

**THE STRUGGLE OF LIVING AS AFGHAN DIASPORA IN AMERICA  
DEPICTED IN KHALED HOSSEINI'S  
*THE KITE RUNNER***

**UNDERGRADUATE THESIS**

**BY  
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NIM 145110101111080**



**STUDY PROGRAM OF ENGLISH  
DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE  
FACULTY OF CULTURAL STUDIES  
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**Presented to  
Universitas Brawijaya  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of *Sarjana Sastra***

**BY  
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**STUDY PROGRAM OF ENGLISH  
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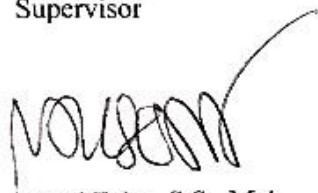
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Hopefully, this research can be beneficial for the other researchers who are interested in similar topic.

Malang, December 11<sup>st</sup>, 2018

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## ABSTRACT

Srining S.A., Andi. 2018. **The Struggle of Living as Afghan Diaspora in America Depicted in Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner***. Study Program of English, Department of Languages and Literature, Faculty of Cultural Studies, Universitas Brawijaya. Supervisor: Yusri Fajar, M.A.

Keywords: Afghan diaspora, cross-cultural adaptation, diaspora, post-colonial criticism, *The Kite Runner*, novel

America is one of the most popular countries for immigrants, that includes large variety of ethnic groups coming from various races, nationalities, and religions. Many immigrants live in America for many different reasons such as studying, working, or running away from economic or politic crisis, religious conflict and warfare in their homeland. However, the immigrants who come along with their original culture will realize that they are different by having different name, physical appearance, culture, ethnicity, and religion among the local people from the land. Unfortunately, it makes them experience the loss of the familiarity which causes common feelings range from mild uneasiness, homesickness and unhappiness to panic, severe irritability, and loss of perspective. The researcher conducted a study on Khaled Hosseini's novel entitled *The Kite Runner* to analyze the struggle of living as Afghan diaspora in America. Postcolonial criticism is used as the approach for this research, especially diaspora and Afghan diaspora, to analyze the data related to the migration. The researcher also uses cross-cultural adaptation to analyze the process of adaptation that is different for each individual also to be the parameter of the success level to the adjustment process.

This research reveals that from *The Kite Runner* novel, the struggle of living as Afghan diaspora is revealed by the problems of Afghan diaspora in America which consist of (1) different rules and systems and (2) sense of longing far away from home. This research also revealed how the Afghan diaspora survive as they compromise to the problems in the struggles of Afghan diaspora to improve their life which consist of (1) working in a gas station and establishing business at flea market, (2) building togetherness, (3) openness of mind and behavior and (4) cross-cultural adaptation accomplishment.



## ABSTRAK

Srining S.A., Andi. 2018. **Perjuangan Hidup sebagai Diaspora Afghanistan di Amerika yang digambarkan dalam *The Kite Runner* Karya Khaled Hosseini**. Program Studi Sastra Inggris, Jurusan Bahasa dan Sastra, Fakultas Ilmu Budaya, Universitas Brawijaya. Pembimbing: Yusri Fajar, M.A.

Kata Kunci: diaspora Afghanistan, adaptasi lintas budaya, diaspora, kritik post-colonial, *The Kite Runner*, novel

Amerika adalah salah satu negara paling populer bagi imigran, hal ini membuat penduduk Amerika terdiri dari berbagai kelompok etnis besar yang berasal dari berbagai ras, kebangsaan, dan agama. Banyak imigran tinggal di Amerika karena berbagai alasan seperti belajar, bekerja, atau melarikan diri dari krisis ekonomi atau politik, konflik agama dan peperangan di tanah air mereka. Namun, para imigran yang datang dengan budaya asli mereka akan menyadari bahwa mereka berbeda jika dilihat dari nama, penampilan fisik, budaya, etnis, dan agama di antara penduduk lokal Amerika. Sayangnya, itu membuat mereka mengalami kehilangan rasa familiar yang menyebabkan perasaan seperti ketidaknyamanan, kerinduan dan ketidakbahagiaan yang membentuk perilaku panik, amarah, dan kehilangan perspektif. Peneliti melakukan penelitian pada novel Khaled Hosseini berjudul *The Kite Runner* untuk menganalisis perjuangan hidup sebagai diaspora Afghanistan di Amerika. Kritik postkolonial digunakan sebagai pendekatan untuk penelitian ini, terutama diaspora dan diaspora Afghanistan, untuk menganalisis data yang terkait dengan migrasi. Peneliti juga menggunakan adaptasi lintas budaya untuk menganalisis proses adaptasi yang berbeda dari masing-masing individu yang juga terbentuk dari parameter tingkat keberhasilan untuk proses adaptasi yang dilakukan.

Penelitian ini mengungkapkan bahwa dari novel *The Kite Runner*, perjuangan hidup sebagai diaspora Afghanistan melingkupi masalah yang terdiri dari (1) aturan dan sistem yang berbeda dan (2) rasa kerinduan kepada tanah air. Penelitian ini juga mengungkapkan bagaimana diaspora Afghanistan bertahan hidup ketika mereka berjuang untuk memperbaiki kehidupan mereka yang meliputi perjuangan hidup dengan (1) bekerja sebagai pegawai pom bensin dan membuka usaha bisnis kecil di pasar loak, (2) membangun kebersamaan, (3) keterbukaan pikiran dan perilaku dan (4) pencapaian adaptasi lintas budaya.



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the background which brings the researcher to conduct a research entitled “*The Struggle of Living as Afghan Diaspora in America Depicted in Khaled Hosseini’s The Kite Runner*”. This chapter consists of three subchapters which are the background of the study, problems of the study and objectives of the study.

