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Teaching Moral Values through Khaled Hosseini's Novels

Využití románů Khaleda Hosseiniho pro seznámení žáků se základními morálními principy

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Prohlašuji, že jsem svou diplomovou práci vypracovala samostatně a použila jen uvedené prameny a literaturu.

V Olomouci dne 27. března 2012

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*I owe thanks to PhDr. Milena Vodičková PhD. for her kind help,
useful comments and valuable advice.*

ANOTACE

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Název práce:	Využití románů Khaleda Hosseiniho pro seznámení žáků se základními morálními principy
Název v angličtině:	Teaching Moral Values through Khaled Hosseini's Novels
Anotace práce:	Diplomová práce se zabývá morálními tématy obsaženými ve dvou románech afghánsko-amerického spisovatele Khaleda Hosseiniho. Po stručném výčtu historie Afghánistánu a biografických údajích o Khaledu Hosseinim práce shrnuje obecné informace o obou románech. Následně se zaměřuje na analýzu Hosseiniho postav a zdůrazňuje morálně zajímavé okamžiky, kterými ve svém životě projdou. V poslední kapitole diplomové práce jsou vytyčeny edukační aspekty románů a důvody, proč je doporučit studentům.
Klíčová slova:	Khaled Hosseini, morální témata, přátelství, zrada, nedostatek rodičovské lásky, vykoupení, zobrazení postav učitelů, edukační aspekty.
Anotace v angličtině:	This thesis deals with the moral themes covered in the two novels written by Afghan American writer Khaled Hosseini. After the brief descriptions of the history of Afghanistan and Hosseini's life it provides general information about the novels. Afterwards, it focuses on the analysis of Hosseini's characters with the emphasis on the morally important situations they encounter. In the last chapter of the book, the educational aspects of the novels and the reasons why recommend them to the students are examined.
Klíčová slova v angličtině:	Khaled Hosseini, moral themes, friendship, betrayal, lack of parental love, redemption, the portrayal of the role of teachers, educational aspects.
Rozsah práce:	76 s.
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ABSTRACT

This thesis is inspired by the endless discussions about the state of the reading competences of Czech pupils and students and therefore its aim is to explore various moral themes present in the novels written by Khaled Hosseini and to find out the reasons why it is desirable to present these novels to Czech students. The main part of the thesis is dedicated to the analysis of the main characters from Hosseini's novels with focus on the ethical issues they encounter. The last chapter then summarizes the educational aspect of the novels and the themes they engage.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, many different discussions about the state of the Czech educational system, the teaching styles and all the weak points in both of them are present everywhere around us. One of these weaknesses is the poor literacy of Czech pupils and students and their supposedly low interest in reading. Therefore, this thesis deals with the literary works and the possibility of using them at school. Its basis is formed by the two novels written by Afghan American writer Khaled Hosseini, *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. As it is stated on the following pages, both of them should be recommended to the higher secondary students and used as a source of discussion about various serious moral themes. But before the teachers decide to discuss a piece of literary work with their students, they should be very well informed about the background of the novel, the author and the novel itself. Therefore, all this information is also provided by the thesis.

The first chapter is purely historical and its aim is to make the readers familiar with the historical background important for the understanding of the novels. Both of the novels are set in Afghanistan, which went through very severe fighting through last forty years, and experienced complicated twists and turns in the way it was ruled. It is necessary to provide the readers with a brief overview of Afghan history. And the same as the historical background the life of the author usually intensively influences their work, so the life of Khaled Hosseini is presented in the second chapter of the thesis as well.

After the historical background of the novels and short account of the main important moments from Hosseini's life will be dealt with, the main focus will be put on the novels. Firstly, basic information about *The Kite Runner* will be provided. It is crucial to be familiar with the plot of the novel, before a deeper observation of the characters and their moral attitudes. This way, the readers will have all the necessary information before the actual analysis of the characters. Afterwards, the development of the characters and their moral attitudes will be described quite in details as a basis for possible future discussion with the students. The characters undergo several moments in their lives when a good moral thinking is necessary and very often they make mistakes which have to be redeemed. These all serve as good discussion topics for the lesson of social sciences.

The same structure is used when dealing with Hosseini's second novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns*.

The last but one chapter of this thesis is dedicated to the comparison of both the Hosseini's novels and the practical assets of the Hosseini's work will be mentioned as it is a good illustration of the power of literature. It is a rare example of how a book can change an attitude towards a country and a nation and how it makes or even forces people to do something good.

Finally, the roles of the teachers in the novels are emphasised. The novels show basically two different types of teachers, who serve as models of a good and bad example of teaching styles and moral attitudes. Likewise, the educational aspects of the novels will be considered and the reasons for which the novels are more than appropriate for educational purposes will be listed and explained. Also with the help of the results of the reading habit research, some facts and figures about the reading and literacy of Czech young people will be provided.

In the conclusion the findings concerning the reasons for which Hosseini's novels are appropriate to be read by the secondary students will be emphasised and summed up.

1 AFGHANISTAN

The two novels written by Khaled Hosseini are situated in Afghanistan. Although the name of this country is spelled in media repeatedly, there is not much information about the history and people of Afghanistan which would be generally known in the Czech Republic or even taught in Czech schools. Therefore it might be useful to make the readers familiar with some basic facts related to the content of the books before the actual analysis of Hosseini's novels.

1.1 FIRST REFERENCE OF AFGHANISTAN

The first historically relevant reference to the country of Afghanistan dates back to the year 530 BC when the king Kyr the Great, the leader of Achaemenid Empire, was defeated by Darius I of Persia (Marek, 2006, p. 37). During his reign, the country was divided into smaller parts called satrapies and even in those days, it was very difficult for Darius to keep Afghan provinces under his rule. Not many of his followers were able to avoid conflicts with hard and tough people inhabiting this country. Among those who suffered a severe defeat from the Afghan tribes, Alexander the Great should be mentioned as his trials speak volumes about how tough the nature of Afghan people is when the need to defend their country comes.

Alexander the Great defeated Darius of Persia and came to the area of Afghanistan in the year 330 BC. He succeeded in defeating only the north of the country and was forced to leave again (Ibid., p. 42). Referring to this event, his words were noted down as a good description of Afghanistan. According to him, this country was and probably it still is: 'easy to march into, hard to march out of' (culturalorientation.net, 2002). What is important about Alexander's journey to Afghanistan is that he as usual took with him geographers, historians and naturalists, who for the first time provided Europeans with some information about this country (Vogelsang, 2010, p. 118-119).

1.2 THE BRITISH ENDEAVOUR TO RULE AFGHANISTAN

From their first diplomatic mission in 1808 in Afghanistan, the British tried to rule it several times during the whole 19th century. It was very crucial to control this area due to its close position to Russia. Afghanistan was a strategic point from which the British could attack Russia, but it also worked the other way round (Gombár, 1999, p. 355). Russia was a natural enemy to Britain in those days, so for them controlling Afghanistan would mean to have a safe wall opposing the Russians and preventing them to enter India (or nowadays Pakistan).

However good this idea was, the British (not the first and definitely not the last country in history of Afghanistan) simply underestimated the strength and totally different manners of an Afghan army. The result of this was the bloody defeat of the British troops, which cost them lives of 15 999 soldiers in the winter of 1841/1842 (Mykiska, 2001, p. 37).

Although their next fight in the year 1879 was quite successful and they conquered Kabul and ruled over Afghanistan, the Afghans only united against them and British soldiers were forced to leave Afghanistan again, and from that time on, they used only the way of political negotiations and contracts and penetrated the country using economic means (Gombár, 1999, p. 356). Afghans kept Russians as their allies and stayed with the British in a formally friendly relationship and remained absolutely independent of their influence, which was politically accepted by the contract on the 22nd of November 1921 signed by the British and king Amanullah (Mykiska, 2001, p. 39).

1.3 MODERN HISTORY

King Amanullah brought the international independence for Afghans, but very soon, due to his European-like reforms, plenty of his opponents appeared. He was brought down in the year 1929. After this, two more kings ruled in Afghanistan for a short time when finally, young, only nineteen-year-old Zahir Shah became king. His rule was quite successful, considering that the people of his country were still keeping old habits including selling people to slavery, forcing women, or to be precise young girls, to marriage and then stoning unfaithful women to death. Through the new liberal constitution from the year 1964 (Vogelsang, 2010, p. 287) and the right to vote for women in the year 1965 (Marek, 2006, p. 265), he and his government succeeded in bringing at least some of the positive changes into the life of Afghanistan.

A relatively stable rule of the king Zahir Shah lasting for forty years from the year 1933 to the year 1973 ended by the coup on the 17th of July (Marek, 2006, p. 259). This coup was lead by Zahir Shah's cousin Mohammad Daud Khan, who overtook the power in the country and declared the Republic of Afghanistan. Although Afghanistan changed from monarchy to republic, it should be noted that the change was more formal than practical as Daud named himself president but ruled rather as a king. (Řezáč, 1993, p. 19).

The unpopularity of his reforms and rising power of the Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) led to another coup which took place in the year 1978. This pro-Moscow communist party, originally an underground force, participated on the coup in 1973 when it helped Daud to get the power. However, soon PDPA started to threaten its former ally Daud as it tried to gain the power in the country. It also got more support from the people who were not satisfied with Daud's government and also from the Soviet Union. Therefore, the April revolution, called also Saur¹ Revolution, took place on the 27th of April 1978 (Marek, 2006, p. 261).

This revolution meant a change in the way Afghan people lived. The communists killed the president and all his family (Vogelsang, 2010, p. 296). On the 30th April, the newly elected president, prime minister and general secretary of PDPA Nur Muhammad Taraki together with his closest co-worker Babrak Karmal declared the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (Marek, 2006, p. 261). And if the previous attempts to reform the country were considered as daring, PDPA's decision to make Afghanistan a modern country was truly revolutionary.

The new programme of the new government was declared on the 9th of May 1978 (Ibid., p. 261). According to Marek, the planned changes concerned: land reform, modernisation of the Afghan army, equality of men and women, diminishing of unemployment and illiteracy and free education for all (Ibid., p. 262). Afghan women were no longer supposed to be considered unequal to men, purchasing marriages were to be banished, burquas were not obligatory. Later on both of these were outlawed. Although in the western point of view, it might seem as a real improvement deserving praise, it was quite an insensitive step (Ibid., p. 262). Therefore, not much changed in the lives of women.

The other problematic field was the introduction of the extensive land reform. The land was given to the people who helped the PDPA during the revolution or people

¹ Saur is a month of a Persian Calendar in which the revolution took place

serving the new regime. However, this was not a clever move of the communist government as the Muslims believed, land was distributed by Allah and no men was allowed change this. Although it was a very feudal way of thinking, it was strongly rooted in the minds of Afghan people and made them very dissatisfied with the new government (Řezáč, 1993, p. 38). It led to strengthening of the opposition of right winged authorities and Muslim activists. Moreover, they were supported by the Muslims who came from the surrounding countries to fight in the name of Allah (Marek, 2006, p. 264). These so called mujahedins played their big role in the following war years.

The situation in the country was getting uncontrollable. And as if the opposition from the outside of the PDPA would not cause enough troubles, the fights for power started to emerge inside the party. PDPA officials realized, they are not able to cope with the situation themselves. They repeatedly asked the Soviet Union to send their army forces to Afghanistan, but the Soviet officials, although they carefully monitored all the changes in Afghanistan, repeatedly denied these requests (Sarin et Dvoretzky, 2001, p. 100 - 101). In the middle of the year 1979, the minister of foreign affairs Hafiullah Amin practically managed to get the power and he systematically started to liquidate all his political opponents – real or imaginary (Vogelsang, 2010, p. 299). In October 1979, Taraki was killed by Amin's troops (Sarin et Dvoretzky, 2001, p. 98). It is interesting that Taraki's closest colleague Babrak Karmal saved himself only because he was an ambassador in Czechoslovakia then and when Amin overtook the power, he was allowed by president Husak himself to stay here and hide himself (Marek, 2006, p. 264).

However bloody the time of Amin's – he was called 'the butcher of Kabul' – rule was he was not strong enough to keep the power safely in his hands. His requests to the Soviet Union to help him fight mujahedins who were increasing in number and power as well, were answered, but in a way he would not expect. Amin made a fatal mistake, as he did not realise, how much his bloody regime worried Soviet leaders. It harmed the reputation of other communist countries too much and therefore, something had to be done (Mikyska, 2001, p. 40). Amin was killed on the 27th of December 1979 by his opponents and Soviet special military forces, he himself invited to Afghanistan (Vogelsang, 2010, p. 299). Soviet troops occupied every military base in Kabul and Amin's palace. From that moment on, nobody was safe in the country and the most tragic and bloody chapter of Afghan history opened.

1.4 SOVIET INVASION

Immediately after Amin's death, the power in the country was overtaken by new president Babrak Karmal, who returned from Czechoslovak exile (Vogelsang, 2010, p. 300). The first thing he needed to do was to calm down people who were not really sure what was happening and were very angry. Therefore, Karmal's new government declared the new programme of the PDPA. It was full of nice words, but as it was just one more in the line of unfulfilled promises, the majority of Afghans did not believe a word in it (Marek, 2006, p. 266). As a result, their opposition, although cleft in two parts, were getting more and more powerful recruiting fighters from Afghan army, and Soviet troops, probably hoping they would let Afghan army protect a new government and regime, were forced to stay and fight another ten years (Sarin et Dvoretzky, 2001, p. 140).

The main aim of Soviet troops was to prevent mujahedin forces from overthrowing the official Afghan government but they never succeeded in suppressing their resistance. The fights divided the country into several unforgiving armed groups. Moreover, almost one third of all population were forced to leave the country (Marek, 2006, p. 273). Most of them found their new home in Pakistan and Iran, where young men were trained and returned back to Afghanistan to fight the Soviets. Under these conditions, the new government was safe to introduce their new programme and all the changes aimed at making life in Afghanistan better, but they had absolutely no real support from the Afghan population and all the well meant improvements were for nothing. As Sarin et Dvoretzky put it, Soviet troops did not realise the Afghans understood them as invaders. Little did they know how crucial and tragic role they played in dividing the nation of Afghanistan and that the millions of killed or wounded soldiers and civilians were the only result of their intervention (Sarin et Dvoretzky, 2001, p. 145).

During a few years of fighting, seven different groups were formed in the fight against Soviet troops. Their attitudes were different but their goal the same, therefore, they united in the year 1983. In the meantime, the exile government of Afghanistan was established in Pakistan. These two organisations were supported by the government of Pakistan who was supported by the United States financial sources and also by Chinese, British or French ones (Marek, 2006, p. 275). The rising power of the Afghan opposition forces, cruelty and absurdity of the fights, lead to the negotiations about the presence of the Soviets in Afghanistan. It took a long time, but finally the last Soviet soldiers left Afghanistan

on the 14th February of 1989 (Vogelsang, 2010, p. 311). However, the mujahedins who had been united only due to their enemy, started to fight each other after this one enemy had been gone and the country entered another chapter of the civil war.

