

The Power of Representation: A Discursive Analysis of Cultural Production across Language, Literature, and Media in Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*

B. Vinoth

Assistant Professor, Department of English

Don Bosco College of Arts and Science

Keela Eral, Thoothukudi (DT).

Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli

Email ID: vinotheaswarybalan@gmail.com Mobile No: 9786619206.

Abstract

Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* offers a powerful narrative that reflects broader cultural and historical realities. This paper examines the novel through the lens of representation, focusing on the interplay of language, literature, and media. Language functions as a tool of both division and connection, shaping character identities and power dynamics. Literary techniques such as first-person narration and symbolism contribute to the novel's emotional and thematic depth. The film adaptation of *The Kite Runner* further explores the complexities of cultural representation, highlighting the challenges of translating literary narratives into visual media. Through this analysis, the paper demonstrates how *The Kite Runner* exemplifies the power of representation in shaping cultural understanding and interpretation.

Keywords: Representation, Language, Literature, Media, Identity, Power, Dynamics, Symbolism, Film Adaptation, Cultural Interpretation

Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* is a novel that transcends personal storytelling to reflect larger cultural and historical narratives. The novel captures the essence of displacement, trauma, and redemption, making it a relevant text for an analysis that intersects with language, literature, and media. The story follows Amir, an Afghan immigrant in America, as he navigates his past and the guilt that has haunted him since childhood. His relationship with Hassan, a Hazara servant and childhood friend, serves as the emotional core of the novel, illustrating themes of betrayal, power, and redemption.

Language plays a significant role in shaping the identities of the characters and their experiences. Amir's bilingualism—his ability to navigate both Persian/Dari and English—reflects his cultural duality. His transition from speaking Persian in Kabul to English in the United States marks his shifting identity. In contrast, Hassan's illiteracy symbolizes the power imbalance between them. The way language is used throughout the novel highlights the barriers between social classes and ethnic groups in Afghanistan. Moreover, the novel explores how language is a means of both oppression and connection. Words are wielded as

weapons, reinforcing divisions between the Pashtun and Hazara communities. As Baba says, “There is only one sin, only one. And that is theft... when you kill a man, you steal a life... you steal his wife’s right to a husband, rob his children of a father” (Hosseini 17). This quote demonstrates how language defines moral and social boundaries. At the same time, letters and spoken confessions serve as means of reconciliation and understanding, demonstrating the power of language to heal past wounds.

As a work of literature, *The Kite Runner* employs narrative techniques that heighten its emotional depth and thematic complexity. The novel’s first-person narration offers an intimate perspective on Amir’s internal struggles, allowing readers to witness his guilt, self-doubt, and ultimate search for redemption. The nonlinear storytelling, interweaving past and present, mirrors the way trauma lingers in the mind and continues to shape identity. Symbolism is another powerful literary device in the novel, with objects such as kites, scars, and the pomegranate tree carrying layered meanings that evolve with the narrative. The kites, which initially symbolize childhood innocence and joy, later become tied to betrayal and redemption. Amir’s internal conflict is evident when he reflects, “I ran. I ran because I was a coward... I was afraid that if I said something, that I did something, something would change” (Hosseini 72). The scars Amir and Sohrab bear represent both physical and emotional wounds that link past and present. Through these literary elements, Hosseini crafts a story that is both deeply personal and universally resonant, capturing the human experiences of loss, reconciliation, and belonging.

The novel’s transition into film provides another avenue for understanding its impact, demonstrating how media shapes and reinterprets literature for a wider audience. The 2007 film adaptation of *The Kite Runner*, directed by Marc Forster, translates the novel’s themes into a visual medium, highlighting aspects of Afghan culture and political turmoil through cinematography and performance. However, adaptation also involves modification, and the film alters certain aspects of the novel to appeal to an international audience. While it retains key moments from the book, it simplifies some of the novel’s more intricate psychological dimensions. The portrayal of trauma in film differs from literature; while the novel allows readers to immerse themselves in Amir’s thoughts and emotions, the film relies on visual and auditory cues to evoke the same responses. The film adaptation also sparked controversy, particularly regarding its depiction of sensitive cultural and political issues. Its release led to discussions about how Afghanistan and its people are represented in Western media. The reception of the film highlights the complexities of adapting a culturally rich and politically charged novel for a global audience.

The intersection of language, literature, and media in *The Kite Runner* demonstrates the power of storytelling across different forms. Language serves as a

marker of identity and belonging, literature captures trauma and human emotion with depth, and media reinterprets narratives, shaping how they are perceived by global audiences. Hosseini's novel, through its literary craftsmanship and subsequent adaptation, becomes more than just a personal tale; it is a reflection of historical struggles, cultural displacement, and the search for redemption. By analyzing *The Kite Runner* through these interconnected dimensions, one gains a deeper understanding of how narratives evolve and endure across linguistic, literary, and visual landscapes.

References:

Hosseini, Khaled. *The Kite Runner*. Bloomsbury Publishing (Paperback), 2013.
The Kite Runner. Directed by Marc Forster, Paramount Vantage, 2007.