keep ethnicity apart. He aims to show the positive

side of the story as he states in his interview with Cineaste:

It was the first time I read a story that dealt with that part of the world that was about forgiveness, healing and atonement and not about violence and terrorism. Often in the West when we hear the word Afghanistan, we think about Bin Laden and the Taliban we don’t think about the people who live there. It was the first time I read a story from there, which starts with the people and not violence and terror. It was important to me to keep the

violence restrained, because it's only a part of the story. Those scenes are story points that move the film forward, but they're not the main focus⁹.

It is evident that although Forster brought some modifications to his adaptation, he did not change the meaning of the original work. When adapting a literary work, the most important point which must be kept is the story that is to say characters, themes and setting so it is clear that Forster's main goal was to reduce the duration because if he does not omit some details, his movie will take more time and this is related to Gerard Genette's characteristics of dramatization that focuses on the temporality of the story which is reducing the duration of the adaptation and at the same time keeping the same meaning of the original work.

IV.2.2. The Theme of Violence

Another theme that is highly present in Khaled Hosseini's novel is violence that is a social problem that increases over years. This expression of aggression created havoc throughout the world since all countries in the world are facing some kind of violence. In fact, the word violence is defined by the world Health Organization as:

The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual , against oneself, another person or against a group or community , that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury , death, psychological harm maldevelopment or deprivation¹⁰.

In other words, it is the purposed use of someone's physical force against an individual or a group of people in order to bring harm, either injury or death, to the victim. This human behavior is also designated by a group of pshychologists as: "an extreme form of aggression, such as physical assault and murder"¹¹. Besides, this behavior exists everywhere at homes, schools, streets and has very bad and dangerous impacts on the victim's life.

However, I distinguish many types of violence, one of these types that I am going to deal with is child abuse which is in turn considered any behavior that harms a child and is against the law. The word “abuse” is usually used to mean harm, or mistreatment. It is defined by Baker on the social work dictionary as an “improper behavior intended to cause physical, psychological or financial harm to individual or group”¹². In fact child abuse is defined by Baker as: the recurrent infliction of physical or emotional injury on a dependent minor, though intentional beatings, uncontrolled corporal punishment, persistent ridicule and degradation, or sexual abuse, usually committed by parents or others in charge of the child’s care¹³.

Thus, this act of violence refers to any psychological, physical and sexual mistreatment practiced by an adult towards a child, someone who is under 18 years of age. Therefore, many authors have dealt with the theme of violence, but Khaled Hosseini shows in his novel entitled *The Kite Runner* another side of violence by developing the four types of child abuse: physical child abuse, psychological child abuse, social child abuse and sexual abuse. However, our main focus will lie on two types of child abuse: physical child abuse and the sexual one.

IV.2.2.1. Physical Child Abuse

Physical child abuse is a kind of abuse in which children are subjected to violence with the intention of harming them. In the novel, Khaled Hosseini uses the character of Hassan the target of physical abuse. Hassan, Amir’s servant, is a Hazara boy who belongs to the minority ethnic group in Afghanistan who are persecuted, oppressed by the majority ethnic group; the Pashtuns because of their different ethnic class, religious beliefs.

Assef, the antagonist, is a racist boy who belongs to the upper class in Afghanistan. He believes that the real Afghan people are the Pashtuns, so the existence of Hazaras bothers him as he wants to get rid of them. He is known for his savagery, he is always injurious to children who are weaker than him like Hassan.

As it is known in Kabul, in winter boys spend their time flying kites. Hassan is the best Kite runner in Kabul as he knows exactly where the kite falls before it comes down. During the kite tournament, Amir did his best to win in order to get his baba's love and attention. When the last kite falls down, Hassan runs happily to bring it for Amir but unfortunately, he was chased by Assef and his friends in the alleyway. Assef asked Hassan to give him the kite but Hassan replied by saying that this Kite belonged to Amir. In addition, Hassan recognized that he was facing danger so he tried to defend himself by throwing a rock to Assef. This act of self-defense let Assef throw Hassan angrily to the ground as it is mentioned in the novel :

Assef mentioned with his hands and the two other boys separated, forming a half circle, trapping Hassan in the alley "I've changed my mind " Assef said ."I'm letting you keep the Kite , Hazara.I'll you keep it so it will remind you of what I'm about to do." Then he charged. Hassan hurled the rock. It struck Assef in the forehead. Assef yelled as he flung himself at Hassan, knocking him to the ground. Wali and Kamal followed¹⁴.