1.5 CIVIL WAR

As was stated before, the end of occupation did not mean the end of the fighting. President Najibullah, appointed to the function in 1986, and the PDPA, although having at least financial support from the Soviet Union were getting weaker. Armed fractions which were fighting the Soviets for almost ten years did not stop the violence (Vogelsang, 2010, p. 312). Therefore, Najibullah was able to keep the power in the country and the illusion of stability only for three years. He was defeated by the opposing troops of commanders Massoud and Dostum, who entered Kabul in 1993 (Marek, 2006, p. 282 – 283). However, these two were not strong enough to keep the power in their hands. All the different fractions, which were formerly united only by their one enemy – Soviet troops and PDPA, lost the point of their mutual understanding. They were already fighting with each other and the country was divided into several different domains belonging to various individual commanders. They were supported by different foreign, western or Muslim, authorities. The most stable areas were Dostum's northern part of Afghanistan and Massoud's northeast part (Ibid., p. 284). On the other hand, the most fragmented part was the south and east of Afghanistan, home of the future strongest force in the country – Taliban (Ibid., p. 284).

The origin of the word Talib is the one who seeks the truth and the first followers of this movement were young Afghans or Pakistanis, students of orthodox Muslim schools called madras (Ibid., p. 285). Soon followers from other Muslim countries joined Taliban, most of them were Muslim fanatics. In its beginning the Taliban movement meant a radical improvement for Afghan people, as they united most of the country, helped the people, stopped the individual commanders from random killing people, raping and kidnapping women and fought against the opium mafia (Ibid., p. 288). However, as soon as they entered Kabul on the 27th of September 1996 and declared the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and chose mullah Muhammad Umar their leader, a very retrograde theocratic regime was established (Vogelsang, 2010, p. 318).

All men were ordered to wear a palm long beard, women had to wear burqas again to hide their bodies completely. But much worse thing than this was that the women were not

allowed to attend schools, work or visit male doctors, which meant, they did not get almost any medical care at all. Every type of profane entertainment was outlawed, people had to surrender their television sets and radio was limited to news and religious programmes. Music, dance, photography and sport were forbidden. Punishments as stoning, cutting limbs or flagellating were on a daily order (Marek, 2006, p. 289). Life was unbearable in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan got into isolation, the only states accepting the Taliban government were Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. The United Nations declared economic sanctions on Afghanistan in the year 2001. The answer of Taliban was destroying two historical monuments of Budha in Bayman (Vogelsang, 2010, p. 322 – 323). But their power did not last long from this moment. After the attack on the World Trade Centre and Pentagon in the USA, Afghan officials refused to stop protecting the terroristic organisation Al Qa'ida, the only three countries accepting the Afghan government dissociated themselves from them. And the way for deposing Taliban of their power was free (Marek, 2006, p. 292).

The US and British army attacked Afghanistan on the 7th October 2001 and on the 13th November the Afghan North Alliance celebrated entering Kabul (Mykiska, 2001, p. 49). Although nowadays, we are far from saying that Afghanistan is a free and democratic country, as the necessity of the presence of the International Security Assistance Force contingent sent by the United Nation Security Council proves (Vogelsang, 2010, p. 325), there is much hope in the future of Afghanistan. This hope is also present in Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* when the heroine who knew how terrible past twenty years for Afghan women were, in the year 2002, safe in Pakistan, says:

I want to go back... This is not home. Kabul is. And back there so much is happening, a lot of it good. I want to be a part of it all. I want to do something. I want to contribute (Hosseini, 2008, p. 378 – 379).

2 BIOGRAPHY OF KHALED HOSSEINI

The life experience of the writers always influences their work, especially when the work is partly biographical. Now, when the history of Afghanistan was outlined, it is only correct to briefly describe Hosseini's life. Therefore, the aim of this chapter is to provide basic information about the life of Khaled Hosseini. The emphasis will be put on the events which influenced Hosseini's career as a writer. The most of the information was found on his own webpage in the section biography and in a few of his interviews.

Khaled Hosseini and his famous literary hero Amir may have more in common than it might seem. Except the fact that their mothers were both teachers; Hosseini's mother of Farsi and History at a large high school in Kabul, (Hosseini, 2009) and Amir's mother of literature at the university, they both experienced the life of immigrants. Although, Hosseini was born in Kabul, Afghanistan, in 1965, his father being a diplomat with the Afghan Foreign Ministry, the whole family had to move to Paris in 1976 (Ibid.). This way, when he was 11, Hosseini found himself in Paris, which might be considered one of "the greatest stroke of luck in his life" (Ferrell, 2010). This way, he the same as plenty of other Afghans avoided a cycle of war and upheaval in Afghanistan that began in 1978, when communists assassinated Afghanistan's president and continues even today (Ibid.).

The Hosseini family were ready to return to Kabul in 1980, but by then Afghanistan had already witnessed a bloody communist coup and the invasion of the Soviet army. Therefore, the Hosseinis sought and were granted political asylum in the United States. In September of 1980, Hosseini's family moved to San Jose, California where Hosseini successfully graduated from high school in 1984 and enrolled at Santa Clara University where he earned a bachelor's degree in Biology in 1988 (Hosseini, 2009). He continued his studies at the University of California-San Diego's School of Medicine, "where he earned a Medical Degree in 1993 and he was a practicing internist till the year 2004" (Ibid.). It might seem to be a nicely and uncomplicated way to a professional success, however, the immigrant experience is never an easy one and no matter from which country the immigrants come, they all experience something similar. This might be one of the minor reasons for *The Kite Runner's* success and appeal. As Hosseini states:

I hear from non-Afghan immigrants — Africans, Indians, Pakistanis, Arabs in France — all the time. These people have had to redefine their lives, which is what my family went through when we came to the U.S. in 1980. My parents were reasonably affluent in Kabul. In the States we were on welfare, my mom became a waitress, and my dad became a driving instructor (Ebiri, 2007).

When safely rooted in California, married to an attorney Roya, working in medical practice, Hosseini “happened to see a television news item about the extremist regime that ruled his native Afghanistan. The report was brief – and rather quirky – but it dramatically altered Hosseini's life. The Taliban had outlawed kite flying” (Ferrell, 2010). It inspired his first, broadly acclaimed novel about two boys, their friendship, betrayal and redemption. He started it in March of 2001 and in 2003, *The Kite Runner*, was published due to the encouragement of Hosseini's wife and has become an international bestseller, published in 70 countries (Hosseini, 2009).

Hosseini's description of the war destroyed Kabul was very accurate. However, Hosseini had to make it up as it was not until the year *The Kite Runner* was published, when he got the chance to visit his home country after 27 years. However, when he finally came to Afghanistan, he says, his feelings were:

Very similar to the experience of my character Amir in *The Kite Runner*. Which is interesting, because I wrote his return to Kabul months before I actually went back myself. (...) I walked into a war zone. Entire neighborhoods had been demolished. There were an overwhelming number of widows and orphans and people who had been physically and emotionally damaged; every 10-year-old kid on the street knows how to dismantle a Kalashnikov in under a minute (Hosseini in Mechanic, 2009).

This visit inspired him to start writing another novel, this time, from the different perspective and with wider orientation on Afghan history and to start working on making the life of Afghans better. In 2006, he was named a goodwill envoy to UNHCR, the United Nations Refugee Agency, (Hosseini, 2009). It can be said that “the compassion Hosseini demonstrated as a physician is evident in his writing and charity work” (Ferrell, 2010).

His second novel, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* was published in May of 2007. In the same year, he made a trip to Afghanistan Hosseini with the UNHCR. It rooted an idea

to establish The Khaled Hosseini Foundation. From now on, Hosseini has been working to provide humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan through this organisation (Hosseini, 2009). Moreover, he is working on A Thousand Splendid Suns movie and on another novel. He admits that this novel “does have to do with Afghanistan, but I [Hosseini] think the take will be very different. It will be a lot more focused on story and on character rather than political events. I'm very wary of retracing my own footsteps” (Hosseini in Mechanic, 2009). So now, the readers can wait, look forward and hope, this novel is going to be the same page turner as the previous ones.

3 PRESENTATION OF THE NOVEL THE KITE RUNNER

Now, when the reader has a basic knowledge about the history of Afghanistan and about Khaled Hosseini's life, some basic information about Khaled Hosseini's novel *The Kite Runner* will be provided with focus on the summary of the plot and the list of the most important themes.

3.1 GENERAL INFORMATION

Prohibition of kite running was just one of hundreds laws whose aims were to make Afghanistan more pure and religious (according to Taliban's opinion) and more middle-aged-like and hardly bearable place for living (in reality). Hardly ever could any Taliban leader imagine that the news of it will reach faraway American newscast and inspire an ordinary physician with Afghan roots, who just happened to watch the news, to write a book. This book called *The Kite Runner* appeared a few years after the kite running ban, when Taliban was being defeated and Afghanistan was looking for its way into a modern world. Without exaggerating, it can be said, that this book has changed lives of many readers and most importantly also lives of many Afghans.

Khaled Hosseini's novel *The Kite Runner* was published in the year 2003 (Hosseini, 2009). The author, an unknown practising internist living in Los Angeles (Ibid.), employed his memories from early childhood spent in Kabul and all the knowledge of Afghan culture and modern Afghan history. Although he had not visited his homeland for almost twenty five years when he started to write his novel, he still succeeded in capturing his readers with his loving description of the old Kabul and a heart-breaking story of the friendship, betrayal and the final atonement. He himself commented on his way of describing Afghan situation under Taliban without having personally experienced it with the following words:

“On the one hand, I was hoping I'd got it right, that I didn't screw up. On the other hand, what I'd written was so terrible, part of me was kind of hoping that it wasn't quite that bad. The reality was that it was actually worse” (Grossman, 2007).

Full of emotions and feelings which are able to connect people across different types of culture and nations, since its first publication, *The Kite Runner* has become an international bestseller. It has been published in more than 70 countries, translated into 40 languages and received many literary awards including South African Boeke Prize and Penguin/Orange Readers' Group Prize (Penguin Group.com, 2012) and although part of its success lies in the increased interest in Afghanistan after the 11th September, 2001 (Kipen, 2003), there is much more to be found in the book.

As Erin Collazo Miller states it, Hosseini has forced people to "think hard about friendship, good and evil, betrayal, and redemption" (Miller, 2012). These themes are really universal therefore there is no reason to be surprised that his success is so great. Moreover, he has helped us to understand the culture and the course of events in the modern history of his country. He has changed the western approach to Afghanistan. Many of his readers no more perceive it as one of many countries suffering from war and poverty, but they are able to identify with it. To sum up, due to its qualities, this novel is one of the books which make people of all cultures and ages read and experience strong emotions through reading, and this aspect is in the context of teaching probably the most important.

3.2 SUMMARY OF THE CONTENT

The very first lines of the novel already inform the readers about a mysterious secret that changed the life of the main hero of the book and the narrator, Amir, and probably not only his. Although the readers know Amir now lives in the safety of American San Francisco, something has happened in his past in a faraway and strange country Afghanistan. Baker notes, that this is one of the Hosseini's merits, this "remarkable ability to imprison the reader in horrific, shatteringly immediate scenes" (Baker, 2003). As soon as this tension is built up and the readers are driven by their curiosity, the story of the friendship of two little boys is slowly unwoven and woven on the background of old Kabul.

This, let us call it, first part of the novel starts with an almost idyllic description of Amir and Hassan's childhood in the nice and rich part of Kabul, Wazir Akbar Khan District. Neither of them has a mother, but they live safely, protected by Amir's rich and influential father Baba, his servant and in the same time Hassan's father Ali and Baba's friend Rahim Khan. The words "almost idyllic" are more than appropriate here,

as from the beginning of the novel the readers feel Amir's slight uneasiness in his relationship towards his father as well as towards Hassan. The reasons for this appear to be quite obvious. Baba is a strong man and his son's books-loving and woman-like nature is not something he might be satisfied with. And even if Hassan is Amir's friend, he is still also his servant and more important "just a Hazara" and not a Pashtun.

One of the Amir's rare opportunities to earn his father's admiration is an annual winter kite running contest. However, his success is immediately followed by a cruel decision to help his friend Hassan "who is suffering unspeakable abuse by three bully Afghani boys, or leave his friend and flee so as not to mar the sweet triumph of the day's events which he expects to celebrate with Baba. Amir chooses the route of betrayal" (Flanagan, 2012). And this is the unrevealed secret hinted at the beginning of the novel. This is the day in the winter of 1975 which "came along and changed everything" (Hosseini, 2007, p. 2). From now on, lives of all the protagonists are going to change and those changes will not be pleasant at all. The narrative enters the second part of the book.

Amir is no longer able to be with Hassan, whose face too much reminds him of his weakness, therefore, "in one of the less believable contrivances of the novel" (Tristram, 2012), Amir makes Hassan look like a thief. As a result of this affair Ali and Hassan leave Baba's house. Soon after, the Soviets attack the country and it is too much for Baba. He decides to leave for a free country – the United States of America, where the relationship between him and his son slowly changes. Baba is no longer so influential and his human face is now visible even for Amir. They finally find mutual understanding. Amir successfully graduates from a high school and continues his studies in the university. In the meantime, he meets a beautiful girl who becomes his wife.

But all these events lead to the final part of the book, which returns the readers to the very beginning of the book. Rahim Khan, who, just as many Afghans, could not stand the continuing fighting and destroying in his homeland and has fled to Pakistan, now calls his little friend Hassan to ask him to visit him and tell him that "there is a way to be good again" (Hosseini, 2007, p. 2).

When in Pakistan, Amir learns that Hassan got married and had a son Sohrab. Razim Khan also reveals him that he and Hassan were brothers, as Hassan was Baba's illegitimate son. However, now he and his wife are dead and his only son Sohrab is lost somewhere in Afghanistan. As it is the beginning of the year 2001, Afghanistan is one of the most unknown and dangerous countries in the world, it is a hard decision for Amir. But the desire

for atonement is too strong and Amir sets off a journey which costs him all his illusions but brings him redemption and a little boy called Sohrab. After a few more turns of events, Amir and Sohrab return to San Francisco and although the readers cannot wait any happily ever after or a “Hollywood hug” (Tristram, 2012), the book ends with something more important, something which is so much typical of Hosseini, with the notion of hope.

3.3 THEMES AND MOTIFS

According to different literary critics, *The Kite Runner* can be understood as a novel of different layers with many different themes. Miller is one of the most prolific critics and she sees the novel as a story about Afghan culture and in the same time a story of humanity whose “core story could be set in any culture because it deals with issues that are universal” (Miller, 2012). According to Tristram (2012), *Kite Runner* is “on one level the story of a friendship between two Afghan boys, a betrayal, and redemption of sorts. On another, it’s about “the enigma of love and exile and the shadows that eternally trail both: loss and the bittersweet burdens of memory.”

The theme of Afghan history and culture, the same as the life in today’s Afghanistan probably contributed to the universal success of the book, as it is “a story set in a culture that has become of increasing interest to Americans since the September 11, 2001 attacks” (Miller, 2012). It should be noted that the evidences of raising interest in Afghan issues were not apparent only in the American environment but also in European context. The book succeeds in explaining a lot from Afghan modern history and culture without making the readers aware of being taught a lecture from history. On the other hand, it also makes the reader so deeply interested in Afghan situation that they cannot help themselves and browse the internet to find out more and more. To conclude, it can be said that “on this level, it [*The Kite Runner*] provides a good way for people to learn more about Afghan history and culture in the context of story” (Miller, 2012).

Modern history and Afghan present are inevitably connected with the ethnic tension. Therefore, the book would not be complete without this theme. Although Hassan believes in his friendship with Amir, and Amir, even if he usually takes Hassan as friend and is also supported in it by Baba, cannot help thinking: “Because history isn't easy to overcome. I was a Pashtun and he was a Hazara, and nothing was ever going to change that” (Hosseini, 2007,

p. 22) This predetermines their relationship and the coming disaster. And if we take a deeper look on this theme, we can notice, together with Baker, that:

Hosseini deftly turns Amir's struggle with race into a parable for Afghanistan. Amir's prejudices contribute to his downfall, much as the Afghans' rigid adherence to tribalism led to the country's implosion after the Soviet withdrawal (Baker, 2003).