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Since America is one of the most popular countries for immigrants, population of America includes a large variety of ethnic groups coming from many races, nationalities, and religions. In line with this fact, according to Kim D. Butler (2002, p.190), even as diasporan populations proliferated, communities that scholars had once labeled as immigrant, nomadic, or exilic also began to be called diasporas. Many immigrants live in America for many different reasons such as studying, working, or running away from economic or politic crisis, religious conflict and warfare in their homeland. However, the immigrants who come along with their original culture will realize that they are different by having different name, physical appearance, culture, ethnicity, and religion among the local people from the land.

Khaled Hosseini, one of popular and influential authors who was born in Kabul, Afghanistan, on March 4, 1965, uses diaspora in his literary works which depicted diasporic community. In his works, he describes journey of immigrants toward self-discovery through several factors such as meeting new people, exposure to new religions, cultures, and ethnicities. However, sense of nostalgic of one's own culture will overwhelm the effort to fit and re-construct the identity where the immigrants battle their sense of belonging. He provides readers an imaginative perspective through fiction as an immigrant on social, political and cultural realities. One of his bestseller novels, *The Kite Runner*, highlights the struggle of Afghan diaspora in America.

*The Kite Runner* is a story about early years in Kabul. The main character, Amir, lives in a fairly posh house with his father, whom he calls Baba, and their servants which are Ali and his son, Hassan. Later on this novel, when the Soviet Armies make an invasion in Kabul, Amir and Baba decide to leave Kabul and go to America as immigrants. While in the runaway leaving their homeland, Kabul, Baba expects that they can have a better life in America. Parallel with this situation, since the evolution of human on earth, they had been dependent on the environment. As to make a better living, human needs to adapt in the right way to survive within surrounding and environment in which they choose to live. In this modern era, people live in multicultural societies and lots of individuals deal with two or more cultures due to the increase of international migration. In line with this fact, Baba and Amir can be safe and start a new life in America through migration.

Through the novel, the reader will also see the transformation of the two main characters when they face different culture and their struggle living as an immigrant. This condition commands the immigrant to adapt in this various life domains, in regard to the demands of dealing with different cultural way of living. When the immigrant learns to live in a new culture, it is not always easy or comfortable. Cultural adjustment is an emotional process. Common feelings range from mild uneasiness, homesickness and unhappiness to panic, severe irritability, and loss of perspective. The basic cause of these feelings is the loss of the familiarity. The differences in way of life, living and thinking between the Middle East society and Western society are ones of the biggest factors that need to be accomplished.

Middle East, including Afghanistan holds conservative system of society with strict religion and culture which means to keep and transmit the traditions from one generation to the next, according to Gutek (2004, p.197). Conservatives believe that institutions such as state, school, church, and family have a primary role and function in society. Their role is to transmit the cultural heritage including skills, values and knowledge through generations. In contrast, the Western society holds liberal construction which promotes the freedoms of human beings and loosens the moral codes as stated by Gutek (2004, p.194). Liberalists believe that individuals should enjoy the freedom that is guaranteed under constitutional protection. The core values of liberalism are based on progress as well as the willingness to experience experiment and change.

The migration in the story itself happened because of the invasion of Soviet which is also influenced by American hegemony to Afghanistan society. Thus, discussion of post-colonialism becomes relevant. In line with this, Gramsci in Ania Loomba's (2005, p.29) *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* states that hegemony is power gained by mixing coercion and consent. It means proliferation of ideology also occurred through creation of subjects who willingly submit to being ruled. The idea of American hegemony has its practical roots in World War II. America emerged from that war as the dominant economic, political and technological power. This fact makes America takes the position at the top of international system and becomes global leader despite already known as superpower country. This is the main reason many immigrants choose America as their destination for immigration.

Even though the story doesn't show the reader the exact colonization of America to Afghanistan, but it shows through the Amir and Baba's way of thinking and way of life. This idea of postcolonialism correlates on how Baba decides about moving and living in America. Moreover, it also pertains to how Amir's perspective and way of life has shaped through his living and growth in America. Thereby, the colonization depicted in *The Kite Runner* novel shows proliferation ideology of the two main characters who choose and willingly be ruled by America can fairly to be studied as postcolonial novel that reveal issues about the problematic life as diaspora.

Khaled Hosseini's interest in depicting Afghan diaspora in the land of America makes him present Baba and Amir as the primary characters of the story. Their condition reflects on how Afghan diaspora's way to deal the problems of living



as immigrants in America. Despite its achievement as bestseller novel, the highlighted issues that Khaled Hosseini brings up about living as immigrant in America is really interesting. As we have known, in this modern day Afghanistan is still torn by both of civil and foreign wars. Afghan people struggled in their own land impacted in increasing numbers of people to escape dangers from within their borders. Afghan diaspora may not define integration into American culture and society like other diaspora might. They also tend to settle in areas where a large number of their own ethnic group present. This condition often led to feelings of isolation and hindering acculturation.

In this research, the researcher used postcolonial criticism as the approach in analyzing the data. The researcher also used diaspora and cross-cultural adaptation as the tool to obtain and analyze the data. Therefore, this research is important because through this research the reader will be able to identify kinds of problems faced by the immigrant especially Afghan diaspora and their way to adapt and improve their life. This study is emphasized in finding out how the adaptation works on Afghan diaspora based on the living of the two main characters which are Amir and Baba. By doing this study, hopefully it will give enrichment for next researchers who are interested in Afghan diaspora. The writer could also enrich her knowledge in cross cultural adaptation of immigrant.