Through this, it is clear that Khaled Hosseini aims to show the impact of belonging to the lower class in Afghanistan through the character of Hassan, the marginalized boy of the story who suffers physically from Assef's abuse. Hosseini gave this image so that readers from all parts of the world can have an idea and know the suffering, mistreatment and the physical child abuse faced by Hazara children.

In contrast, in the movie the scene that shows the fight and the physical abuse of Assef towards Hassan is not detailed as the scene contains a kind of violence. Forster aims to

leave it out of his adaptation and gives just a glimpse about it as it is not the main focus because the movie is dedicated to all categories of people including children. He avoids embodying the violent graphic scenes considering the fact that his work will be viewed by an under-aged audience. Hence, depicting brutal scenes of violence in the movie can affect children negatively.

IV.2.2.2. Sexual Child Abuse

Sexual child abuse is an abusive sexual contact between a child and an adult which is done by force. It is one of the common crimes rejected by society. Sexual abuse or rape is one of the most important themes of the narrative as it arises the climax of the story. As the incident is very important, Khaled Hosseini managed to describe it with details through giving a vivid description of the scene from the beginning till the end as it is clearly mentioned in his novel :

"Fine", Assef snapped. "All I want you weaklings to do is hold him down. Can you manage that?" wali and Kamal nodded. They looked relieved. Assef knelt behind Hassan, put his hands on Hassan's hips and lifted his bare buttocks. He kept one hand on Hassan's back and undid his own belt buckle with his free hand. He unzipped his jeans. Dropped his underwear. He positioned Himself behind Hassan. Hassan didn't struggle. Didn't even whimper. He moved his head slightly and I caught a glimpse of his face. Saw the resignation in it. It was a look I had seen before. it was the look of the lamb¹⁵.

From what is mentioned above, it is evident that Assef did not care about Hassan and his main interest was just to abuse the Hazara Hassan sexually without worrying about the consequences. However, through this detailed description of the scene, it is claimed that the event is one of the most important themes of the novel as it is considered the turning of the story that led the relationship of Amir and Hassan to end.

Another character who witnessed and suffered from sexual abuse is Sohrab; Hassan's son, an ethnic Hazara who belongs to the lower class of Afghanistan. After his parents, Farzana and Hassan were murdered under Talib hands, he was taken to an orphanage in Kabul. Once there, Sohrab suffered from sexual abuse practiced by a Talib official who was in fact, Assef, the same person who raped Hassan when they were children. So Hosseini's main aim from this detailed description is to show that Hazara children faced misery in their daily life and had no children rights. Hazaras boys are exposed to all types of abuse even the most dangerous one which is sexual abuse. In addition to this, Hussein did not describe the sexual abuse imposed by the Talib official but he gave just an idea about the event by describing the way of his dancing, his clothes and his makeup. All in all, Hussein shows that Hazaras are not equal to Pashtuns as they can not even protect themselves from danger. The best example that illustrates this is Hassan who could not even defend himself and accept directly the sexual abuse of Assef because of his social class.

Unlike the novel, there is a difference in the depiction of rape in the adaptation. In the novel, Amir describes how Hassan is pushed to the ground, undressed and raped by the sadistic Assef. The importance of the scene let the author to give much details about it. In contrast Marc Forster did not show the scene due to its violent image instead he gave just a glimpse about it as he could not omit it completely because it is one of the most important themes of the narrative.



Figure 1: The Kite Runner rape scene: Assef unzipping his pants. Marc Forster, The Kite Runner, (Paramount Vantage, 2007) 00:32:45.