The previously mentioned theme of exile may be slightly overlooked in the comparison with the more general and provoking theme of friendship destroyed by betrayal, but it is also very strong and important. Almost 8 million Afghans fled the country (Lutz, 2011) and there are much more refugees from other countries all over the world. Therefore, Hosseini's work with this theme must be understood as very up-to-date. Exile is one of the factors which lead to meeting and colliding of completely different, sometimes even antagonistic cultures. The following abstract from the novel illustrates this theme very nicely. Baba has been asked to identify himself with an ID after he had written a cheque to pay his shopping as is a usual practice in the United States. However, for him it is an insult of his honour and he in his rage starts to demolish the shop. Amir apologizes but he thinks.

I wanted to tell them that, in Kabul, we snapped a tree branch and used it as a credit card. Hassan and I would take the wooden stick to the bread maker. He'd carve notches on our stick with his knife, one notches on our stick with his knife, one notch for each loaf of *naan* he'd pulled for us from the *tandoor*'s roaring flames. At the end of the month, my father paid him for the number of notches on the stick. That was it. No questions. No ID (Hosseini, 2007, p. 112).

Similar points of conflicts are not as rare in our multicultural society as might seem and it is very useful for the readers, especially the young ones, to become familiar with them.

The last theme or to be more precise the last themes, which have to be mentioned here are the themes of morality. All the critics, literary theorists and the readers agree on the one similar view, that the book presents the story of strong moral themes connected to the concepts of friendship, good and evil, betrayal, redemption and honour. However, these themes will be dealt with in the following chapters of this thesis.

4 THE KITE RUNNER: CHARACTERS AND THEIR MORAL ATTITUDES

The description of characters in *The Kite Runner* is generally considered to be a strong point of the book. For example, Bond praises that the “characters have life and complexity” (Bond, 2003). On the other hand, there are some voices disapproving of the determinism which does not allow the characters to grow for themselves. As Tristram (2012) mentions, the fates of its characters are too tightly determined and the readers easily guess their following actions as well as their motifs in those actions.

One of the themes which are strongly present in the book and able to outreach the borders and affect people’s feeling regardless their culture or religion is the troubled and fragile relationship of Amir and his father. In the following chapters, the character of Baba will be discussed with the focus on his relationship with Amir.

4.1 BABA

Baba is undoubtedly the most prominent and strongest personality in the novel and draws much of the readers’ attention. He is determined and even stubborn, brave, almost feared and dreaded but also generous and philanthropic. And it should not be forgotten, he is a typical Pashtun as well. Let us take his qualities one after another and examine Baba’s complicated personality in the same way in which it is gradually revealed in the book.

4.1.1 BABA: ALWAYS A MAN OF HONOUR?

In the first half of the novel, Baba is presented as “a huge Pashtun, ‘a force of nature’, who is something of a legend, with a story that he had once wrestled a black bear” (Bond, 2003) a story nobody ever dares to doubt. He seems to be playing the role of God or another creature with supernatural features. He is definitely the strongest character, nearly almighty and “almost larger than life” (Whipple, 2003). This view of Baba is supported by some one of his typical characteristics. Except his already mentioned strength and power, it is also typical for him to perceive the world “in black and white. And he got to decide what was black and what was white” (Hosseini, 2001, p. 14). Who else than the God has

the opportunity to decide about this? It is this God-like nature of his father that is so difficult for Amir to reach and satisfy.

Besides his strength and power, Baba is admired for his courage and bravery. Baba is undoubtedly a brave man. Not only in the way that he does not show his fear and is able to fight a bear but he is also brave in a way that he follows his visions and does not allow people to change them. Even when doing something so much philanthropic as building an orphanage, he does not allow other people to change his plans and he is not willing to listen to their doubtful comments (Hosseini, 2007, p. 12).

There are places in the book, when Baba's bravery can almost make him look like a supernatural and unbelievable "cartoon hero" (Bond, 2003) whose acting is hard to understand for the readers. This happens for example when he is willing to risk being shot by a Russian soldier in order to defend a young woman from being raped.

The bulldog-faced Russian raised his gun.

"Baba, sit down, please," I said, tugging at his sleeve. "I think, he really means to shoot you."

Baba slapped my hand away. "Haven't I taught you anything?" He snapped. He turned to the grinning soldier. "Tell him he'd better kill me good with that first shot. Because if I don't go down, I'm tearing him to pieces, goddamn his father!" (Hosseini, 2007, p. 101)

In this moment, Baba's heroism is tempered by Amir's aside and makes the scene so much real, so understandable. After all, Amir has nobody left besides his father and there is the woman's husband who should stand behind her. But he knows Baba well and realises it would not be Baba if he would act differently.

Do you always have to be the hero? I thought, my heart fluttering. Can't you just let it go for once? But I knew he couldn't – it wasn't in his nature. The problem was, his nature was going to let us kill all (Hosseini, 2007, p. 101).

The question if saving a young woman from being raped is worth risking lives of several other people is a question for further discussion or an essay, and it will not be answered in this thesis the same as it is not answered in the novel.

But there are even more different colours in Baba's courage. He is not only courageous to stand against the threads of all types, but he is also able to accept the truth, however difficult it is. After all, it costs much courage to face the fact that his beloved country and home is no longer a good place to live it. And it costs even more resolution to leave for uncertainty of a completely strange country, where Baba is no longer going to be an honoured legend. From this moment on, Baba is going to change. Although, his characteristic features outlast, the outside conditions make Baba lose much of his former fame. But he undergoes all with his typical courage and wish to provide his son with chances to live and succeed in a free country. As he says: "I didn't bring us here for me, did I?"

The same as the conditions are changing, the relationship of Baba and Amir is changing as well. It might be caused by the rising importance of Amir for Baba – it is nothing unusual when immigrant parents have to rely on their children. But more probably it is caused because Baba has now only one son, to whom he puts his hopes and wishes. Suddenly, the career of a writer does not seem as meaningless as in Afghanistan and Baba learns at least to try to understand his son. Finally, their relationship reaches its climax, when Baba is willing to do something he refused in Kabul – he reads Amir's stories (Hosseini, 2007, p. 150).

Although it is in this new environment difficult for Baba, more flashes of his former power are visible from time to time in the book. When he refuses the welfare food stamps (Hosseini, 2007, p. 114) and when he forbids Amir to tell anybody about his serious disease (Hosseini, 2007, p. 117). On the other hand, it should be noted, that these two acts are motivated not only by his bravery but more probably by his need to always be a man of honour. He fears too much that he would lose his honour, no matter if he lives in rich quarter in Kabul or on a San Jose flea market in California.

4.1.2 BABA: A FEARLESS MAN?

Therefore, if Baba is worried about his honour, does he fear also anything else? The answer is definitely yes. He is very much concerned with the character of his son, Amir. He as a brave and determined man cannot possibly understand his son's nature. Amir seems weak to him. There is only one person he can share his worries with. And it is his best and closest friend Razim Khan, who has the privilege to speak openly with Baba and remind him

of his mistakes, though they seem to be so few. He is the one to whom Baba can confide his dissatisfaction with Amir.

“I know, I know. But he is always buried in those books or shuffling around the house like he’s lost in some dream.”

“And?”

“I wasn’t like that.” Baba sounded frustrated, almost angry.

Rahim Khan laughed. “Children are not colouring books. You don’t get to fill them with your favourite colors.”

....

“Sometimes I look out of the window and I see him playing on the street with the neighbourhood boys. I see how they push him around, take his toys from him, give him a shove, a whack there. And, you know, he never fights back. Never” (Hosseini, 2007, p. 19).

Razim Khan is also the only person left to reveal to Amir Baba’s biggest secret and source of his most dreadful worries; the secret of Baba’s illegitimate son, Hassan. With Hassan, Baba’s worst feelings of fear are always connected. Baba is always protecting Hassan and treating him as nicely as the circumstances allow, he pays him a medical surgery to adjust his cleft upper lip, he tries to spend equally time with him and Amir. He shows a parent-like fear for Hassan. And when Hassan and Ali leave the Baba’s house, Amir notices how much it moves his father. It is one of the moments, when even almighty Baba is on his knees. The situation is stronger than he and he is not able to change it.

Then I saw Baba do something I had never seen him do before: He cried. It scared me a little, seeing a grown man sob. Fathers weren’t supposed to cry. “Please,” Baba was saying, but Ali had already turned to the door, Hassan trailing him. I’ll never forget the way Baba said that, the pain in his plea, the fear (Hosseini, 2007, p. 93).

In that moment, his strong emotions are understandable concerning his and Ali’s long lasting friendship. However, when we learn that Hassan is his son, more meaning is added to this scene.

It is hard for the readers to imagine how Baba must feel when he lives faraway from Afghanistan in the safety of a democratic state and hears all the news of killing and suffering in Afghanistan. Does he have any news about his other son? There is no evidence of it, probably not. He cannot help thinking about Hassan and remembers him on Amir's birthday when he: "rolled his head towards me [Amir]. 'I wish Hassan had been with us today,' he said" (Hosseini, 2007, p. 116).

The last but one Baba's characteristic which should not be forgotten is his moral attitude and how he perceives crime. He is modern enough to have a clear and not so usual (in Afghan culture) vision of the religion and its rules. He reacts to Amir's worries that he is a sinner when drinking scotch in following words: "If there's a God out there, then I would hope he has more important things to attend to than my drinking scotch or eating pork" (Hosseini, 2007, p. 16). As he has explained:

"There is only one sin, only one. And that is theft. Every other sin is a variation of theft." (...) "When you kill a man, you steal a life," Baba said. "You steal his wife's right to a husband, rob his children of a father. When you tell a lie, you steal someone's right to the truth. When you cheat, you steal the right to fairness. Do you see? (Hosseini, 2007, p. 16).

When, close to the end of the novel, the readers find out, even Baba is a sinner who has stolen Amir's brother, Hassan's father and their right to know the truth, it would be too easy and ill-considered to perceive Baba as a negative protagonist. As his friend Rahim Khan explains: he was a man torn between two halves, Amir jan: you and Hassan. He loved you both, but he could not love Hassan the way he longed to. (...) When he saw you, he saw himself. And his guilt (Hosseini, 2007, p. 263). It is clear how much Baba was chased by the fear that his legitimate son might turn out the same sinner as he himself. He desperately tried to avoid it and bring Amir up a strong and brave man but his effort and demands on Amir's character lead on contrary to Amir's weakness and desire to be appreciated by his father which finally chased Amir into betraying Hassan. Later on, Amir realizes: "As it turned out, Baba and I were more alike than I'd ever known. We had both betrayed people who would have given their lives for us" (Hosseini, 2007, p. 197).

But it would not be fair to end the portrayal of Baba without reminding that he for his whole life tried to be a good person. The driving force for this was probably his remorse

caused by his inability to admit Hassan is his son. But the motives for goodness are not after all so important, the goodness itself is what matters. Razim Khan adds:

Sometimes, I think everything he did, feeding the poor on the streets, building the orphanage, giving money to friends in need, it was all his way of redeeming himself. And that, I believe, is what true redemption is, Amir jan, when guilt leads to good (Hosseini, 2007, p. 263).

And in this search for redemption, Amir really turned out to be Baba's son.

4.2 AMIR

Amir is undoubtedly the main character of *The Kite Runner*. It is his faith, the readers follow and his sin which is the moving force of the novel. At first, the readers are driven into reading by desire to discover what is Amir's secret and sin. And then the consequences of it will not let them put the book away. But, as Johnson (2012) notes, it should be realized that Amir himself is not the creator of all those actions, he is so called "stuck main character" who is dragged through the story of the novel by the other characters. Now Amir's character will be discussed together with the influences that made him a stuck character.

4.2.1 AMIR: "THE UNWITTING EMBODIMENT OF BABA'S GUILT"

Amir's life is predetermined by some crucial factors. Except that he is born into a very respectable and rich family and he is able to enjoy all the privilege connected to his father's status, the other factors are rather negative. He is definitely influenced by the absence of his Mother, who died during the childbirth, and by the sense of guilt his father feels towards his other son, whom he cannot legitimately accept. Although all of these aspects are not known for the readers, they are penetrating Amir's life and determining all his actions and other events in the book.

About the first fifty pages of the book are spent on telling the story of idyllic childhood, which is disturbed from time to time by the descriptions of Amir's troubled relationship with Baba, significant by the lack of Baba's love. There is no doubt that every

child needs love from their parents, if one of them is not present, the other should take over their role. But unfortunately for Amir, he seems to have a “mysterious inability to earn the love of his philanthropically generous but emotionally withholding father” (Kipen, 2003). Therefore, Amir has two impassable obstacles which hold him stuck; his longing for a mother and his father’s love.

This desire to have a mother is contrasted with Hassan, whose mother is alive but she has left when Hassan was a newborn baby. Hassan never speaks about her and Amir does not have enough courage to ask him. Therefore he cannot share his suffering even with the closest person he has in the world. He can only think about it and imagine:

I always wondered if he [Hassan] dreamed about her, about what she looked like, where she was. I wondered if he longed to meet her. Did he ache for her, the way I ached for my mother I had never met? (Hosseini, 2007, p. 6)

Amir desperately longs for knowing something about his mother. This desire for possessing at least some knowledge about his mother is partly satisfied in a rather bizarre situation. When Amir comes back to war destroyed Kabul, he meets a former university colleague of his mother, now a beggar, who is grateful to return to good passed days even if it is only in his mind and thoughts. From this man Amir learns that she “had liked almond cake with honey and hot tea, that she’d once used the word profoundly, that she’d fretted about her happiness” (Hosseini, 2007, p. 219). Although, it is not much, it is a precious memory for Amir and it is much more information than he has ever got from his father. As Amir reflects:

Baba had always described my mother to me in broad strokes, like: “She was a great woman.” (...) Baba took his memories of her to the grave with him. Maybe speaking her name would have reminded him of his guilt, of what he had done so soon after she had died. Or maybe his loss had been so great, his pain so deep, he couldn’t bear to talk about her. Maybe both (Hosseini, 2007, p. 219).

The fact, that his mother has never been talked about by his father, is just another factor adding to their poor relationship. Amir believes his father blames him for his mother’s death and cannot forgive him for it (Hosseini, 2007, p. 49). As if it would not be enough for

a little boy to consider himself a cause of his mother's death, Amir also realizes he does not fulfil his father's expectations. This idea is confirmed when he overhears the conversation of Baba and his closest friend Rahim Khan ending with following words pronounced by his father: "If I [Baba] hadn't seen the doctor pull him out of my wife with my own eyes, I'd never believe he is my son" (Hosseini, 2007, p. 20). When thinking about Amir's future mistakes, these words should be taken in mind, as they are very strong and able to do a lot of harm in a child's soul.

Looking at all these aspects, what at the first look might have seemed to be an idyllic childhood, is, as Flanagan (2012) states it, shadowed by "a dark cloud; a troubled relationship with his [Amir's] distant father." While reading some of the first pages, the readers easily understand how much Amir suffers from the lack of acknowledgment and interest from his father. He is able to realize that most of the time Baba spends with him rises from Baba's sense of duty and not because he would really want to spend time with his son. And he can also feel his father's disappointment with him after most of these occasions. Following example speaks for all these moments:

I cried all the way back home. I remember how Baba's hands clenched around the steering wheel. Clenched and unclenched. Mostly, I will never forget Baba's valiant efforts to conceal the disgusted look on his face as we drove in silence (Hosseini, 2007, p. 19).