## 1.2 Problems of the Study

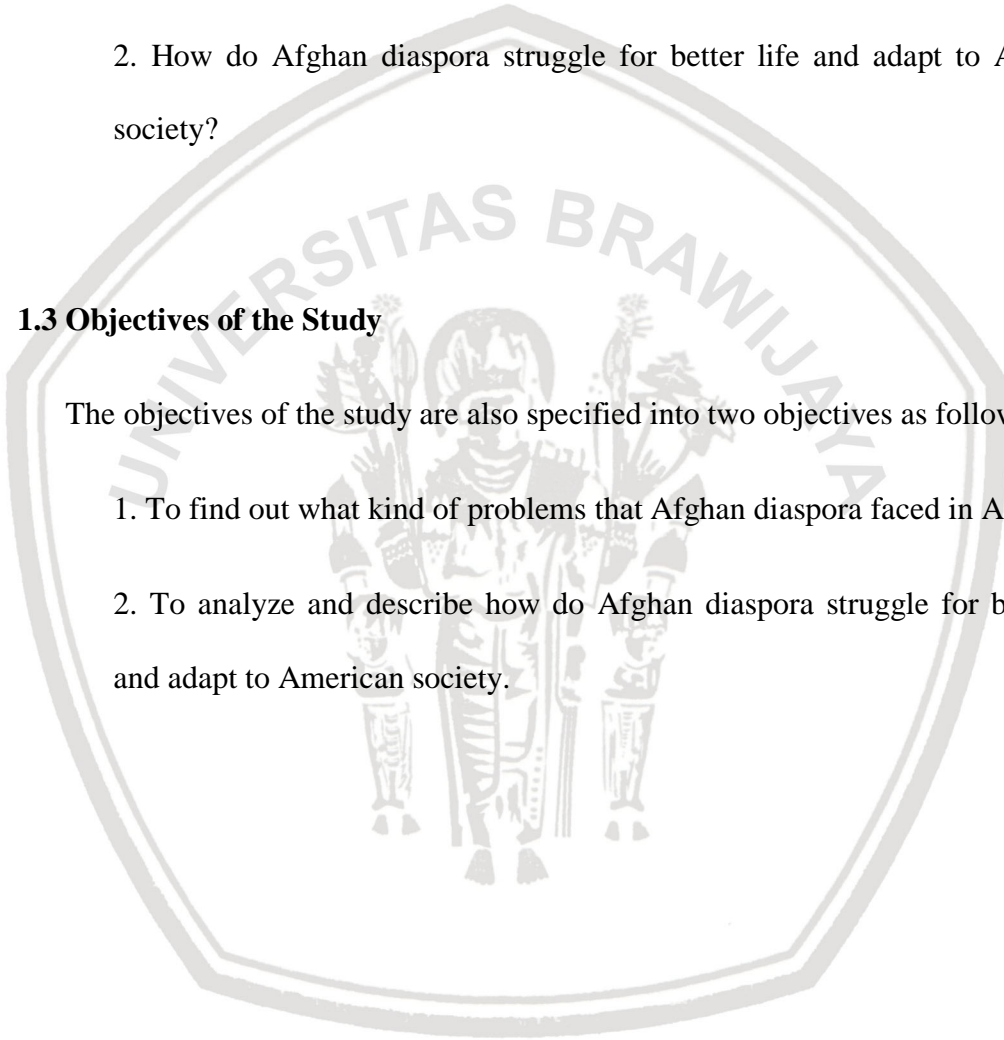
Based on the background of the study, the researcher is interested in finding out the answers to these questions:

1. What kind of problems that Afghan diaspora faced in America?
2. How do Afghan diaspora struggle for better life and adapt to American society?

## 1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are also specified into two objectives as follow:

1. To find out what kind of problems that Afghan diaspora faced in America.
2. To analyze and describe how do Afghan diaspora struggle for better life and adapt to American society.





## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND RESEARCH METHOD

In this chapter, the researcher presents the review of related literature which is used in conducting the research. This chapter uses postcolonial criticism as the approach and two supporting theories which are theory of diaspora, specifically Afghan diaspora and cross-cultural adaptation. Moreover this chapter also describes the previous studies and research method.

#### 2.1 Postcolonial Criticism

Postcolonial theory is related to the colonizers and colonized. It is a complex and contentious field since its emergence in 1970s. Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin (1998, p.187) explain that the word 'colonial' refers to the colonialism activities in the past. While the word 'post' means after or hence. Thus, the term 'postcolonial' was used to the situation after colonialism in the past. According to Leela Gandhi (1998, p.125), post-colonialism discussion aims to fulfill two fundamental objectives. First, it seeks to reveal how the colonial encounter takes part to the conjunct transformation of colonizer and colonized. Second, it examines and produces manifesto in order to combat institutionalized distress and oppression. Postcolonial

theory can be considered as theoretical framework in order to highlight the struggle of one culture in the domination of another culture as stated by Bressler (2007, p.238). It indicates that in postcolonial study the colonized is considered as the victim of the colonizer's political domination.

Postcolonial criticism is no longer discussing about the relation between West and East directly. Young (1990) stated that postcolonial theory is the concept to examine the reorientation towards the perspective of knowledge, as well as needs that developed outside the West. He adds that postcolonial theory is concerned with developing the idea of a political practice and morally committed to transforming the conditions of exploitation and poverty which means that postcolonial theory can be used to criticize the domination power of the new imperial.

In addition, according to Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin (1998, p.i) postcolonial studies stand at the intersection of debates about race, colonialism, gender, politic and language. Moreover, postcolonial also explains about diaspora, orientalism, double consciousness, nativism, mimicry, hybridity and ambivalence. The discussion is related to the studies also involve various kinds of experiences such as migration, slavery, suppression, resistance, representation, difference, race, gender, and place. Postcolonialism fascinated the idea of migration, globalization, and transnationalism.

In line with this, according to Nair in his book titled *Postcolonial Theories of Migration* (2013) states that postcolonialism has been recently reinvigorated as a useful approach to advance existing migration research. Colonial period witnessed migration due to war, slavery and imperial subjugation. However through the

decolonization, the dispersal of people occurs through forced migration or voluntary reason which happened over various places in the world. Closely connected with migration and cultural identity is diaspora study, which constitutes an important subject in postcolonial discourse. So the concept of postcolonialism is appropriate to analyze the character of Amir and Baba, since both migrate because of war and experience the life of diaspora.