This figure is a close-up shot taken from a quick scene in which we see the Pashtun Assef unzipping his jeans towards the Hazara Hassan. Marc Forster aims to keep violent scenes apart because the novel is about forgiveness, loyalty, and friendship. Forster uses this quick shot to demonstrate the rape scene to ensure that the movie can be viewed by an audience of all ages. Hence, he gives just a glimpse about the existence of this kind of child abuse in a way that will not shock children. According to the Motion Picture Association of America, it is of importance to diminish the issue of violence so that to make a movie that is suitable to a large audience¹⁶. Furthermore, movies containing graphic violence have a negative impact on the enjoyment of the movie itself¹⁷. Therefore, Marc Forster has omitted certain features in the movie so that the scene can be viewed by an audience of all ages.

In addition, this transformation can be explained in relation to Gerard Genette's Characteristics of dramatization that is thematic transformation, that is to say that when making an adaptation of any literary work, changes must occur whether addition or subtraction which affects the meaning of the original work which means "pragmatic Transposition"¹⁸.

IV.2.3. The Theme of Suicide

Suicide is a theme that is present in Khaled Hosseini's novel *The Kite Runner*. Attempt of suicide supports the main events of the narrative as it is closely linked to the novel's main theme which is redemption. Suicide is one of the factors that existed worldwide years ago. It is considered one of the most important moral problems in human history. Thus, the French sociologist David Emile Durkheim defines Suicide as: "death resulting directly or indirectly from a positive or negative act of the victim himself which he knows will produce this result"¹⁹.

In addition, The American Clinical psychologist Edwin Shneidman defines Suicide as: "a conscious act of self-induced annihilation, best understood as a multidimensional malaise in a needful individual who defines an issue for which suicide is perceived as the best solution"²⁰.

Suicide or self-murder which can also be called self-violence is a human behavior done by someone who wants to hurt himself when he is found in front of problems that can not be solved. Khaled Hosseini describes the attempt of suicide in his novel through Sohrab's character. He tempts to show the struggle that Hazaras face within the Afghan society. He describes oppression, mistreatment and injustice that is subjected towards them. Sohrab's inferiority, lack of confidence within himself, his inability to bring changes in his life lead him to commit suicide.

In the novel this act of suicide is done by Sohrab; Hassan and Farzana's son, who after the death of his parents was taken to an orphanage. Once there, Sohrab suffered from starvation, loneliness, fear and uncertainty. Like a marginalized boy, Sohrab was subject to

mistreatment and sexual abuse. When Amir, Sohrab's uncle, knew that he had a nephew in the orphanage, he decided to rescue and take him to America.

Amir sacrifices his life to save Sohrab from Assef's hands after a long fight, he promised that he would never let him come back to the orphanage and he would adopt him. Unfortunately, Amir found difficulties in adopting Sohrab, so he tried to explain the situation to Sohrab that the process of adoption could be done only if he came back to the orphanage temporarily. Sohrab refused the idea and remembered all the fear, misery that he witnessed there. As a result, he found himself unable to change his life despite Amir's promise, he attempted suicide by slitting his wrists "He says the boy had cut himself deeply and had lost a great deal of blood and my mouth begins to mutter that prayer again: La illaha ila Allah, Muhammed u rasul ullah"²¹, because for him, suicide was a way to escape from Assef's abuse.

The scene of suicide plays an important role in the development of the events more precisely in Amir's searching for redemption to correct the wrongs committed during his childhood towards his friend and half - brother. So through this description, Khaled Hosseini sheds light on this oppressed lower ethnic group to show the atmosphere they grew up in. He also aims to show that hazaras as weak people who can not bring changes in their lives, are hopeless and unhappy of the existence so when they face problems, they put an end to their lives.

Contrary to the novel that depicts the scene of Sohrab's attempting suicide, the movie made by Marc Forster omitted completely the event due to the bad effects that it left on the audience because if suicide was shown, the manner and the place where the crime occurred must be shown. That is to say, when Sohrab cut his wrists in the bathroom which was full of his blood must be shown. Thus, the scene contains graphic violence that is highly

contradictory to the Motion Picture Association of America whose main aim and necessity is reducing violence so that the movie can be seen and enjoyed by children and adults²².

Besides, this transposition is also related to Gerard Genette's characteristics of dramatization that is thematic transformation which means that the movement from telling to showing can not be done without some modifications in the plot, "Pragmatic transposition"²³.

The filmmakers can not bring all the events of the narrative on the stage, so they can omit some details with the aim of remaining faithful to the original work.