This lack of recognition from his father does not cause that Amir would not love his father. Quite contrary; he loves him very much and is proud to be his son: "He [Baba] motioned to me [Amir] to hold his hat for him and I was glad to, because then everyone would see that he was *my father, my Baba*" (Hosseini, 2007, p. 13). It can be said that "what Amir craves most in life is the recognition and affection from his father that he doubts he will ever know" (Johnson, 2012). And the only way to get this affection and recognition is to satisfy his father.

After some disappointing attempts, such as a soccer or Buzkashi tournament, Baba has made to change his son into a man, he suggests: "I think maybe you win the [kite flying] tournament this year" (Hosseini, 2007, p. 49). It is a big moment for Amir. As Baker (2003) notes, winning an annual kite-flying contest, where boys battle for supremacy armed with kite strings coated in ground glass, may be really Amir's last chance to gain his father's love. Amir

has a hope now. He is a good kite fighter and only if he won. It would change a lot. Amir makes a resolution:

I was going to win. There was no other viable option. I was going to win, and I was going to run that last kite. Then I'd bring it home and show it to Baba. Show him once and for all that his son was worthy. Then maybe my life as a ghost in this house would finally be over. I let myself dream: I imagined conversation and laughter over dinner ... (Hosseini, 2007, p. 49.).

And really, after a very thrilling description of the kite fights, Amir with the support of Hassan wins the tournament. While Hassan, who is the best kite runner in the whole Kabul, starts his way to find their opponent's kite whose string he and Amir have cut, Amir imagines the scene when he and Hassan will hand in hand bring the kite they have cut and found.

A dramatic moment of silence. Then the old warrior would walk to the young one, embrace him, acknowledge his worthiness. Vindication. Salvation. Redemption. And then? Wel ... happily ever after, of course. What else? (Hosseini, 2007, p. 59).

However, "happily ever after" is rare outside the world of fairy-tales. Amir wins the tournament, but loses something much more important. Hayes (2007) calls it the "loss of innocence." She says that: "he [Amir] was just beginning to think about some real issues in life, when the faithful day of both victory and defeat changed his life forever. Growing up was no longer gradual. He had suddenly been thrust into adulthood" (Hayes, 2007, p. 12). Amir loses his innocence and discovers evil. Unfortunately, he not only discovers that there is evil in the world around him (here presented by Assef who rapes Hassan) but also inside of him, when he does not risk and avoids helping Hassan.

Now the recognition of his father does not seem so important. Amir desperately wants to confess himself, to gain redemption, but again he is not brave and strong enough to face the potential consequences. So he stays in silence. The relationship with Baba starts to cool down again. And as from evil usually arises nothing else than evil, Amir, who cannot stand being near to Hassan, hides some money and his wrist watch in Hassan's room and claims that Hassan took the money as a way to get rid of him. Amir is stuck again; it is not lack

of his father's love but his crime and remorse which influence his life from now on and do not allow him to be free.

After moving to America, Amir's situation gets better. He is now able to stand for what he wants. He does not study medicine as his father wishes but works on becoming a professional writer and marries Soraya, a woman he loves, although she is accompanied by a bad reputation. Probably, it might be the fact that he knows she also made mistakes in her life but was able to overcome them that makes him love her even more. Together, they take care of Baba until he dies of cancer. Finally, both Amir and Baba are able to find a way to each other. Baba reads Amir's stories and respects him. It can be said that except their disability of having a baby, his life with Soraya is happy.

He sometimes remembers Hassan and wonders how, if at all, he lives in Afghanistan and soon, he is about to discover more. One day, Rahim Khan calls from Pakistan and asks Amir to come and be good again. This is a request Amir is not able to deny. However, after arriving in Pakistan and learning about Rahim Khan's and Hassan's life in Kabul, about Hassan's son Sohrab, about Hassan and his wife being dead and most importantly about Hassan being his illegitimate brother, Rahim Khan unveils the true reason why he has asked Amir to come. This reason is to find Sohrab in a Kabul orphanage and bring him back. Now, Amir has again a choice in front of himself. He can either step back from a shadowed alley and go back to the safety of America just as he did it on that winter evening, or he can stand out for himself and repay the debt he has made. He chooses the second option.

I can't go to Kabul, I had said to Rahim Khan. I have a wife in America, a home a career, and a family. But how could I pack up and go back home when my actions may have cost Hassan a chance at those very same things. I wished Rahim Khan hadn't called me. I wished he had let me live on in my oblivion. But he had called me. (...) There is a way to be good again, he'd said. A way to end the cycle (Hosseini, 2007, p. 198).

By coming to Pakistan, Amir has been pulled out from his safety and comfort, but he takes the rule over his life and holds it with a determination and courage so typical for his father. There is no other option for him than to come back with Sohrab. Although at the end of the novel he shows the lack of understanding for the child's soul tortured by the death of his parents, life in the orphanage and abuse by Assef, who made a career

as a Talib officer, and contributes to Sohrab's suicide attempt, he finishes his journey successfully. He completes a strange circle of events. Hayes sees his journey as "one example of the nature of circular time in *The Kite Runner*. In dozens of ways, life keeps repeating itself: the parallel lives of Ali and Baba, Hassan and Amir and even Aseff and Amir. Life keeps coming back on itself in lots of ways" (Hayes, 2007, p. 9). When Amir is back home with little Sohrab and runs a kite just for a hint of smile on Sohrab's face, this circular of time ends. And after all it seems to end happily.

4.2.2 AMIR: ONE OF THE KINGS OF KABUL

The relationship of Amir and Hassan is one of the intriguing aspects of the novel. In this short chapter, Amir's character will be looked at from the point of view of his friendship with Hassan. Strangely, Amir and Hassan call themselves "the kings of Kabul" but they are and they are not friends at the same time. "Amir is cruel to Hassan, just as much as he values his friendship and loves him in his own way" (Bond, 2003). But why is it so? Hassan is loved by Baba and their friendship is supported by him as well, so where is the problem?

The first problematic point in their relationship can be seen in the fact that Amir is a Pashtun and Hassan a Hazara. These two ethnic groups are quite antagonistic and Hazara regarded as a lower race have suffered a lot from Pashtuns. Ali and Baba were also close to each other and spent their childhood together. However, as Amir notices, Baba never refers to Ali as his friend (Hosseini, 2007, p. 22). And the same as Baba with Ali, Amir does not think himself as Hassan's friend.

Never mind that we taught each other to ride a bicycle with no hands, or to build a fully functional homemade camera out of a cardboard box. Never mind that we spent entire winters flying kites, running kites. (...) Never mind any of those things. Because 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 (Hosseini, 2007, p. 22).

And indeed, it is not easy to overcome all these aspects. But the more important thing determining their relationship might be Amir's jealousy. It is Hassan who always stands in front of him and fights for him if necessary. Amir realizes how much his father wishes

Amir to be capable to stand out for himself and how much Hassan is in his courage similar to his father. This might be the reason for Amir's unpleasant jokes or looking down at Hassan for his illiteracy. After all, books seem to be the only area where Amir is better than Hassan. But even here, Hassan shows his moral superiority. When Amir plays a trick on him and instead of usual reading from the book, he makes up his own story, Hassan is impressed and appreciates it as "The best story, you've read me in a long time" (Hosseini, 2007, p. 26). Sometimes, it is much more difficult to forgive a virtue than a vice. And it definitely is here for Amir. And it gets much worse, when Amir betrays Hassan. Although Hassan is the one who has been hurt, he stays loyal and makes the life for Amir unbearable. Finally, this loyalty resolves in Amir's successful attempt to chase Hassan away.

Hassan milled about the periphery of my life after that. I made sure, our paths crossed as little as possible, planned my day that way. Because when he was around, the oxygen seeped out of the room. (...) But even if he wasn't around, he was. (...) Everywhere I turned, I saw signs of his loyalty, his goddamn unwavering loyalty (Hosseini, 2007, p. 77 – 78).

Nevertheless, weighing all the bad characteristics of Amir and his piling one mistake on another, it can be stated that: "Amir is a deeply flawed young man, lacking the courage which his father possesses so abundantly, yet I also felt him to be very likable and sympathetic" (Bond, 2003). The readers cannot just judge him, they are forced to feel with him: "Amir's betrayal of Hassan is believable and understandable in human terms, apart from culture, and his long-term remorse is not surprising (Whipple, 2003). Moreover, the readers are not only forced to feel Amir's emotions, they are also dragged into the moment, the same as him, they are influenced by same aspects as Amir and they have to be compassionate as they guilty the same as he is.

Hosseini has a remarkable ability to imprison the reader in horrific, shatteringly immediate scenes not least the incident in which Hassan is violated. The result is a sickening sensation of complicity. Like Amir, the reader watches the suffering and does nothing. (...) True evil, he suggests, comes when good people allow bad things to happen (Baker, 2003).

4.3 PRESENTATION OF MINOR CHARACTERS AND HASSAN IN THE KITE RUNNER

The following chapter deals with the minor characters of the novel *The Kite Runner*. It should be realized that although these characters are dedicated just minor parts in the story, their importance is immense. As Tristram (2012) claims, “it is one of the strengths of the novel that even minor characters, in California, Pakistan and Afghanistan, are made real, their lives and conflicts more than stick-figure silhouettes on Amir’s backgrounds.” Therefore, it would be a big mistake not to cover them as well in this thesis.

4.3.1 HASSAN: *THE BEST KITE RUNNER IN KABUL*

Although Hassan’s life is followed only in the first part of the book and then it is just left to Rahim Khan to retell the rest of Hassan’s story, it can be said that he is the most important character in the novel. He is the moving force the whole novel revolves around. Therefore, his character should be at least briefly mentioned here.

Before the actual characterisation of Hassan, it should be understood what it meant to be a Hazara in the seventies in Afghanistan. Johnson (2012) explains that “in America, the status of Hassan and his father would be comparable to being black and Native American in the deep South in the 1920’s.” This comparison is quite understandable even in our middle European context. Moreover, Hassan is a motherless child. His mother left him soon after he was born. Again, in the context of Islam, this is even worse than in our region, as when a wife leaves husband with another man, she harms her family’s honour and a good reputation. However, Hassan is not a bad child, affected negatively by all these facts. He does not seem to be an unhappy person. And it can be asked, why it is so.

Hassan’s most significant feature is his ability to find a falling kite without actually looking at the sky. He does not need to look, because he just knows. And he lives his life in the same way. He knows how to live a real life, “as he has simply accepted the role he's been given in life” (Whipple, 2003) and he does the best he can do with all the means he has got. He puts his heart and soul in everything he does and is unbelievably loyal and truthful. He always tells the truth and he “thinks everyone else does too” (Hosseini, 2007, p. 48). The loyalty is most obvious in his relationship towards Amir and it even sometimes makes Hassan lie. “Hassan always, always takes the blame for what Amir did when some mischief

was found out” (Johnson, 2012). And he does this even when he is unjustly blamed of stealing. He claims to be guilty and protects Amir for the last time.

This was Hassan’s final sacrifice for me. If he’d said no, Baba would believe him because we all knew Hassan never lied. And if Baba believed him, then I’d be accused; I would have to explain and I would be revealed for what I really was. Baba would never, ever forgive me. And that lead to another understanding: Hassan knew. He knew I’d seen him in that alley, that I’d stood there and done nothing (Hosseini, 2007, p. 91).

This loyalty and acceptance of his role in life has its roots probably in Hassan’s and Ali’s religion and their strong belief in God and his will. Nevertheless, the fact that Hassan accepts his role does not mean that he does not desire anything. It should be mentioned that he wishes not to be illiterate and when he becomes a father, just as all the parents, he wishes the best for his child. As he says in his letter to Amir: “I dream that my son will grow up to be a good person, a free person and an important person” (Hosseini, 2007, p. 191). A good, free and important person, just the same as Hassan was, as the freedom and ability does not come from the outside world but from the inside of every human being. And as Lencz (p. 7, 2003) points out, there is much more sense and importance in living a real life with our whole soul and heart then in being a seemingly important politician deciding about the lives of million people without really understanding the life.

4.3.2 RAHIM KHAN

Rahim Khan is a particularly important character in the novel. He has a major influence on Amir and he understands his troubles caused by the relationship with Baba. In the moments where Baba’s and Amir’s different natures seem to be causing problems, he often saves the situation. For example when Amir wants Baba to read the first story he has written, it is Rahim Khan who offers to read it and encourages Amir to write more. He is also sensitive enough to feel something has happened between him and Hassan. And hints to Amir, he can confide to him.

“You know, you can tell me anything you want, Amir jan. Anytime.”

“I know,” I said uncertainly. He looked at me for a long time, like he was waiting, his black bottomless eyes hinting at an unspoken secret between us. For a moment, I almost did tell him. Almost told him everything but what would he think of me? He’d hated me, and rightfully (Hosseini, 2007, p. 87).

And it is Rahim Khan who asks Amir to come back to Afghanistan and find Sohrab. Despite the fact that the way back might be painful and even dangerous for Amir, it is a form making him free from his remorse. So once again, now for the last time, Rahim Khan saves the situation and helps Amir. Thinking about his role in the novel, it might be said, he symbolizes understanding, forgiveness and relief in the novel.

4.3.3 GENERAL TAHERI

General Taheri is the father of Amir’s wife, Soraya. The reason for mentioning him in this paper is that he serves as a good contrast to Amir’s father in the approach to the welfare and therefore, they both present two different and typical kinds of immigrant behaviour. While Baba stops taking food stamps as soon as he has a job, although a menial one, general Taheri considers taking a job in America as a wasting of his talents which will be needed in Afghanistan when it is finally free.

I learned that he [general Taheri] kept his family on welfare and had never held a job in the U.S., preferring to cash government-issued checks than degrading himself with work unsuitable for a man of his stature. (...) The general believed that, sooner or later, Afghanistan would be freed, the monarchy restored, and his service would once again be called upon. SO every day, he donned his gray suit, wound pocket watch, and waited (Hosseini, 2007, p. 154).

Using a character like general Taheri therefore serves very well to make readers familiar with the immigrant community and its typical representatives.

Although there are more interesting characters to be found in the novel, for the needs of this paper, those mentioned above are more than necessary.

5 PRESENTATION OF THE NOVEL A THOUSAND SPLENDID SUNS

“Maybe you should write about Afghanistan again (...) Tell the rest of the world what the Taliban are doing to our country” (Hosseini, 2007, p. 206). In *The Kite Runner*, one of the characters in the book suggests that the main protagonist Amir writes about Afghanistan. Amir refuses as he is “not quite that kind of writer” (Hosseini, 2007, p. 206). However, it seems that Hosseini himself is that kind of writer, as his second novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* tells the story where Afghanistan and especially Kabul are one of the main characters (Zipp, 2007) and the long 35 years of their history are described in details here (Foley, 2007).

In this chapter it is the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* that will be discussed. Firstly, general information about the novel and a short summary of the content will be provided, followed by the themes and motifs presented in the novel.

5.1 GENERAL INFORMATION

Encouraged by the unexpected success of *The Kite Runner*, Hosseini started to write a new novel. The topic had been clear for a long time. Hosseini explains “as I was finishing the editing of that book [*The Kite Runner*], I had decided that I had to write a second book and address the issues pertaining to women” (Sachs, 2008). Also, shortly after the *Kite Runner* was published, Hosseini visited Afghanistan and drew much inspiration for his following book here. He found the most important inspiring ideas in women walking the streets in burqas and he could not help and: “wondered about their inner lives, whether they had ever had girlish dreams and about their hopes and disappointments” (Mommott, 2007).