### 2.1.1 Diaspora

Diaspora is defined as the dispersal of a people from its original homeland as stated by Kim Butler (2002, p. 189). The characters and the events shown in the story represent the people who struggle to assimilate into new land and new culture in order to fulfill the need to do the migration from their homeland. Stated by M.L. Raina through his article entitled *Home, Homelessness and The Artifice of Memory* (2007) that, "Dislocation can occur as a physical movement from home into alien territory forced by war and persecution." It means that the diaspora needs to adapt in new territory where things are really different from their origin. There are two types of displacements, which are voluntary and involuntary or forced migration. Voluntary migration means movement according to personal desires. Involuntary migration means in which a person or community is forced to leave their homeland, irrespective of their choice most likely because of war.

Displacement and exile have enjoyed a special privilege in literature. Diasporic literature is influenced by migratory experiences of displaced communities. As already known, literature reflects reality includes change in social, political, and cultural realities while retaining a connection to heritage. Specifically, diasporic literature represents the life of people who migrate into the new land, including their adaptation to new culture.

Diaspora itself is a part of phenomenon in postcolonial world. In another word, it can be assumed that diaspora is an ancient social formation, comprising people living out of their ancestral homeland, retaining their loyalties towards their co-ethnics and their homeland from which they were forced off. Although it was used in the classical period in relation to Jewish population, it is getting broader as the term has proliferated and applied to many diasporic communities coming through such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, India, Mexican, and so on.

Diasporic communities, according to Safran (1991, p.83), are committed to the maintenance or restoration of this homeland and have high solidarity within the group. Basically it formulates that diasporic communities are still bound to their origin country and have the strong connection with their origin community. They also establish and preserve their origin culture in the new land. In connection with this, James Clifford (1994, p.304) states that diasporic configurations such as longing, memory, and dis(identification) are partaken by a broad range of minority and migrant populations. This statement shows that immigrants cannot be separated from their homeland.

When the individuals are disconnected from their homeland, instead they are capable to find themselves in strong relation with their own homeland. It because of their longing feeling and sense of belonging come up as they compare their *true homeland* and *temporary homeland*. Moreover, diaspora also includes dwelling, maintenance communities, and longing feeling far away from home. As a result, they formed consciousness and solidarity that retains the identification apart from their national time/space in order to live in the new land. James Clifford also adds that diaspora is not the only matter of movement of the dispersed people but also the struggle to define their identity as diasporic community. Those characteristics of diaspora are also reflected on the two main characters which are Amir and Baba, and their connection to other Afghan diaspora in the story. In order to go further into the analysis, the reseacher also applies an additional theory of Afghan diaspora.

### 2.1.2 Afghan Diaspora

Afghan diaspora is one of the diasporic communities in America. As stated by Farhad Ahmad Pir (2011) in his Journal entitled *Role of Afghan Diaspora*, based on historical context of the migration cause is by foreign invasion, particularly from Soviet, and internal clashes have made the land of Afghanistan as a hotbed of wars between worlds powers and colonizers. Afghanistan was torn with struggle of Monarchs and Republicans, the internal struggles were largely supported from different external powers. These wars led to the destruction of economy, politic,



infrastructure, raped of women, and mass killing of Afghans in their homeland. That factor led the Afghans to the decision to do migration to another country for the sake of safety. Afghan people come mostly under the category of involuntary migration.

Despite experiencing many conditions to face the adjustment problems in the new land, also isolation related to their culture, custom, tradition and many things, Afghan diaspora have formed their own communities within the society and intensely wait for the better condition. Afghan mass migration throughout twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century can be divided into four phases from 1970's to the present.

- (1) First phase of refugees (1973-1992)
- (2) Second phase of refugees (1992-1996)
- (3) Third phase of refugees (1994-2001)
- (4) Fourth phase of refugees (2001)

The Afghan-American population in the US numbers close to 300,000 (Embassy of Afghanistan, Washington, D.C.). The central concentrations are in San Francisco Bay Area, California, and Northern Virginia. Although a few Afghans immigrated to the America in early twentieth century, the mass migration did not occur until the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1978 (Morwari Zafar, 2015). According to Lipson, Juliene and Patricia (1996) in *"Afghans." In Refugees in America in the 1990s*, the vast majority of Afghan refugees in the United States were in 1999. They arrived here not through choice, but because of the needs of safety, as

they avoid warfare in Afghanistan. Many were trained as professionals in Afghanistan but found work impossible to obtain in the America, due to difficulties with the English language, depleted savings, or lack of a social support.

The waves of immigrants from Afghanistan in the 1980's provide a big picture of the strengths and challenges of the people. Whereas in the early 1980s, the arrival of educated and cosmopolitan Afghan immigrants, their middle-class relatives arrived here by the late 1980s through family reunification. These newer arrivals were less educated, and some were illiterate in their own language as well as in English. For many Afghan refugees, America was not their first country of refuge. Many escaped the violence of their own country by fleeing to Pakistan, for example. However, in Pakistan there are many issues such as health problems, as well as heat exhaustion, were common maladies. Similar problems confronted those who fled to Iran.

Those facts of Afghan Diaspora are reflected in the novel, as the migration of Amir and Baba happened because of the foreign invasion from Soviet. The destruction caused by the war is also described through the novel, from the damage of the country infrastructure, economy and politic mess, raped of women, and mass killing of Afghans in their homeland. Because of this reason, Baba took a decision to migrate from Afghanistan to Pakistan and then to California (America). There is also a specific distinction between Afghan diaspora's first generation and second generation. The first generation tends to not always understanding or supportive of the shift to the new land values. While the second generation tends to be more open to



new values of new culture. Through the story, Afghan diaspora are also depicted as committed and have high solidarity within the group and lived closely to each other, mainly in California in which Amir and Baba choose to migrate. The first generation behavior is also shown in Baba responses to the situation he needs to face as he adapts as immigrant. Moreover, the second generation behavior is represented from Amir's behavior toward the adaptation cases.