IV.2.4. The Theme of Friendship

Friendship is the association of love, faithfulness, esteem and confidence between two persons or more. It is determined as: "a relation based on mutual respect, appreciation and liking"²⁴. Aristotle argued in his *Nicomachean ethics*(2018) that friendship is the source of happiness and its precious value can not be replaced by other things "No one would choose to live without friends even if he had all the other goods"²⁵.

However, sometimes we find a connection between two persons in which one of them is more interested and does his best to keep the relationship right well, whereas the person from the other side is neglectful. In fact, that person is participating on what is called one sided friendship. Khaled Hosseini was one of the most famous writers who have dealt with this type of friendship through describing the friendship of Amir and Hassan.

The Kite Runner is a novel about redemption, loyalty and self-sacrifice but relationships are the main focus. In fact, there is companionship between several characters

like: Rahim and Baba, Baba and Ali but the one to which more importance is given is that of Hassan and Amir.

In the first parts of the novel, Khaled Husseini describes the childhood and the beautiful relationships between Amir and Hassan as being quite strong. Both boys enjoy doing everything together, playing outside, watching movies and climbing trees as it is mentioned in the novel :

When we were children, Hassan and I used to climb the poplar trees in the driveway of my father's house and annoy our neighbors by reflecting sunlight into their homes with a Shard of mirror. We would sit across from each other on a pair of high branches, our naked feet dangling, our trouser pockets filled with dried mulberries and walnuts. We took turns with the mirror as we ate mulberries, pelted each other with other with them, giggling, laughing ²⁶.

When Amir comes back from school, he goes with Hassan to the hill where they sit and chatter together. Then, Amir starts telling his stories to the illiterate Hassan who enjoys them much as it is mentioned in the novel:

One summer day, I used one of Ali's kitchen knives to carve our names on it: "Amir and Hassan, the sultans of Kabul". Those words made it formal: the tree was ours. After school, Hassan and I climbed its branches and snatched its blood – red pomegranates. After we'd eaten the fruit and wiped our hands on the grass, I would read to Hassan ²⁷.

Although Amir is a Pashtun boy who belongs to the Pashtun community which is considered the upper class in Afghan society, and Hassan is a Hazara boy who belongs to the lower class, both boys grow up to be friends. That is to say that their social class, ethnicity and religion did not make an end to their friendship until the day of the kite tournament when everything changed to the worst.

After the incident of Hassan's rape, the friendship of Amir and Hassan starts collapsing. Hassan, the victim, remains always loyal and faithful to his master and considers him his best friend with whom he shares everything .The latter never denies something to

Amir and is ready to do everything even if he will be punished as it is mentioned in the novel:

“Sometimes, up in those trees, I talked Hassan into firing walnuts with his slingshot at the neighbor’s one, eyed German shepherd. Hassan never wanted to, but if asked, really asked he wouldn’t deny me”²⁸.

Unlike Hassan, Amir is selfish and jealous, he never treats Hassan like his friend as he never plays with him in front of others and relatives. Instead of teaching him how to read and write, he mocks on him for being illiterate. Within the novel, we notice that Amir can not stand up and defend himself as it can be seen when both boys confront Assef and his two friends Wali and Kamel, during their discussion Assef wants to beat Amir, then Hassan tries to defend by using his slingshot, but Amir on the other hand remains calm and does not react.

From all what is mentioned before, it is clear that Amir considers Hassan his servant and protector so he befriends him just for his self-interests and protection from bullies.

Through this detailed description of friendship, it is evident that Khaled Hosseini wants to show the companionship of the two innocent children who have learnt to talk and walk together and whose minds were not full with racist thoughts that is to say they do not have ideas about the differences that existed in Afghanistan between Pashtuns and Hazara, so each one enjoys the existence of the other. “Amir and Hassan, the sultans of Kabul” symbolized their friendship³⁰. As a boy, Amir learns that he and Hassan do not belong to the same ethnic group, so his feelings and actions were affected by racist thoughts.

Hosseini writes about friendship to demonstrate how the conditions of life in Afghanistan and the social, religious and social differences between both groups can shatter

the friendship of Amir and Hassan that is to say that due to social inequalities friendship can not be experienced, he also proves that there is no one sided-friendship that can last.