From these ideas, a new novel emerged and was published in 2007. Although describing the difficulties of life, women in Afghanistan had to go through, Hosseini’s themes are once again crossing borders of all countries. As Phoenicia (2012) notes: “Mariam and Laila could have been a story of daily triumph over circumstances in the inner city of anywhere USA or harsh life in a Canadian town.” And she can see a connective point in the novel: “we are all human fighting to shine and at times fighting each other” (Phoenicia, 2012). Therefore, it is no surprise that immediately after being published, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*

became a bestseller number one (Sachs, 2008) and is appreciated by many critics but also by many humanitarians.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE CONTENT

It is clear that the topic of *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is life of women, specifically life of women in Afghanistan worsen by the constant wars and fighting. However, as was stated before, some of their problems are not unknown to women of America or Europe. Still, Hosseini's goal in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is to deal with the plight of women in Afghanistan" (Kakutani, 2007) which he successfully does.

Being longer and more voluminous than *The Kite Runner*, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* has more space to trace the lives of two main protagonists, two Afghan women, Mariam and Laila. From its beginning, the novel depicts "the injustice to which women are subjected" (Baron, 2007). The novel opens with the story of Mariam, a *harami* (bastard), living only with her mother in a small shack close to the city of Herat, where Jalil, Mariam's rich father lives with his legitimate family. Mariam's sad life is predetermined by the way she is raised by her mother, who hates Jalil and probably also the world in general and she does not lose her bitterness even in her relationship towards her daughter. Mariam's father on the other hand seems very nice to her, however, his kindness and friendship lies more in his words than in his deeds.

As the story starts to unravel, Mariam's mother commits suicide and her stepmothers make Jalil get rid of her as soon as possible. The easiest way to do it is to get 15 year old Mariam married. Rasheed, who is much older and quite unattractive, becomes Mariam's husband and takes her far from her home to Kabul, where she soon understands how it is for a woman to live with a man who comes from "a society in which women are valued only for reproduction" (Walter, 2007). After she has suffered a series of miscarriages, life with Rasheed becomes more and more unsustainable and Mariam even regularly experiences domestic violence. In this moment, Hosseini leaves Mariam's story aside and moves on to depict the life of Mariam's parallel, Laila.

Laila is in contrast to Mariam raised by loving father, who perceives women as equals to men. He puts an emphasis on the Laila's education and when it is no longer possible for her to go to school, as the missiles are destroying Kabul's streets, he himself teaches her.

Although Laila has a loving father, she, the same as Mariam, has a troubled relationship with her mother who is too much weighed down by the loss of her two sons and is no longer able to act like a mother. After a tragic moment, when the missile hits Laila's house, her parents die and she is left alone and injured. Moreover, she discovers she is pregnant with her beloved Tariq, who left for the safety of Pakistan earlier. And it is nobody else than Rasheed and Mariam who take care of her and cure her. However, Rasheed's intentions are not the charitable ones. Soon, he asks Laila to marry him and as she believes Tariq is dead, she accepts his offer. After all, Afghanistan is not a safe place for a lonely, pregnant girl.

At first, Mariam's behaviour towards Laila is very unfriendly, but when the baby girl Aziza is born, the edges are smoothened and the two women find a mutual understanding and with the help of each other are able to cope with almost unbearable conditions of their lives. Their relationship resembles to one of a mother and a daughter and results in the novel's climax, in an act of "extraordinary generosity and self-sacrifice" (Yardley, 2007). Mariam kills Rasheed as she protects Laila from actually being killed by him and after, she encourages her to leave with the children and Tariq while Mariam herself stays behind and is sentenced to death. When Mariam's sacrifices for Laila like that, it is undoubtedly an act very typical for a mother. Finally, the book has its happy ending, the readers learn that Mariam's father actually loved her and Laila after US forces stabilize the situation in Afghanistan comes back to Kabul, sets up a school and becomes pregnant for the third time.

The ending seems to be a little idealistic considering the current situation in Afghanistan. Laila a teacher in a re-built orphanage, her children happy again, even her little boy Zalmai slowly forgets his father Rasheed and has a nice relationship with Tariq, and Kabul itself, in the process of reconstruction, it all seems too positive after how the heroines have suffered so much, maybe even "a little flimsy" (Walter, 2007). However, the readers might forgive it, if they understand, that, as Baron (2007) explains, it is visible that during the whole book and in the ending especially, Hosseini insists that "the dream of a peaceful Afghanistan ought not to be relinquished."

5.3 THEMES AND MOTIFS

There is a clear similarity between the novels *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, as in both of them Hosseini, as is typical for him, employs very serious themes

understandable for men and women across borders of various cultures. Some of them are mentioned by Phoenicia (2012) in her critical review of the book. These are, for example: human suffering, the struggle of women to be in control of their own lives, domestic violence and political forces snatching away the rights of individuals.

The theme of human suffering is depicted in the novel into so detailed descriptions that the reader has to wonder, if it is really possible to bear so much misery in real life and that Hosseini is going to the unnecessary extremes to get as many emotions as possible. However, as Walter reminds, the reality in Afghanistan used to be the same, maybe even worse:

You might think this novel is becoming too melodramatic, as one horror succeeds another, with rockets blowing families apart and attempted escapes and even murder, alongside the beatings and whippings and threats that make up the women's daily experiences. But when I started to think this I remembered women I met in Kabul, and how many of them had stories to tell almost as melodramatic as this (Walter, 2007).

Although the novel is aimed at the stories of women, no man is safe from pain and suffering. Even Rasheed, who represents pure evil, suffers by the loss of his son. Laila's father has lost two sons and has to cope with the all-destroying grief of his wife. And Mariam's father, after he has been very cruel to Mariam, also gets to understand what it is to be struck by the death of people who are close to him.

Nevertheless the women go through all this as well, but with the Afghan political system being as it is, they have no chance as the men to somehow change the situation. And it is obvious that "from its opening page, the novel relentlessly exposes the injustice to which women are subjected" (Baron, 2007). It shows how women have to struggle to be in control of their own lives. As being unequal to men, they cannot travel on their own, work or even get a proper medical treatment. They have to depend on men completely. The men, who can be moody, do not take in consideration women's needs and worse, they can actually be bullies and hurt their women. And this account of injustice is again no product of Hosseini's imagination but "a sadly accurate version of what many Afghan women have experienced" (Reese, 2007).

This is where the theme of the domestic violence has its place. According to Ann Jones's report, 95 percent of women in Kabul suffer from some form of domestic violence

(Jones in Freeman, 2007). Could this number be any worse? No wonder, Hosseini has chosen to deal with this topic in his book. By doing this, he “speaks for women who have long been (and many of them continue to be) condemned to silence” (Baron, 2007) and not only women in Afghanistan as it might seem but for all those, who have a similar experience in other parts of the world.

Last but not least, the theme mentioned by Phoenicia (2012) is the theme of political forces snatching away the rights of individuals. It is a theme dealt by many writers through the history of literature, and especially in the 20th century, it proved to be a very up-to-date topic. As other writers, Hosseini shows, how unbelievably easy it might be to lose the basic human rights and find oneself living in an authoritative regime. It is very nicely portrayed in the part of *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, where Taliban are taking over the control over Afghanistan and are proclaiming new laws which are quite inhuman not only for women. One of these rules is that women will stay inside their homes all the time and are forbidden from attending schools and working (Hosseini, 2008, p. 271). Laila who was brought up in a liberal way reacts:

They can’t make half the population stay home and do nothing,” Laila said.

“Why not?” Rasheed said. For once, Mariam agreed with him. He’d done the same to her and Laila, in effect, had he not? Surely Laila saw that (Hosseini, 2008, p. 271).

Of course, in Afghanistan as in an Islamic country, Taliban did not have any serious difficulties with enforcing these laws, but it does not lower the seriousness of it. After all, did the Nazis have difficulties with enforcing the well-known anti-Semitic laws? And the situation of black people in the American south; was it so much different from one? And if the readers still do not realize the easiness with which this can happen, they might turn to the Margaret Atwood’s *Handmaid’s Tale*. From this point of view, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* has very educational value, as it can show the readers the easiness with which an individual can lose all their basic human rights due to a various political forces.

Considering Hosseini’s previous novel *The Kite Runner*, the readers might expect to meet the theme of betrayal and redemption in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* as well. And it can be also found here, indeed, although not occupying so important part of the novel as in *The Kite Runner*. If the readers think more about the story of Mariam’s father Jalil, they can see clearly how he betrays his daughter and how he, much later, of course, desires

redemption and her forgiveness. Unfortunately, neither of them lives long enough to find peace in mutual understanding. However, Laila is entitled to inform the readers about Jalil's atonement exactly as he wrote it down in a letter for Mariam.

I dare, I dare allow myself the hope that, after you read this, you will be more charitable than I ever was to you. That you might find it in your heart to come and see your father. That you will knock on my door one more time and give me the chance to open it this time, to welcome you, to take you in my arms, my daughter as I should have all those years ago (Hosseini, 2008, p. 395).

And once again, together with suffering, betrayal and desire for redemption, the most important theme, the hope is present in the novel to balance all the misery.

6 A THOUSAND SPLENDID SUNS: CHARACTERS AND THEIR MORAL ATTITUDES

The aim of the following chapter is to describe in details two main characters of the novel, Mariam and Laila. These two women seem not to have much in common, on contrary, they seem to be opposites and their contrast is used to show the complexity of Afghan society (Walter, 2007). Nevertheless, as they are both human beings and women, who share the same way of life, it is also possible to find some similar characteristics. Now, these similarities and differences will be discussed.

6.1 MARIAM: A CHILD NEEDS NOTHING ELSE THAN LOVING PARENTS

Every psychologist dealing with the development of children will agree that till the age of six, the children basically need nothing else than the loving environment provided by their parents and this cannot be dependent on anything, not on the good behaviour of the children or the good will of their parents, children have to be loved because they are and just as they are (Herman, 2006, p. 53). This is a basic condition for bringing up an individual with self-esteem and self-love, who has a healthy regards of the world. Now let us look at the way, Mariam is brought up to understand the way she lived for the rest of her life.

It is no later than at the age of five when Mariam hears for the first time the word *harami*; a bastard. Although she is not old enough to understand the meaning of it, in the tone her mother Nana said it, she can feel, it is: “an ugly, loathsome thing to be a *harami*, like an insect, like the scurrying cockroaches Nana was always cursing and sweeping out of the *kolba*” (Hosseini, 2007, p. 4). Later, when she is older, she understands what her mother meant by her words: “*harami* was an unwanted thing; that she, Mariam, was an illegitimate person who would never have legitimate claim to the things other people had, things such as live, family, home, acceptance” (Hosseini, 2008, p. 4).

So Mariam grows up with a feeling, she is unwanted and guilty. She feels guilty as she is the reason why her mother was disgraced, why she had to leave Herat and settle for a small hut and why they are so alone – or at least she is claimed to be this reason. On top of that, she

feels very guilty after every visit of her father, whom Nana formally respects, but her relationship towards him is actually more complicated. She definitely envies him the love of Mariam. She often vilifies him by telling Mariam various not very flattering stories about him. She might hate him, she might be angry with him, she might even still love him in a way, but it is clear, she is scared Mariam might love him more than her.

It cannot be said that Nana does not love her daughter; quite contrary, she loves Mariam, but she is “so damaged herself and loved her daughter in such a flawed manner that ultimately the only possible outcome is tragedy” (Phoenicia, 2012). This love poisoned by Nana’s bitterness and the feeling of being unfairly hurt and by the fear that she might lose Mariam and be left alone in this unfriendly world, where every person and especially men can be a potential threat, is visible in the thing Nana learns Mariam about the world they live in. Things such as:

Learn this now and learn it well, my daughter: Like a compass needle that points north, a man’s accusing finger always finds a woman. Always. You remember that, Mariam (Hosseini, 2008, p. 7).

This and her shame for being an unmarried mother might be the reasons why she never leaves the hut and does not like people to visit them. And why she does not want Mariam to start attending a school.

What’s the sense schooling a girl like you? It’s like shining a spittoon. And you’ll learn nothing of value in those schools. There is only one, only one skill a woman like you and me needs in life, and they don’t teach it in school. (...) Only one skill. And it’s this: *tahamul*. Endure (Hosseini, 2008, p. 18).

As France, 2010 notes from both Nana’s narratives and behaviour, it is clear, “that she hates her own existence thoroughly and that life has been a constant agonising struggle. This may lead the reader to draw the conclusion that Mariam is being punished by Nana as a result of the psychological trauma Nana has endured.” So Mariam stays only with her mother, entertained and educated only by a few visitors among whom, two most precious people in her life, Mullah Faizullah and her father Jalil, belong. Mullah Faizullah comes to teach her

verses from Koran and, which is more important, he treats her with tenderness and love which do ask anything in return.

Jalil visits Mariam regularly every Thursday, spends an afternoon with her, tells her various stories and brings her little gifts. It seems that he might be a perfect father, except he is present only on Thursdays and never does anything to prove his nice words. Therefore, when Mariam comes to the age when a child needs proofs and not only promises, she necessarily has to be severely disillusioned by him.

And she is disillusioned when one day she comes to Jalil's house, but she is not let in and disgraced, she has to spend the night on the street. Meanwhile, her mother commits suicide, as, although she kept on persuading Mariam how much Mariam needs her, it was Nana who needed Mariam and from the fear and possibly as a kind of revenge, she hangs herself. Mariam, broken down with remorse, does not get any consolation from her father. Instead, she is married to Rasheed, an ugly shoe-maker from Kabul, who is much older than she is.

When in Kabul, Mariam slowly learns how to live with moody Rasheed and how to take care about his household to please him or at least not make him angry. As it happens, she has a chance to make friends here, but she is too scared to try and actually, she probably does not even know how to do it. And even if she knew, there is this constant feeling of being a *harami*, somebody who does not deserve their proper place in the world.

In the tandoor line, Mariam caught sideways glances shot at her, heard whispers. Her hands began to sweat. She imagined they all knew that she'd been born a *harami*, a source of shame to her father and his family. They all knew that she'd betrayed her mother and disgraced herself (Hosseini, 2008, 65).

And no wonder, she fears so much those Kabul strangers and the possibility they might know about her shame, as nobody ever told her, it is not her shame to be a *harami*, and that she is not to be blamed.

However, even worse things happen to her, she is neither able to make friends nor to carry her babies for the full period of her pregnancies. After several of her miscarriages, Rasheed turns to be a violent brute and the only things resting in Mariam's life is the household, her faith, constant fear and complete isolation. As Hosseini himself puts it, "the key word with Mariam is that she is isolated in every sense of the word" (Hosseini

in Foley, 2007). She is isolated from happiness, motherhood, love, friendship and even from possession of any kind, either material or, except the verses of Koran, intellectual.

From now on, Hosseini leaves Mariam so he can tell the story of Laila. And only when little Laila mentions Mariam, he returns to her just “in a flash in which we see, as Hosseini clearly intends us to, how behind every silent burka in Afghanistan is an individual with a hidden history” (Walter, 2007). What Mariam’s history is like, Laila will soon learn as their lives will cross surprisingly, but first, the readers need to know Laila’s own history.