## **2.2 Cross-Cultural Adaptation**

People are surrounded by elements in their own culture that influence who they are and how they relate to the world. The cultures that people lived since their birth and have grown up, make them feel comfortable because they used to live with that custom and system. People's values and attitudes have been shaped by their experiences in their native culture. However, when they happen to migrate from their homeland to the new land, the important thing that needs to be accomplished is adaptation.

According to Castro (2003), adaptation refers to the process of adjustment to the existing conditions in the environment. Intercultural adjustment and adaptation concern for many who deal with the stress of living in a new and different culture. According to Matsumoto D., LeRoux, Bernhard, and Gray (2004, p. 282), adapting to a new culture can have both positive and negative consequences. The negative consequences of poor adjustment include psychological and psychosomatic concerns

will have an impact to the early return to one's home country; emotional distress, poor communication, culture shock, depression, anxiety, diminished school and poor work performance, and difficulties in interpersonal relationships. On the other hand, positive consequences include gains in language competence, self-esteem, awareness, and health, self-confidence, positive mood, interpersonal relationships, and stress reduction.

Cross-cultural adaptation is a process of acclimatizing to the demand of a new cultural environment, which means both changing perspectives and reconciling beliefs to the host culture. It is more about sensitivity, understanding, reaction and anticipation (Ling & Lei, 2014, p.24). In general, there are four broad streams on the cross-cultural adaptation process proposed by Oberg (1960) which are started from *Honeymoon*, *Hostility*, *Humor*, and *At Home* stage. It is the most dominant cross-cultural adaptation model, the U-curve theory of cultural adaptation. In *Honeymoon* stage, the individual will experience feeling of fascinated and excited by everything new. Then move on to the next stage which is *Hostility*. The novelty of the new culture has worn off and the individual will primarily focus on the differences between new culture and home culture. In this stage, the individual will experience the feeling of homesick. Next stage is *Humor*, where the individual is becoming more familiar with the new culture and its "logic" and values. Cultural cues become easier to read. Then move on to the last stage which is *At Home*, in this stage the individual will experience sense where "new" culture is no longer new; instead, the "foreign" country you live at the moment will feel like another home.

Allport (1937) proposes the Big 5 Traits theory, which includes: openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism. Furthermore, other researchers develop the personality traits theory, openness or open-mindedness which refers to an open attitude toward different situations and the flexibility of individuals to adapt when they are in a new environment. In other cases, very little adaptation change may take place in individuals whose ethnic community offers an almost complete isolation from having to face the new cultural challenges. Thus, adaptation can be understood as the continuing psychological and behavioral outcomes of acculturation processes. By applying the cross-cultural adaptation theory and cycle as proposed by Oberg (1960) that will be used to illustrate the process of finding how the immigrants adapt and improve their living in the new land through the depiction in the story.

### 2.3 Previous Studies

In this study, the researcher uses two previous studies to broaden the knowledge and to get other perspectives to do the research. The first is the study entitled *Configuring the Identity of Amir and Baba in the Context of Diasporic Discourse in Khaled Hosseini's The Kite Runner* conducted by Wahyukirana (2016), a student of Sanata Dharma University. In her research, she discussed how the identities of Amir and Baba constructed in Diasporic Discourse, using the assimilation ability of both characters as an individual. Wahyukirana's research used

the same material object as the researcher uses in this research which is *The Kite Runner* novel.

The second study is the study entitled *The Influence of Cultural Factors on the Cross-cultural Adjustment: A Study Focuses on the Working Experience of Chinese Knowledge workers in Sweden* conducted by Yuan (2017), a student of Lund University. In her research, she discussed the cross-cultural adjustment of Chinese knowledge workers whose experience their working life in Sweden from the cultural factors' perspective. Yuan's research used the same theory as the researcher used in this research which is cross-cultural adaptation. Moreover, Yuan also used cultural differences as the ground theory of her research.

These previous studies are different from this study because the main focus of this research is to observe the struggle of living as Afghan Diaspora depicted in *The Kite Runner*. The previous studies are focusing more into the individuals as their object of research. Meanwhile, this research is focusing more into the problems that affected the adaptation process faced by the main characters of the story and how the main characters struggle to survive in the new surroundings. The previous studies definitely enrich the researcher's knowledge in using postcolonial criticism and cross-cultural adjustment within the analysis and result of the object chosen by the previous studies.

## 2.4 Research Method

In conducting the research, the researcher takes several steps, there are:

### 2.4.1 Deciding the material object

The novel entitled *The Kite Runner* is chosen as the material object of the study because of its correlation to Afghan Diaspora in America. The main issue that the researcher is interested about is the main character's migration from Afghanistan, which caused by war, to America with expectation to have a better life, and their struggle after migrated as their sense of belonging to their homeland in Afghanistan overwhelmed the adaptation process.

### 2.4.2 Deciding the suitable approach and theory

The researcher chooses the suitable approaches for this research. Since the research is about the struggle of living as Afghan diaspora in America, the researcher uses postcolonial criticism as the approach and two supporting theories which are diaspora, specifically Afghan diaspora, and cross-cultural adaptation as the guideline to collect and analyze the data from the material object which is novel.

### 2.4.3 Reading the novel and collecting the data

In this step, *The Kite Runner* novel is read several times to gain a better understanding about the character's condition and behavior toward the adaptation of living as Afghan Diaspora in America. While re-reading the story, the researcher will



also analyze the action, dialogue, and narrative description in the story that are marked.