Contrary to the novel that shows the complex friendship of Amir and Hassan, the adaptation made by Marc Forster does not depict it as being complicated rather it was such a happy one. In the movie, both boys lived in the same house and share everything together as true friends. The latter is strengthened by the use beautiful visual acts that show their friendship.



Figure 2: The Kite Runner friendship scene: Amir and Hassan walking arm in arm. Marc Forster, The Kite Runner, (Paramount Vantage, 2007) 00:13:51

The figure above is a close up shot of Amir and Hassan which demonstrates to the audience the pure friendship of both boys as they walk arm in arm and give each other friendship looks. Forster insists on friendship because it was his first time that he reads a story about this part of the world that deals with friendship, atonement, loyalty and not terrorism and violence³¹. George Bluestone claims in his theory entitled *Novels to Films* (1957) that it is not of importance to show the bad side of existence, rather the film makers must use the good visual acts to convey the value of relationships³². Moreover, this is what Forster did in his adaptation of the novel.

In addition, there is no voice-over in the movie which was in fact the aim of Forster to remove it and allow the audience use their imagination to recognize relationships and situations unlike the novel whose narrator is the protagonist who describes everything and tell exactly his ideas throughout the story ³³.

Therefore, these differences in conveying friendship can be linked to the timeframe of the movie that lasts two hours and eight minutes. As a result; not all the details and information of the narrative can be used in the dramatic one as Gerard Genette cited in his theory *Palimpsestes* that this omission can be explained by the temporality of the story, the need to shorten the duration, which is one of the characteristics of dramatization; that is to say some aspects of the original story must be cut ³⁴. As Forster aims to show the good side of the story in his adaptation, he omitted all the acts that show Amir and Hassan's troubled friendship. By doing so, the filmmaker creates a clearer relationship between the two boys than in the novel.

To sum up, we can say that various modifications can occur when moving from any literary work to another most precisely from narrative to dramatic one. In Marc Forster's adaptation of *The kite Runner* many elements have been eliminated and some others have been changed. Obviously, these changes are linked to Gerard Genette's characteristics of dramatization that is the need to compress the duration, thematic transformations and the loss of textual means.

Endnotes:

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V. Conclusion

This dissertation has been divided into two main chapters in which we discussed and analysed the different aspects between the novel of the Afghan-American writer *The Kite Runner* and its adaptation made by the film producer, Marc Forster through the use of Gerard Genette's theory of transmodalization since it is the most appropriate for our work.

In the first chapter, We illustrated some of these aspects through the study of the main characters of the story. First, We dealt with the character of Hassan who is described in the novel as a hazara cleft lip boy who differs from the Pashtuns in social class, religion and physical appearances. Due to these differences, Hassan was subjected to different kinds of

abuse. In the movie, he is described as a normal boy with no abnormal physical appearance. Then, We studied Afghan women to show the restrictions imposed towards them by Talibans with the aim to show their low position in Afghanistan. We have also dealt with other characters like: Rahim and Wahid whose role in the novel is given more importance whereas in the movie many details are omitted. Thus, these differences between both selected works in what concerns characters are related to some characteristics of dramatization that is the temporality of the story.

The second chapter shows the differences that exist between both selected works in terms of themes. Here, We dealt with all the most important themes of the novel through analyzing the ethnic tensions between the upper and lower class of the country. We have also studied both types of violence faced by Hazara boys as well as suicide committed by Sohrab. Hussein insists on these themes to highlight the misery and oppression imposed towards Hazara. Whereas in the movie a lot of details were omitted as Forster aims to attract a large audience and his adaptation can be viewed by children and adults. At the end of this chapter, We focused on the theme of friendship that was described as a complex one in the novel. On the other hand, Forster insists on the good side of the story through using scenes that show happy relationships in the movie. All these changes are linked to the loss of textual means and thematic transformations.

To conclude with, We consider through the use of Gerard Genette's theory of transmodalization that even though the movie holds the same story of the novel, there are differences in terms of characters and themes.

The scope of our research does not allow us to deal with all issues related to both

Khaled Hosseini's novel and Marc Forster's movie. Therefore, We invite other students to discuss, study and explore the work from other perspectives.

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