6.2 LAILA: YOU CAN BE ANYTHING YOU WANT

With Laila the readers have the possibility to see a completely different way of life. And it might be said, that they get much more optimistic feeling from the beginning of Laila’s story in comparison with Mariam’s one. In the year 1987, Laila lives with both of her legitimate parents in Kabul. She is a “great beauty, with a doting father and a protective boyfriend — a lucky girl” (Kakutani, 2007). She is actually a neighbour of Mariam, however, she does not know her or talk to her. Laila’s father is a university educated man, who due to the Soviet regime has to work in a factory, but he used to be a high school teacher. He loves his daughter and tries to give her as much as he is able to – that means a proper education.

Another important person in Laila’s life is Tariq, her friend who has suffered from a severe injury and has only one leg. Laila loves him as brother, as a person she can always rely on. She has also some more friends, her classmates Giti and Hasina, with whom she can share all the girlish secrets. So far, it might seem that her life is as happy as the life of any nine-year-old girl, however, in the year 1987 when Afghanistan is occupied by the Soviets, hardly any family is not affected by the war, and even Laila’s family is not spared.

Laila’s two brothers, whom she has never known, are fighting the Soviets somewhere outside the Kabul. It is hard enough for Laila’s mother not to have her sons with her, but when the news about their death comes, Laila’s “precarious happiness begins to unravel” (Baron, 2007). For Laila, the death of her brothers is not something really personal, as she does not remember them. She dutifully mourns them, “but in her heart, her true brother was alive and well” (Hosseini, 2008, p. 138). Unfortunately, for Laila’s mother Fariba the loss is more than real. She has not been acting much like a mother to Laila before, but now she

suffers severe depressions and becomes only a bundle of sheet on her bed, a shadow walking aimlessly around the house. Therefore, Laila's life, the same as Mariam's, is affected by a broken mother (Phoenicia, 2007). While to Mariam in her innocence, it never occurred that her mother might commit suicide, Laila fears this possibility so much, that she even makes some steps to avoid it. And when she finds the courage to tell her mother about her fears, the answer is not what Laila expected but it is also not what she hoped for:

I won't lie to you, I've thought about it since too. But, no. Don't worry, Laila. I want to see my sons' dream come true. I want to see the day the Soviets go home disgraced, the day the Mujahideen come to Kabul in victory. I want to be there when it happens, when Afghanistan is free, so the boys will see it too. They'll see it through my eyes. Mammy was soon asleep. Leaving Laila with duelling emotions: reassured that Mammy meant to live on, stung that *she* was not the reason (Hosseini, 2008, p. 142).

Laila, however, is more fortunate than Mariam as she has a loving father and friends. And it is her father who tries as much as he is able to compensate Laila the lack of affection expressed by her mother. As he tells her, he also misses his sons, but he adds: "But I'm glad I have you. Every day, I thank God for you" (Hosseini, 2008, p. 148). Thanks to her father, Laila is raised up with the feeling, she is a clever and important human being and with the belief of her father, that she is and will be a person of some value. While Mariam was not allowed to attend school, Laila is encouraged to. As her father "is a strong believer that education is far more significant to his daughter's upbringing than an arranged marriage" (France, 2010):

You're a very, very bright girl. Truly, you are. You can be anything you want, Laila. I know this about you. And I also know that when this war is over, Afghanistan is going to need you as much as its men, maybe even more. Because society no chance of success if its women are uneducated, Laila. No chance (Hosseini, 2008, p. 114).

As times passes, the Soviet troops leave the country and Kabul is tormented by the missiles of different mujahideens' factions. Laila grows up in a beautiful teenager, experiences the first love emotions but in the same time, sees the death, suffering and destructions all around. Her friends start to disappear, either emigrate or die. And worst of all,

Tariq comes to announce, he is going to leave for Pakistan with his parents as well. He offers Laila to leave with him, but as she cannot imagine leaving her parents, especially her father, she refuses. In the moment of the deepest grief, she experiences the highest happiness when Tariq finally says he loves her and they make love. Still he leaves after all and Laila stays behind with the feeling of immense loss.

Soon, Babi persuades Laila's mother to leave Afghanistan as well. But before they can head towards the borders, a missile hits their house, kills both Laila's parents and make her life cross with Mariam's.

6.3 MARIAM AND LAILA: YOU ONLY HAVE TO ENDURE

Now, when the early years of Laila's and Mariam's lives were described, it is possible to account how they after they met influenced each other. Although, both of them can be perceived as Kakutani (2007) puts it, rather one-dimensional; Mariam "an unlucky girl whose luck turns from bad to worse" and Laila "a lucky girl whose luck abruptly runs out," the moment their lives cross, Mariam's character starts to show fully its hidden potential and Laila's one reaches surprising courage. And all this happens under very cruel conditions as the cynical admonition of Mariam's mother: "There is only one, only one skill a woman like you and me needs in life, (...) And it's this: *tahamul*. Endure" (Hosseini, 2008, p. 18) "turns out to be a tragically accurate forecast of the trials that await Mariam and Laila as wives to Rasheed" (Baron, 2007). Let us examine the characters of Laila and Mariam as Rasheed's wives.

6.3.1 RASHEED'S WIFE MARIAM

Mariam is quite puzzled; it is surprising when Rasheed brings half dead Laila to their house and asks Mariam to take care of her. But soon, she starts to suspect Rasheed's reason is not so charitable and realizes he wants to marry Laila. Mariam does not like this idea at all and does not want it to happen. She pleads with Rasheed, but there is no chance he might change his mind. And if she hopes, the girl will refuse his offer, her hope does not take long, for the girl quickly accepts it. Now, Mariam has a strange girl in his house and is very unhappy about it. Hosseini explains why: "Mariam had been there for 19 years, and she

would feel her territory infringed upon” (Hosseini in Foley, 2007) and this is also the reason she does not respond to Laila’s attempts to become if not friends than at least not enemies. After all, Mariam has been a servant for Rasheed and now she refuses to be a servant for Laila – not that Laila would actually asked her to be, but Mariam with her experience cannot be sure of anything. So they both live in the constant air of hostility created by Mariam.

Rasheed with his never ending humiliation of Mariam and emphasizing how ugly and stupid she is in comparison with Laila does not ease the situation. However, finally he himself with his violent behaviour plays an important role in bringing them together. When he stops his decent behaviour towards Laila, after the baby girl instead of a boy is born, Mariam is not happy that Rasheed is mean to Laila. Quite contrary, “to her own surprise, Mariam finds herself pitying the girl [Laila]“ (Hosseini, 2008, p. 233). Thanks to Rasheed’s violence, Mariam also for the first time experiences the feeling of being stood up for by somebody.

Rasheed raised the belt again and this time came at Mariam.

Then an astonishing thing happened: The girl lunged at him. She grabbed his arm with both hands and tried to drag him down, but she could do no more than dangle from it. She did succeed in slowing Rasheed’s progress toward Mariam (Hosseini, 2008, p. 235).

The same night, she discovers for the first time, how quickly and easily children are able to make adults love them.

Mariam sighed. She sat down and let her finger be grabbed, looked on as the baby squeaked, as she flexed her plump legs at the hips and kicked the air. Mariam sat there, watching, until the baby stopped moving and began snoring softly. (...) And though her throat was parched with thirst and her feet burnt with pins and needles, it was a long time, before Mariam gently freed her finger from the baby’s grip and got up (Hosseini, 2008, p. 237 – 238).

After this night, Mariam decides to give Laila the old dresses she sewed originally for her unborn babies. It must be very hard for her to do something like this, give those clothes away. They have to be precious to her as they represent all her unfulfilled hopes. This

act opens the imaginary door of friendship for Laila and Mariam. Now, only a cup of *tchai* in the evening, and they are “not enemies any more” (Hosseini, 2008, p. 244). And they do not stay as “not enemies,” soon they become closely attached to each other. For Mariam a whole new world opens. From the situation which seemed terrible, from the state of being only one of two women of violent Rasheed, “Mariam finally finds a person to connect with, and because she is childless, Laila becomes her daughter for all practical purposes” (Hosseini in Foley, 2007). From now on, she suddenly gains a family she always wanted. Her relationship with Laila is the one of a mother and a daughter and Laila’s little girl Aziza loves Mariam as much as a child is able to.

Mariam had never before been wanted like this. Love had never been declared to her so guilelessly, so unreservedly. (...) And she marvelled at how, after all these years of rattling loose, she had found in this little creature the first true connection in her life of false, failed connections (Hosseini, 2008, p. 246).

Laila brings not only love into Mariam’s life but hope as well. She suggests a dangerous plan the three of them are going to leave Rasheed. And for Mariam, the terrible life she was able to tolerate for many years seems impossible now and she hopes for something better. However, it shows, that hope is a “treacherous illusion” (Hosseini, 2008, p. 248) after all. And they are forced to stay with Rasheed and from now on, their “only hope of affection or solidarity is with one another, and they survive not just physically but also emotionally by putting their faith in each other and in their love for Laila’s children” (Walter, 2007).

When Taliban takes over the reign of the country, Rasheed loses his shop due to a fire and life of Laila and Mariam even worsens. In the moment of the worst poverty, Mariam decides to put aside her pride and contact her father. With a tiny hope, she learns he is dead for a long time and the critical situation becomes desperate. Aziza has to be left in an orphanage. And everybody suddenly understands what it is to be really hungry. After many days of suffering, something unimaginable happens; Tariq appears in front of their door. Mariam sees hope in Tariq. But probably she also sees this hope is not for her, but for her beloved Laila. When Rasheed learns Tariq has been in his house with Laila, his rage reaches its climax, he beats both of them harshly and suddenly Mariam realizes, how much unfair this all is and that she has suffered unfairly for all those years.

Had she been a deceitful wife? She asked herself. A complacent wife? A dishonorable woman? Discreditable? Vulgar? What harmful thing had she willfully done to this man to warrant his malice, his continual assaults, the relish with which he tormented her? (...) Had she ever justly deserved this meanness? (Hosseini, 2008, p. 338 – 339).

For the first time in her life she tries to fight back. However, neither Mariam, nor Laila are strong enough to beat Rasheed. His violence seems to be unstoppable and Mariam comprehends, he does not mean only to beat them but he is in his fury going actually to kill Laila. Rasheed hands “remained tightly clamped around Laila’s windpipe, and Mariam saw that he meant to carry this through. He meant to suffocate her (Hosseini, 2008, p. 339).

But Mariam decides, she is not going to let this happen. For the first time, she realizes, that after all these things Rasheed has taken from her during their marriage, Laila is not going to be the next one. “She would not watch him take Laila too” (Hosseini, 2008, p. 340). Almost thirty years passed after she made her first important decision to go to see her father, and she makes a crucial decision again. And in the moment when she determines to kill Rasheed, it is for the first time that “*she* is deciding the course of her own life” (Hosseini, 2008, p. 341).

In this way, towards the end of the novel, Mariam finally takes her life into her hands, finds her courage and dignity as well. Suddenly, she is the strong one, not Laila, she is the one to say what has to be done. She wants Laila to leave, and to her unwillingness to abandon Mariam, she responds and explains what happens if Taliban finds them:

They’ll find you as guilty as me. Tariq too. I won’t have the two of you living on the run, like fugitives. What will happen to your children if you’re caught? (...) Who will take care of them then? The Taliban? Think like a mother, Laila jo. Think like a mother. I am (Hosseini, 2008, p. 349).

In this way she forces Laila to leave and she herself stays behind prepared to die with only two concerns in her mind. She feels sorry for Laila’s little Zalmai as she took his beloved father from him and she doubts he will be ever able to forgive her and she also fears, she might not keep her dignity till the end of her life. Otherwise, she is satisfied in a certain way: “For me, it ends here. There’s nothing more I want. Everything I wanted as

a little girl, you've already given me. You and your children have made me so very happy" (Hosseini, 2008, p. 350). Now Mariam wishes only safety and happiness for Laila.

Hosseini states, "Mariam really matured by the end of this novel," (Hosseini in Foley, 2007). Paradoxically, it is towards the end of her life, when she finally gets some recognition from the outside world. In a women prison where she is placed, the other convicts look up to her with a kind of admiration as her crime is killing her husband – something unimaginable for them. After a few days in prison, she is sentenced to death, taken to the place of execution and shot. While she is walking to the place of the execution, she is thinking about her life:

She thought of her entry into this world, the *harami* child of a lowly villager, an unintended thing, a pitiable, regrettable accident. A weed. And yet she was leaving it as a friend, a companion, a guardian. A mother. A person of consequence at last. No. It was not so bad, Mariam thought, that she should die this way. Not so bad. A legitimate end to a life of illegitimate beginnings (Hosseini, 2008, p. 361).

It is rather sad, but there is a grain of optimism at that moment. Indeed, her death can be perceived as useless and unfair, which it actually is because she does not deserve this kind of punishment. However, as is obvious from the previous extract, Mariam does not understand it like this. As she said to Laila before:

It is fair. I've killed our husband. I've deprived your son of his father. It isn't right that I run. I *can't*. Even if they never catch us, I'll never escape your son's grief. How do I look at him? How do I ever bring myself to look at him, Laila jo? (Hosseini, 2008, p. 349 – 350).

Mariam understands her act as a crime and she accepts the punishment. And there are more reasons for which she accepts her death peacefully. "She had found what she wanted in life, a companion. She had found love and acceptance, and a home. It was with peace that she could walk to her death. She did what every mother does, which is to put the well-being of her child first" (Hosseini in Foley, 2007). Therefore, Mariam dies with the feeling of being useful, of fulfilling the part she had been assigned in this world. And we all can hope that every human being is able to find happiness no matter which country and time they live in or what their former prospects are, and to fulfil their life and die satisfied with it.

6.3.2 RASHEED'S WIFE LAILA

From quite a happy life, Laila wakes up in Rasheed's house to discover, her parents are dead, her house destroyed and she, half dead, left alone in Kabul, one of the most dangerous places to be when you are a lonely woman. She suffers a lot with nightmares and remorse, but Mariam with her experience, although she takes care about her nicely, has no consolation to offer her. And as is usual in this novel, situation gets worse for her, when a stranger comes to tell the story of how Tariq died. Suddenly, Laila understands what their parents felt when her brothers died. And with this grief, she has also to face a completely new situation. Although she wanted to leave for Pakistan as soon as possible, now she accepts Rasheed's offer and marries him. She has a good reason for this, because she is pregnant with Tariq. Because of this baby, she is willing to marry much older Rasheed, pretend the baby is his, be dishonest to him, unfair to Mariam and stay in Kabul. She does what she can to protect this baby who is "her last link to the person that she had been before she had become so utterly alone. A part of Tariq still alive inside her" (Hosseini, 2008, p. 213).

Now Laila raised in a liberate way has to tolerate Rasheed's conservative customs, his insults of Mariam and Laila's parents to which her only respond can be a "cold, hateful look" she only flashes at him" (Hosseini, 2008, p. 217). Otherwise, she has to surrender. She cannot find a pleasant companion in Mariam either. Mariam, very upset to have the girl in the house, acts with a surprising hostility. Still she understands Mariam's anger and prevents Rasheed from hurting her. When they have their first fight, Laila to her surprise realizes she likes to shout at Mariam, "to have a target at which to focus all her simmering anger, her grief" (Hosseini, 2008, p. 227). And she cannot help thinking if Mariam feels the same.

This understanding for Mariam and the way, Laila was raised up, makes her to stand up for Mariam and protect her, when Rasheed wants to beat her. Laila has never before experienced violence like this and she cannot let him hurt Mariam.

When the baby is born, Laila is chased by numerous fears. She fears Rasheed will be careless with Aziza or that the fragile baby might catch a dangerous disease. Her little Aziza is too precious to her. However, for Rasheed, who was praying for a boy, Aziza is a great disappointment and he does not care about her at all. As Mariam puts it: "You gave him a daughter. So, you see, your sin is even less forgivable than mine" (Hosseini, 2008, p. 244).