#### **2.4.4 Analyzing and interpreting the data**

After collecting the data, the researcher will analyze the data. The researcher takes the data from action, dialogue and narrative description of the story that are marked. Thus, the researcher will analyze the data using theories presented above in order to get the valid result for the research. After that, the researcher interprets the data from the novel that is marked to get clear depiction about the struggle of living as Afghan diaspora in America shown in *The Kite Runner* novel.

#### **2.4.5 Drawing Conclusion**

After analyzing and interpreting the data, the final step of this research is drawing conclusion based on the result of the data analysis.

### CHAPTER III

#### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

*The Kite Runner* is a diasporic novel written by Khaled Hosseini. In this story, Khaled Hosseini presents the life of Afghan diaspora in America. Through his works, he molds his characters whose had migrated to depict the emotional and physical journey of adaptation to the new life in America. However, in other hand, the Afghan diaspora still have desire to come back to their homeland while there also another who already fit perfectly into the new land.

The struggle begins as they decided to migrate to America. It causes many life changes since Afghanistan and America are holding different values and perspectives. In *The Kite Runner* novel, Amir as the main character is portrayed as a young Afghan diaspora who is seeing the life in America as opportunity and has a good ability to adjust to the new surroundings. Meanwhile, his father, Baba, is portrayed as an old Afghan diaspora who is overwhelmed by the sense of longing far away from his homeland as he tried to adjust to the new life in America. Those two types of different adaptation are correlated to the way they face the situation for their adaptation.

From this novel, it can be seen that migration caused by the war is an actual phenomenon as the story is correlated to the real situation that happened in Afghanistan. It also connects to Afghan diaspora ways of surviving through the poor



condition caused by the war. Although, migrate means they can survive and start new life in a new place, there are many obstacles that are caused by the migration. Because leaving their homeland also means leaving the life in there. Custom, system and surrounding will become the main factor of the individual's happiness and success in their life. Whereas, physical and emotional condition will affect a lot to the adjustment process which means the adaptation can be easier or harder when it happens to be applied to different individual.

In this chapter, the researcher answers the problems of the study that have been stated in the previous chapter. This chapter consists of two sub-chapters. There are the problems of Afghan diaspora in America and the struggles of Afghan diaspora to improve their life. The first sub-chapter explains about various problems and conditions that Afghan diaspora, especially Amir and Baba, must face as accomplishment to their adaptation in America which has been depicted in the story. It also gives an explanation about how the emotional process affects the behavior of the individual, as the longing feeling far away from home keep coming. Through the journey, Afghan diaspora experience and learn many things as they adjust to the new life.

As the analysis keeps going, the second sub-chapter will give clear correlation between how the immigrants adjusting to the new surroundings and their effort to improve their life that is depicted in the story through the characters. The flexibility of individuals toward different situations will support their adaptation performance. The data will be analyzed by employing post-colonial criticism, diaspora, especially

Afghan diaspora, and applying cross-cultural adaptation. It is aimed to reveal the process of adaptation of Afghan diaspora during their living in America.

### **3.1 The Problems of Afghan Diaspora in America**

Before going deeper into the analysis of Afghan diaspora's struggles in America, it is significant to open the research problem to the classified of the applied problems from the internal and external factors. Every individuals organize themselves into various kinds of social grouping and conditions, in which resulted to the complex and dynamic environment which is different from place to place, time to time and across cultures. According to Rutherford and Ahlgren (1991), "Human behavior is affected both by genetic inheritance and by experience. The ways in which people develop are shaped by social experience and circumstances within the context of their inherited genetic potential." From that statement, it can be assumed that each individual is born into social and cultural setting that develop their characteristics and behavior toward some given situations.

Moreover, in addition to the information about human society stated by Rutherford and Ahlgren (1991), every culture includes a somewhat different web of patterns and meanings: ways of earning a living, systems of trade and government, social roles, religions, traditions in clothing and foods and arts, expectations for behavior, attitudes toward other cultures, and beliefs and values about all of these activities. It means that those different social patterns will predict different predictable behavior, which will be considered as an acceptable human behavior

when the behavior is suiting the situation based on those factors mentioned. This social pattern is also applied for the immigrants. Unusual behavior of the immigrants can be considered as inappropriate because some normal behaviors in one culture may be considered unacceptable to other parties.

Based on that explanation, here are several problems that Afghan diaspora, especially Amir and Baba, must face to adapt into American society.

### **3.1.1 Different Rules and Systems**

Rules and systems are applied differently for each authority and territory. It is also valid in America. As what researcher had mentioned before in the background of the study, there are many differences of values and perspectives between West and Middle-East. Middle East, including Afghanistan holds conservative system of society with strict religion and culture which means to keep and transmit the traditions from one generation to the next generation, while the Western society holds liberal construction which promotes the freedoms of human beings and loosens the moral codes. Those perspectives develop rules and system that are suitable for the specific society.

The first set of rules that need to be faced by Afghan diaspora in order to be an immigrant is Visa. Immigrating to America is a tough decision, despite its popularity as a popular country for immigrant. There are many procedures that need to be accomplished to gain legal visa as an immigrant. It includes different types of immigrant visas, required forms, and steps in the immigrant visa process. To be

qualified to apply for an immigrant visa, a foreign citizen must be sponsored by an American citizen relative, America's lawful permanent resident, or a prospective employer (American Embassy official website, 2018).