Still the little girl brings a lot of happiness. She is able to soften Mariam's heart and make her more open towards Laila's attempts to befriend her. Thanks to that, Laila gains a very good friend, a person whom she can trust and with who she can share all the misery of life with Rasheed. In Mariam, "Laila finds a friend and a doting alternative mother" (Hosseini in Foley, 2007).

Laila, in contrast with Mariam, does not want to let the others, especially Rasheed, decide about her life. She is determined to leave him as soon as possible. When this opportunity comes, the readers actually do not know where she wants to go, they can only see how excited and scared Laila is in this situation. Unfortunately, women are not allowed to travel without a male companion, so they are caught and prevented from leaving the country. After they return home, for the first time, Laila experiences Rasheed's extreme cruelty. And for the second time, she gets very close to death. Rasheed locks her and Aziza in the bedroom without any food or water. Terrified that she might lose Aziza, she has to degrade and pleads with Rasheed.

"Just one glass, Rasheed. Not for me. Do it for her. You don't want her blood on your hands."

He walked past.

She began to plead with him. She begged for forgiveness, made promises. She cursed him.

His door closed. The radio came on (Hosseini, 2008, p. 264).

After a few days, Rasheed releases them, just in time to save them. And from now on, Laila, Mariam and Aziza are forced to stay at home all the time. Moreover, with the arrival of the Taliban, all women are actually forbidden to leave their houses, so now Rasheed's ban is legal. For Laila, the change of her hometown is almost unbearable, she is forced to watch her country going crazy and can be grateful only for the fact her parents are dead and cannot see it. It makes her sick that Rasheed is the only "perspective," (Hosseini, 2008, p. 276) she now has in the entire world. Laila hates Rasheed to the marrow of her bones, but she has to stand him and even be grateful that he does not tell the Taliban he has a suspicion Aziza is not his daughter. And what is more, she becomes pregnant by him. She seriously considers she will get rid of the unborn baby, because she is afraid she will not be able to love Rasheed's baby, but finally she decides not to.

In the end Laila couldn't do it. It wasn't the fear of bleeding to death that made her drop the spoke, or even the idea that the act was damnable – which she suspected it was. Laila dropped the spoke because she could not accept what the Mujahideen readily had: that sometimes in war innocent life had to be taken. Her war was against Rasheed. The baby was blameless (Hosseini, 2008, p. 276 – 277).

At this moment, it is nicely visible how strong and human Laila is. It must be unspeakably difficult for her to decide like this, but considering the way she was raised up, it may be said, she has no other option; she too much values the life she is not able to kill. Paradoxically, this decision almost kills her, as when the baby is supposed to be born, the doctor has to perform a caesarean section without the anaesthetics. Laila again, shows her courage when she decides: "Cut me open and give me my baby" (Hosseini, 2008, p. 283). This way, Zalmai is born, Rasheed's long awaited son.

If the readers think Rasheed is going to become more kind or gentle, they are really mistaken. Quite contrary, he spoils Zalmai, neglects Aziza and beats Mariam and sometimes Laila as well. Laila loves her boy, but she has to watch him become more alike to his father and cannot do anything about it.

Zalmai worshipped his father, and, because he did, he was transformed when his father was around to dote on him. Zalmai was quick then with a defiant cackle or an imprudent grin. In his father's presence, he was easily offended. He held grudges. He persisted in mischief in spite of Laila's scolding, which he never did when Rasheed was away (Hosseini, 2008, p. 288).

Moreover, Rasheed tries to persuade her Aziza might become a street beggar to earn some money. The Taliban, the draught, the destruction of Rasheed's shop, all of it causes too many troubles to the family and they become poorer and poorer. Laila does not want to let Aziza beg and she fights courageously to prevent Rasheed from forcing her into it. She acts as bravely as possible to protect her daughter, but she is scared, she has no certainty and nobody except Mariam, who can help her to protect Aziza. She also fears she will have to do something bad to Aziza in order to avoid something even worse. She dreams she and Mariam are hiding Aziza into a hole in the ground.

Aziza's breath fogs the sheet of plastic in which they have wrapped her. Laila sees her panicked eyes, the whiteness of her palms as they slap and push against the sheet. Aziza pleads. Laila can't hear her screams. *Only for a while*, she calls down, *it's only for a while* (Hosseini, 2008, p. 293 – 294).

It does not take a long time, and Laila's dream practically turns into reality. She does not have to bury Aziza alive, but she is forced to leave her in an orphanage for an indefinite period of time. The circumstances force her to betray her daughter and leave her. Although she tries to visit her as much as possible, Aziza suffers in the orphanage, because the food and shelter cannot compensate the absence of her mother and Mariam.

"They have food here," Laila said shakily. She was glad for the burqa, glad Aziza couldn't see how she was falling apart inside it. "Here, you won't go hungry. They have rice and bread and water, and maybe even fruit."

"But *you* won't be here. And Khala Mariam won't be with me" (Hosseini, 2008, p. 308).

Besides, neither the readers nor Laila actually know what the everyday life in the orphanage looks like. Is she treated well? Do the other kinds behave nicely to her? Laila visits Aziza as much as she is able to. But due to the law which prohibits women from leaving their houses without a male companion, she is often caught and beaten by the Talib guards. Still, she does not give up, changes the way, hides behind the corners, does everything she can to be able to see Aziza at least for a while. And then, from the worst situation, a miracle emerges. On the return from the orphanage, in the front door of her house, Tariq is standing, waiting for her.

Laila is stunned. After all those years of mourning Tariq, she can see him alive and what is more, he comes because he wants to see her too. She thinks probably he still loves her. And he says he has written her letters, he wrote her "volumes" (Hosseini, 2008, p. 330), so he must have been thinking about her all the time. It might seem strange, that Laila after all that suffering, after eight years spent with Rasheed, would actually care if Tariq still loves her. But it is necessary to realize, that Tariq represents her past. With him, she is more alike that girl who used to have education, ambitions and opinions (Walter, 2007). It hurts but

it also brings hope to Laila. He tells her what happened to him and she tells him her story and the secret about Aziza. When Tariq leaves after the afternoon they spent together, Laila watches him leave and a shudder passes through her, “a current of something sad and forlorn, but also something eager and recklessly hopeful” (Hosseini, 2008, p. 335). And although, she possibly cannot know, what is going to happen, this reckless hope roots in her mind.

Nevertheless, it is Mariam, who makes Laila’s hope come true. At the moment when Laila almost gives up her fight for life, Mariam kills Rasheed and saves her. For the first time in her life, Laila does not know what to do. She obeys all Mariams’ orders and allows her to comfort her with unreal promises about their happy future. The next day, she has to accept that there is not happy future for Mariam, probably she sensed it before, only her mind protected her from too much grief, but now she has to face the facts. So she leaves only with Zalmai, looking back at Mariam and the useless details imprints into her mind because of the emotional strength of the situation.

Mariam was wearing a white scarf over her head, a dark blue sweater buttoned in the front, and white cotton trousers. A crest of gray hair had fallen loose over her brow. Bars of sunlight slashed across her face and shoulders. Mariam waved amiably. They turned the corner, and Laila never saw Mariam again (Hosseini, 2008, p. 351).

6.4 LAILA AND TARIQ

With Tariq, Laila leaves for his home in Pakistan and now, it might seem Laila is free, free from Rasheed, free from the Taliban, free from Afghanistan. But is she really? She might be free from the Taliban but Rasheed and Afghanistan are not gone. Rasheed stays with her and will stay as a half of her son. Little Zalmai misses his father very much and has to cope with this loss and get used to Tariq. Laila suffers immensely when she sees how much Zalmai misses his father but she cannot do anything about it.

She is also not free from Afghanistan. It is tightly rooted deep in her heart. She might not realize it at first, but she misses her country very much. She could leave for America or another country, set up her life there, start a little restaurant and fulfil her father’s dream, but

she is a patriot really. When the U.S. forces attack Afghanistan and bring down the reign of Taliban, Laila unexpectedly becomes restless.

A year ago, she would have gladly given an arm to get out of Kabul. But in the last few months, she has found herself missing the city of her childhood. (...) She hears of school built in Kabul, roads repaved, women returning to work, and her life here, pleasant as it is, grateful as she is for it, seems ... insufficient to her. Inconsequential. Worse yet, wasteful (Hosseini, 2008, p. 378).

Suddenly, Laila realizes how much her parents loved Afghanistan and how much they hoped for its good future. And she feels an urge to go back. She wants to go back “for Mammy and Babi, for them to see it [Kabul] through *her* eyes” (Hosseini, 2008, p. 378) and for the future of Kabul. She wants to be a part of it, she wants to help it. She is again that little girl, who can be anything she wants. As her friend Hassina used to say to her: “You’re going to be somebody. I know one day I’ll pick up a newspaper and find your picture on the front page” (Hosseini, 2008, p. 163). Now there is finally a chance to be somebody, to do something good and Laila cannot resist it.

When Tariq agrees, there is nothing that would hold Laila back. The only delay is the way to Heart, where she visits Mariam’s former house and learns, and gives the readers a chance to learn, more about Mariam and her father. Finally, Laila returns to Kabul, starts teaching in an orphanage. Her family seem to be happy. Children have slowly got rid of her fears, even Aziza who did not want to go back is happy. Laila has everything she has ever wanted, maybe more. She is happy and she knows, who is the reason of her happiness. She does not want Mariam to be forgotten and that is the reason why, when she becomes pregnant for the third time, and her children with Tariq play the game of naming the baby, “the game involves only male names. Because, if it’s a girl, Laila has already named her” (Hosseini, 2008, p. 402).

7 THE COMPARISON OF THE NOVELS THE KITE RUNNER AND A THOUSAND SPLENDID SUNS

Usually, when unknown authors publish their first book and this book becomes a great success, the readers await impatiently if they are going to publish more books. And if they do, the following book has to face various comparisons from critics and the readers as well. The Kite Runner novel met a surprising success and spread through the word of mouth of readers and book clubs all around the world. A Thousand Splendid Suns was often reviewed and often at least a short comparison with The Kite Runner appeared in those reviews. Therefore, even this thesis is not going to avoid comparing Hosseini's two novels and in the following lines, a few notes on the similarities and differences of the novels together with the brief information about the practical assets of both novels provided at the end of this chapter.

There are many differences between the two Hosseini's novels. Some are quite obvious, some more subtle. Many of them were mentioned in previous chapters, mostly when the themes of the novels were discussed. This and the fact that all those differences and similarities are interwoven are the reasons for which only the most important ones are going to be mentioned here.

The first difference between the novels is quite evident. Whereas The Kite Runner is a story about the world of men, A Thousand Splendid Suns explores the world of Afghan women. This difference is connected with the reasons for which the novels were actually written. As Hosseini explains in an interview for an Academy of Achievement, the urge to finish The Kite Runner was more a literary one. "An urge of a newborn writer who wants to finish a book" (Hosseini, in Academy of Achievement, 2008). When he heard about the ban of kite flying, it inspired him to note down a short story, which "was intended to be a nostalgia piece about a favourite childhood pastime but grew in only a day or two in 1999 into a dark tale of loss, guilt and redemption" (Ferrell, 2010). However, with the second book the reason was different. Hosseini says:

"I had decided already that I was going to write a book about women, and I wanted this book to be a fictional account, however narrow in its aim of what happened to these women in Afghanistan. So many people suffered in Afghanistan over the last

three decades, but it's hard for me to find a group that has suffered more than women” (Hosseini, 2008).

Previously, he had been very successful with discovering the world of men, the story narrated by Amir was believable and alive. But now, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* presented a more difficult challenge. Determined to show the world the suffering of Afghan women, Hosseini started to work on a novel told by a woman. And as if it was not difficult enough, he chose to tell the story from the perspective of two, quite different women. However, Hosseini tried hard and eventually slipped his “feet into those shoes and live in that skin” (Hosseini, in Academy of Achievement, 2008). And according to various critics, he was successful in this endeavour.

This success was caused by Hosseini's refusing to regard his women characters as “only” women but “as people, as human beings” and he just focused “on what it is that they fear, what it is that they hope, how were they disappointed by life, what are their illusions, their disillusion” and in this way “these women, these characters, were starting to speak for themselves” (Ibid.). And in this way, they became understandable across the borders for women and even men. A male critic Ben Daniel (2007) says “The protagonists are women living in a land I’ve never visited, who survived two decades of warfare while being subjected to the worst kinds of domestic abuse imaginable, all of which is beyond my ken, making Hosseini’s second novel vitally important for me to read” (Daniel, 2007). And this aspect, this understandability is the thing connecting both novels, because as was mentioned many times in this thesis they both speak about the themes understandable for everybody. The themes are basically international.

As soon as Hosseini understood this connective power of the written word and the interest raised by his first novel (the *Kite Runner* was not only it was successful literary, but it also helped the people understand more Afghan culture and see it not only as a country hiding Usama Bin Laden and fighting the United States). He also understood how he could make the western readers aware of Afghan background. Consequently, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* went further in explaining the characteristics of Afghan culture and history. It provided its readers with the detailed description of latest Afghan history and tried to explain the political turmoil affecting this country so precisely, it might resolve in the feeling the reader is having a history lesson (Walter, 2007).

Therefore, it can be said, that while *The Kite Runner* was more a personal story, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* was dedicated to Afghanistan. Hosseini wrote *The Kite Runner* without the personal experience of war torn Afghanistan. When he visited his homeland, it made a huge impact on him and almost forced him into writing a new novel. He comments: “I went to Afghanistan in 2003 and met lots of women and heard so many sad, inspiring and horrific stories. All their stories came back to me when I began writing the book in early 2004” (Hosseini in Memmott, 2007). As a result, this book helped to understand the complexity of Afghan culture. In this way, both the books *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* raised the interest in the lives of people living and suffering in Afghanistan.

7.1 THE PRACTICAL ASSETS OF HOSSEINI’S NOVELS

As a result of this interest people also started to find out various possibilities how to improve it. Basically, as Baron (2007) puts it: *A Thousand Splendid Suns* “is a work committed to helping living people in whatever ways fiction can: it is, in fact, a humanitarian novel.” And not only it is committed to helping but it actually helps.

In 2006, he received the Humanitarian Award from the U.N. Refugee Agency, and was named a goodwill envoy for that agency (Foster, 2007). But he did not settle only for this. The success of his fiction enabled him to create a foundation in 2009 to help fund education, build shelters and provide other aid to homeless refugees in Afghanistan (Ferrell, 2010). The Khaled Hosseini’s Foundation is aimed at the Afghan people, especially women, children and refugees (The Khaled Hosseini Foundation, 2010). It is hard to imagine a better outcome of the books dealing with themes of morality and the fight of good against the evil. And it is no exaggerating, when it is stated, that Hosseini’s books are rare examples of how literature can make people actually do something, and in this case something good.

8 THE EDUCATIONAL ASPECT OF KHALED HOSSEINI'S NOVELS

In the previous parts of this thesis, the novels *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* were discussed in details. From now on, the focus of the thesis is going to be more practical. As this thesis is written as a part of studies at the Faculty of Education, it is only appropriate to devote the first part of this chapter to the teachers appearing in the novels and to mention the role of teachers in Hosseini's novels. Therefore, the characters of the teachers from *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* will be identified and described with the emphasis on the role they play in the novel. To identify and discuss the roles of the teachers in the novels is an activity which might be carried on also with the students who are recommended to read these novels. In the second part of the chapter the reasons why students should be encouraged to read Hosseini's novels and which themes are appropriate to be discussed with them are given and explained.