When the individuals apply to American embassy or consulate, the consulate officer will take the consideration based on laws, whether the applicants are eligible to receive a visa or not. If the applicant qualifies the requirements, the consular officer will determine which visa category appropriate for the applier. Next, the applicants will be interviewed by the immigration staffs in charge to identify the motives and prospects for their migration and life after the migration. Because of this complicated procedure, the visa will be taking a long time to be ready for the immigrant as illustrated below:

We'd spent six months in Peshawar waiting for the INS to issue our visas. Our grimy one-bedroom apartment smelled like dirty socks and cat droppings, but we were surrounded by people we knew-- at least Baba knew. He'd invite the entire corridor of neighbors for dinner, most of them Afghans waiting for visas. (Amir, 1963, p.113)

From the excerpt above, it implies that the immigrants who want to migrate to America need to be prepared and struggled in the runaway which is not decent if seen from the properness aspect of life. This condition requires Baba and Amir to live low standard of life, which is represented in the poor apartment setting that is really different from the way Baba and Amir lived in Kabul, where they are considered as wealthy family and lived in fairly posh house. This degradation makes them live

uncomfortably in that apartment because the material and supporting aspects of living are not provided appropriately in there.

However, Amir and Baba are still happy because they are surrounded by people who are familiar to them. Because most of people that come to that area are from their local land who also want to migrate mostly because of safety reason which make the location become like a rest area before they continue their immigration journey. For the immigrant, it is crucial to save their lives as soon as possible rather than taking their time to plan and be ready for it, without any concession to prepare for their living material support so they will not waste too much time. In that area, with limited and most basic living material support they could have, they help each other until they are ready to leave the place. Moreover, the war condition makes it impossible for the runaway victims to come back to their homeland resulted in the need to endure the condition for quite a long time until their visa is ready.

Despite the fact that it takes a long procedure, it cannot be set aside the fact that America is a popular country for immigrants. Each immigrant has different experiences getting their legal status. This is also implied on the narration where Amir and Baba are waiting for their visa in Peshawar, there are a lot of people like them who want to migrate and wait for their visa. Since so many people from various countries across the world are making America as their destination to migrate, it is acceptable to assume why the visa takes a long time and has a very strict and selective rules to be processed.



This condition is reflected when Taliban rules the region in Kabul. Amir who has just returned to the Middle East to see his father's best friend and business partner, Rahim Khan, learns the truth about his childhood playmate, Hassan, who is actually his illegitimate half-brother. Hassan has a son named Sohrab. Unfortunately, Hassan has been killed by the Taliban and this makes Sohrab became an orphan.

Amir, in his homecoming to Afghanistan, helps Sohrab to escape from Afghanistan and decides to bring his nephew to America to live with him and Soraya. In order to adopt Sohrab and take him to America, Amir must go to the Embassy and follows the rules set as he applied for Sohrab's visa to legalize his migration to America. There he met Raymond Andrews, who explained the rules and data that need to be submitted in order to adopt and take Sohrab to America. Amir (1963, p. 288) describes it on the conversation between Raymond Andrews and him as follows:

"You have death certificates?"

"Death certificates? This is Afghanistan we're talking about. Most people there don't have birth certificates."

His glassy eyes didn't so much as blink.

"I don't make the laws, sir. Your outrage notwithstanding, you still need to prove the parents are deceased. The boy has to be declared a legal orphan."

"But—"

"You wanted the long answer and I'm giving it to you. Your next problem is that you need the cooperation of the child's country of origin. Now, that's difficult under the best of circumstances, and, to quote you, this is Afghanistan we're talking about. We don't have an American embassy in Kabul. That makes things extremely complicated. Just about impossible."

The conversation above shows that it is nearly impossible for an orphan and a victim of war to do migration. One of rules set by the American Embassy for visa applicant is to be qualified to apply for an immigrant visas, a foreign citizen must be sponsored by American citizen relative, America's lawful permanent resident, or a prospective employer. For this condition, Sohrab has his uncle, Amir, who is a legal citizen of America. But since he is still underage, he needs his parent permission admission to be adopted by his uncle. Unfortunately, his parent was executed by the Taliban which makes him an orphan. Therefore, since there are data forms that need to be fulfilled in order to validate the adoption, Sohrab's condition as an orphan and a victim of Afghanistan war makes the adoption becomes harder to be accomplished. Moreover, to fulfill those required data, it needs government institution to make and validate the condition. Unfortunately the fact that Afghanistan condition and infrastructures are damaged by the war, makes it nearly impossible to accomplish the requirements despite the tragic condition faced by the victim. Thus, the condition shaped by the war makes the victim drown into poorer condition.

. Whereas, there is another obstacle indicates from the passage above. It is how the people in charge of the legal visa migration respond to the war's victim condition which is inhuman and merciless. The way Raymond Andrews responses to Sohrab's condition can be counted as strict and no tolerance because he only focuses on the systems that need to be followed, without any concession for those victim of the war which make the migration becomes harder. This is really tragic for the victim



of the war, in which the situation they need to be saved immediately but the rules and system set by the government won't allow them to immigrate easily.

Another frustration, which is caused by the differences between Middle-East and West, is shown in the condition where Baba reacted to the I.D. buyer check system. Baba's frustration with learning new culture, also the overwhelmed feeling caused by the differences between his homeland, Afghanistan, and America result in outburst in the Convenience Store. Amir (1963, p.111) describes the way Baba reacts to the situation as follows:

I was flipping through a worn copy of a Mike Hammer mystery when I heard screaming and glass breaking. I dropped the book and hurried across the street. I found the Nguyens behind the counter, all the way against the wall, faces ashen, Mr. Nguyen's arms wrapped around his wife. On the floor: oranges, an overtuned magazine rack, a broken jar of beef jerky, and shards of glass at Baba's feet. It turned out Baba had no cash on him for the oranges. He'd written Mr. Nguyen a check and Mr. Nguyen had asked for an ID. "He wants to see my license," Baba bellowed in Farsi. "Almost two years we've bought his damn fruits and put money in his pocket and the son of a dog wants to see my license!"