8.1 THE ROLES OF TEACHERS IN HOSSEINI'S NOVELS

In both of the Hosseini's novels, a thoughtful reader must notice the emphasis on the education. It plays an important role in private lives of the protagonists in the same extent as in the national context. Amir's and Laila's fathers persist on providing their children with the best possible education, as it gives them freedom to become valued people. Valued not only by the society but also by themselves. From the national point of view, education is one of the most important parts of restoring destroyed Afghanistan. Without education, no new generation will be able to avoid the mistakes their ancestors made.

8.1.1 IDEOLOGICAL TEACHERS

If the readers take a look at the characters of teachers who appear in Hosseini's novels, they can be divided into two groups. The first group is composed by the teachers who represent their contemporary society of Afghanistan, its culture and maybe even ideology. In this first group, two teachers might be included. When Amir discovers information about the history of Hazara people, which seems to be less biased than that taught at school, in one

his mother's books, he shows the book to his teacher, awaiting a response worthy of a teacher, but the teacher's reaction is quite different:

“That's the one thing Shi'a people do well,” he said, picking up his papers, “passing themselves as martyrs.” He wrinkled his nose when he said the word Shi'a, like it was some kind of disease (Hosseini, 2007, p. 8).

This teacher therefore represents the majority of Afghans who perceive Hazaras as a minor race (Mykiska, 2001, p. 51) and in his doing this, he helps the persecution because of their perceived lower status (Bond, 2003), as he presents his view to his pupils.

In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, the teacher soaked in ideology is represented by Laila's teacher Shanzai, called by her pupils Khala Rangmaal, Auntie Painter, according to the way in which she shapes her hand when slapping pupils (Hosseini, 2008, p. 111). In the spring 1987, when Khala Rangmaal teaches Laila, Afghanistan is still occupied by the Soviet forces and Khala Rangmaal, is very strongly influenced by the communist ideology. She believes that women and men are equal in every way, and that there is no reason women should cover their faces (Ibid., p. 111). Moreover, she perceives the Soviets as friends and saviours of Afghanistan.

This all might be considered as quite a harmless enthusiasm, but she also encourages the pupils: “And you must lend your own hand, children. You must report anyone who might know about these rebels. It's your duty. Even if it's your parents, your uncles or aunts” (Ibid., p. 111 – 112). This teacher shows how unimaginably dangerous an ideology penetrating education of children and young people might be. However, she is also a sad example of how easily the Taliban defeated this reformist attempts when Laila many years after she left the school sees Khala Rangmaal in an orphanage; once she forbid her students from covering, now she wears burqa and visits her children whom she, prevented from working, cannot feed (Ibid., p. 314). The readers cannot help and have to feel sorry for her. And by creating this contrast between once so revolutionary and strong women and a broken middle aged mother visiting her children in orphanage, he also shows how Taliban was able to break the human spirit completely.

8.1.2 IDEALISTIC TEACHERS

The other group of teachers in Hosseini's novels can be called idealistic in the best sense of this word. These teachers do their job, because they believe in it. They are persuaded they can do a lot of good by it.

The first representative of this group is undoubtedly Amir's wife, Soraya. Her story about teaching her illiterate servant back in Kabul might seem minor, maybe even marginal in comparison with the emotionally charged story of Amir, still it is an important and striking moment. The readers can feel Soraya's enthusiasm and pride:

I know it sounds childish, but the first time, Ziba wrote her own letter, I knew there was nothing else I'd ever want to be but a teacher. I was so proud of her and felt I'd done something really worthwhile (Hosseini, 2007, p. 132).

Somehow, the readers understand the reason why to teach is not to transmit the ideology, but to teach, to help pupils gain some kind of ability. And they have to esteem Soraya the same as Amir, who at this moment remembers his teasing Hasan and ridiculing his illiteracy, esteems her. Soraya is admirable for one more thing. Her father does not want her to become a teacher and continues on devaluing this profession when he says: "Anyone can teach" (Hosseini, 2007, p. 158). But Soraya persists: "Teaching may not pay much, but it's what I want to do! It's what I love" (Ibid., p. 159). A lot of teachers might envy Soraya such a strong enthusiasm.

In the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, a very good example of a teacher who serves as a moral model and a support would be a local Koran tutor Mullah Faizullah, Mariam's teacher of Koran. He helps Mariam to learn the verses from Koran by heart and thanks to his gentle approach later in her life she finds a lot of consolation in repeating them. Also one of the worst things Mariam blames her father is the fact that he does not allow her to say good bye to Mullah Faizullah after she has been married. However, she will never leave him, as she will never forget him and the verses he taught her. She will pass Mullah Faizullah's wisdom on to little Aziza. And the verses he taught her will also be the last words she will have on her lips in the moment of her death.

Soraya's counterpart in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is surprisingly Laila herself. On her return to Kabul, Laila becomes a teacher, as she, raised in an intellectual environment, believes in the importance of education for the reconstruction of Afghanistan. She uses her knowledge to help restore her country and to help the orphans find their value in life.

These two idealistic teachers represent what Khaled Hosseini in his speech to the graduates at Santa Clara University in the year 2011 mentions as the real meaning of education. And it is to become "men (and women) for others." As he explains:

I think this notion is not only the "true north" of education, but also of what it means to live a fulfilling life. Being a man or woman for others is a great responsibility but it is also a great gift. (...) Remember the watchword of this university, and be a man or woman for others. If you do, you will not only fulfil the aspirations of those who founded this great school for you, you will always have work, always have purpose and always have community (Hosseini, 2011).

8.2 WHY RECOMMEND HOSSEINI'S NOVELS TO THE SECONDARY STUDENTS

As the name of this whole thesis suggests, it is committed to the novels of Khaled Hosseini and their possible use for making students familiar with some of the important moral attitudes. The question which moral themes might be acknowledged by the students was basically answered when the individual themes of both of the novels were discussed in previous chapters. The aim of this chapter is to answer the question why it actually is desired to recommend students to read and why to read especially Khaled Hosseini's novels.

Nowadays, a topic which the media like to emphasize is the decreasing literacy of the reading public, especially of the children and young people. However, according to the research carried out by a Czech literary critic, Jiří Trávníček, which was aimed at the reading public in the Czech Republic, shows that quite contrary, young people from the age of 15 to 24 read quite a lot. But the reason they read lies in the school requirements and when this pressure ends, they stop reading as well. Trávníček also claims that although the amount of books which young people read is quite wide, they do not possess the basic ability of literacy (Trávníček, 2011, p. 160). Therefore, it is only desirable that every teacher, not only literature or language teachers, encourages his students to read. As a future teacher

of the English language and social sciences, I believe, I will have enough opportunities to encourage my students to read and I would definitely recommend both Hosseini's novels for the following reasons.

Carter and Long (in their publication *Teaching Literature*), introduce three main reasons why students should be encouraged to read in general; the cultural model, the language model and the personal growth model (Carter et Long, 1992, p. 2). The first so-called approach sees the value of literature in its "encapsulating the accumulated wisdom" (Ibid.), which therefore enables the readers "to understand and appreciate cultures and ideologies different from their own" (Ibid.). Undoubtedly, the *Kite Runner* is more than suitable when the teacher wants to make students familiar with Afghan culture but also with a culture of a Muslim country and most importantly with a culture, or better to say with the remains of the culture, of a country torn by war, totalitarian and theocratic regime.

Although Hosseini writes in English, he uses a few of the words in Farsi, and creates the sense of authenticity. Through his books, students can become familiar with many of traditions and customs of Afghan culture. He speaks about buzkashi and kite-flying, an Afghan wedding and many others. He explains a lot from the Afghan history even mentions the Budha statues destroyed by the Taliban and enables the readers together with Laila to actually visit them, touch them and enjoy the view of his beautiful country. What a lesson of history, religion and even geography. Moreover, all this information motivates the readers to get involved with the book more and search for more background information, which might be very useful for the students.

Also in the world where thanks to the television news we can actually see all the damage and suffering caused by various war conflicts and hear the numbers of the dead, we become more and more emotionally blind to all of it. However, the individual story of a person whose life was affected like this, be it a story of Hassan and Sohrab or Laila and her little Aziza or other people, forces us to think hard about the world we live in and to feel all their emotions like fear, anger or helplessness again. And suddenly, it is not just a different and strange culture and a far-away country, but a country we are familiar with and we are also forced to rethink our former prejudices towards it. All those are the reasons, for which it is more than desirable to read both Hosseini's novels and learn something about the culture they are set in.

According to the second model, the language model, the main reason for which literature is valued and used in teaching is that it is "promoting the language development"

(Carter et Long, 1992, p. 2). As Hosseini's novels are due to their themes and seriousness of the topic appropriate for the high school students, it does not have to be too difficult to find some students whose level of English is high enough to read the book in original. The language used in it is not so much difficult and from my personal experience I can confirm that a moving story can help the patient reader overcome all the difficulties he might come across. And both Hosseini's novels, as was proved before, have the moving story, which is moreover thrilling and capturing the reader from the very first lines. And this easiness and catching story do not demean the style, as Usha (2006) puts it, "Hosseini's narrative is uncomplicated and yet complex."

Such a narrative is able to captivate the reader regardless if they read the books in original or Czech translations. Nowadays, young people do not avoid long stories (Trávníček, 2011, p. 161) as is often claimed, but if they are to read a book, they have to be motivated. It must interest them and appeal to them, it must have something to offer them and as was stated before, Hosseini fulfills all these requirements of young readers. As Baker sums it up: "Hosseini has a remarkable ability to imprison the reader in horrific, shatteringly immediate scenes" (Baker, 2003). And he would not let the reader go until the book is finished.

The last but not least model is the personal growth model. This one is closely connected to the first one. The aim of the teachers should not be to make their students read books only for school, but to make them "continue to engage with literature throughout their lives" (Carter et Long, 1992, p. 3). It is also one of the most problematic issues revealed by the research done by Trávníček about the reading public and habits in the Czech Republic mentioned above. Therefore, teachers' aim should be to help students create their reading habits and preserve them. For, as Trávníček notes, it is exactly the age of 15 to 24 when people are most easily influenced by the teachers in their choice of books (Trávníček, 2011, p. 125). Teachers should take advantage of their influence and motivate the readers by "selecting the texts to which students can respond and in which they can participate imaginatively" (Carter et Long, 1992, p. 3). And although Hosseini's novels take part in an exotic Afghanistan and far away United States, he deals with many issues which might be familiar to the readers.

In *The Kite Runner* the most prominent one is the difficult relationship between the father and son and the son's inability to gain his father's love. It might be sad, but the fact is that this problem is really quite universal and young people might suffer from it a lot.

In this way, the book may help them to identify themselves with Amir and follow him through all the emotionally strong moments in the relationship with his father.

Nevertheless the most important reason for reading *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* lies in the fact, that the author never leaves hope. Although the ending of *The Kite Runner* might be flawed by “Hosseini’s obsession with karmic justice” (Usha, 2006), as he “in order to bring the tale full circle he relies on techniques that make the end seem like a rerun of the beginning with a not too gentle reshuffle of characters and events” (Ibid.). The readers and most of the critics still have to forgive him for this, as he brings hope in the lives of his characters the same as in the lives of readers. And I cannot help thinking that it is a good thing if the students can let this hope penetrate their lives and if they understand that however miserable their life might seem (as Mariam’s) and however terrible thing they have done (or they have not as Amir), there is still hope for them to become a valued person if their future decisions are right.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to present two novels written by Khaled Hosseini with focus on the moral aspects presented in the novels through their characters and find out the reasons why young students should be encouraged to read these novels and the ways in which they might discuss their themes.

Both of the novels written by Khaled Hosseini are situated in Afghanistan during approximately last forty years. This country torn by the constant wars, fighting and fanatic warlords creates a perfect scene for the difficult moral decisions and the characters described into the slightest details have to face the moments nobody would want to go through. However, these moral themes are not only to be applied to a war torn country. Hosseini works with the topics such as friendship, betrayal, lack of parents' love and the desire to be appreciated. Any student from any part of the world understands those and has at least some experience with them.

Therefore, after the historical background of Afghanistan, basic information about the novel and quite a detailed analysis of the characters were dealt with the focus of this thesis has changed and the main interest aimed at the educational aspects of Hosseini's novels. The moral themes are summed up and the reasons for which students should be encouraged to read these novels named. Basically, it is possible to summarize these reasons into three groups. The first is the cultural reason, as these novels provide students with enormous amount of information about Afghanistan, its culture and history. The language model, because reading the novels in original presents a way of improving the knowledge of English. The language used in the novels is not difficult therefore secondary students might deal with it successfully. And the last but definitely not the least is the personal growth model. As it is stated in the previous pages, students might grow personally after reading Hosseini's novels. These novels offer enough themes for the discussion about moral issues as well as for personal reflection. Moreover, the novels, although dealing with serious themes, are written in an easy and catching way, which might attract even those who do not perceive reading as their favourite free time activity and even might raise their interest in reading.

After listing all the minor aims of my thesis, I can only say: If just one reader of this thesis will agree or just one of my future pupils will read Hosseini's novels with interest and thinking, I believe the aim of my thesis will be fulfilled.

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RESUMÉ

Cílem této diplomové práce bylo analyzovat postavy přítomné v románech Khaleda Hosseiniho se zaměřením na morálně obtížné situace, kterými projdou, prozkoumat edukační aspekty obou románů a zdůvodnit, proč je vhodné seznámit s těmito knihami studenty anglického jazyka a společenských věd.

V první kapitole jsou uvedeny základní historické údaje týkající se Afghánistánu nezbytné pro snazší orientaci v ději románů. Tato země prošla během posledních čtyřiceti let nespočetnými válkami a konflikty, které ji změnila v místo téměř nesnesitelné pro lidský život. Pro román, který se zabývá závažnými morálními tématy, však tvoří velmi vhodné dějiště. Na pozadí zničujících konfliktů se tak rozvíjí příběhy plné takových témat, jako přátelství, zrada, snaha o napravení vlastních chyb a nedostatek rodičovské lásky a ocenění. Tato témata jsou samozřejmě srozumitelná napříč kontinenty a je více než pravděpodobné, že podobnou zkušenost má i mnoho žáků na základních a středních školách.

Právě to je důvod, proč jsou v této práci podrobně analyzovány postavy hrající hlavní roli v jednom z Hosseiniho románů. Nejprve je pozornost věnována románu *Lovec draků* a následně knize *Tisíc planoucích sluncí*. Poté se diplomová práce zaměří na edukační aspekty obou románů. Zvláštní pozornost je věnována různým zobrazením postavy učitele. Hlavní náplní poslední kapitoly práce je vyjmenování a vysvětlení důvodů, proč je vhodné, aby studenti byli s romány seznámeni.

Romány studentům poskytnou velmi přístupnou formou základní kulturní přehled nejen o Afghánistánu, ale i o kultuře Afghánských a jiných imigrantů. Dále, pokud se studenti rozhodnou číst knihy v původní, anglicky psané, verzi, zvýší se jejich jazyková kompetence. Romány nejsou psány složitým jazykem, proto je možné je ke čtení v původní verzi doporučit. Jako poslední byl uveden důvod osobního růstu. Oba romány nabízí nesmírné množství témat pro diskuzi v rámci hodin společenských věd i pro osobní zamyšlení.

Oba romány jsou proto více než vhodné pro využití v hodinách anglického jazyka či společenských věd a tato diplomová práce to potvrzuje.