From the passage, this condition indicates how Baba becomes sensitive over something that he feels really different about the surrounding and the treatment he got in America. Since the first chapter, Baba is depicted as an adult man that has pride and control over his own emotion. Baba's outrage is coming from the different treatment back in their homeland, Kabul, where Amir could walk into the store with a

stick and the owner would carve notches in the stick to indicate how much Baba owned him. The Vietnamese couple who is afraid after seeing Baba's outburst, also in shocked state of mind after seeing Baba's unusual behavior. The stress of living in a new and different culture influenced his behavior and way of communicate toward the other individual. Baba's breakdown is not about the I.D., but about the overwhelmed feeling by the differences and everything he has known for his entire life.

Another different set of system that needs to be faced by Afghan diaspora in America is Welfare. In America, there is a U.S. Welfare system. Welfare programs are government subsidies to the poor, including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Medical Aid, Food Stamps, Earned Income Tax Credit, Housing Assistance and Supplemental Security Income as mentioned by Robert A. Moffitt (2015) in his journal entitled *The Deserving Poor, the Family, and the U.S. Welfare System*. Before decided as the qualified recipients for the welfare, the individual must prove their income is below the target, which will be validated and categorized by Federal Poverty Level. In the story, as an old man and also immigrant that works only as a gas station worker, it makes Baba qualified to achieve the welfare from the government. However, Baba does not want to achieve the welfare because of his set of value and pride. Here is the quotation from Amir (1963, p.114) about how his father rejects the welfare describes as follows:

Baba dropped the stack of food stamps on her desk. "Thank you but I don't want," Baba said. "I work always. In Afghanistan I work, in America I work. Thank you very much, Mrs. Dobbins, but I don't like it free money." Mrs. Dobbins blinked. Picked up the food stamps, looked from me to Baba like we were pulling a prank, or "slipping her a trick" as Hassan used to say. "Fifteen years I been doin' this job and nobody's ever done this," she said. And that was how Baba ended those humiliating food stamps moments at the cash register and alleviated one of his greatest fears: that an Afghan would see him buying food with charity money. Baba walked out of the welfare office like a man cured from tumor.

The conversation above explicitly shows that the advantage to achieve welfare hurts Baba's pride as human and as a man, since he assumes that he can still work and earn money with his own way. This action of rejection from Baba stimulated the feelings of unfamiliar to Mrs. Dobbins. For Baba, to receive such advantage is humiliating. In his mind, he feels he is still capable to work even though just as gas station worker. His action shows his desperation to be respected as a man even he is already in old age. Baba believes in his perspective as an Afghan man and still takes it as they already migrated to America. It is different from Amir's father in law, General Taheri. In *The Kite Runner*, Amir (1963, p. 154) describes it as follows:

I learned that he had 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— he saw flea market only as a hobby, a way to socialize with his fellow Afghans. The general believed that, sooner or later, Afghanistan would be freed, the monarchy restored, and his services would once again be called upon.

The statement indicates that General Taheri preferred to receive the welfare instead of working a proper job. It seems that kind of action is formed because of the General Taheri's pride to not work below what he had achieved back in Kabul. Instead, he believes sooner or later, Afghanistan will be freed from the war. Every day, the General Taheri gets up and puts on his best suit, not to look for work. Thus, his action is the form of hopes that today will be the day that Afghan monarchy will rise again and that he can go home to the life he had before migrated to America. This form of hope is experienced by many Afghan diaspora.

Afghan diaspora who mostly involuntary migrate, believe that one day Afghanistan will be freed from war and they can come back to their homeland. This form of faith is related to Farhad Ahmad Pir's findings (2011) in his journal entitled *Role of Afghan Diaspora* about how Afghan diaspora express their expectancy, but with different kind of actions. In Farhad's research, many Afghan diaspora express their hopes with involvement in state building, economic reconstruction, rehabilitation and private sector for the development of Afghanistan. This means major rebuilding and renovation is happening in Afghanistan, because of Afghan diaspora.

### **3.1.2 Sense of Longing Far Away from Home**

The process of adaptation can be overwhelmed by the sense of longing far away from home. This matter is experienced a lot by Baba in *The Kite Runner* novel. For the first time, Baba has a journey to escape from the war with his son, Amir.

Through the living in America, his adaptation process becomes really hard because he keeps comparing his homeland custom with his new land custom. Homi Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* (1994) states that the belonging is affiliated to these locations but the longing for the homeland reflects through memory and nostalgia. As stated above, the statement made by Homi Bhabha applied to Baba's case after the incident at the Convenience store. Amir (1963, p. 112) defines it very clearly as below:

Baba was like the widower who remarries but can't let go of his dead wife. He missed the sugarcane fields of Jalalabad and the gardens of Paghman. He missed people milling in and out of his house, missed walking down the bustling aisles of Shor Bazaar and greeting people who knew him and his father, knew his grandfather, people who shared ancestors with him, whose pasts intertwined with his.  
For me, America was a place to bury my memories.  
For Baba, a place to mourn his.

That excerpt indicates that Baba experiences overwhelmed feeling by the differences between his homeland and the treatment he got in America. His sense of longing stimulates the nostalgic feeling back to his life in the past when he still lived in Kabul. The custom and system that he used to live back in Kabul make him keeps comparing those rules and surrounding which is really different from his new land, America.

According to Hannerz (2002, p. 92), people think about home when they are 'away'. As a contrasting concept, 'away' can involve travel, tourism, migration, escape, exile, diaspora. Parallel with this statement, Baba thinks about home because



he is away from home which is the result of his migration. The nostalgic condition is only in Baba's mind. He creates an imaginary homeland as what he had restored to his memory when he used to live in Kabul.

From the first part of the story, Baba was described as a successful business man in Kabul. Baba was not only wealthy, but also influential. A lot of people owned and respect him as an individual and senior member of Afghan society. He misses the sense of familiarity he felt back then in his homeland where he could become himself without any pressures from others, because he was more appreciated and felt comfortable toward the homeland's surrounding. The familiarity includes the people, the surrounding and the environment which makes Baba recalls his memory when he used to live in Kabul which is more pleasant than in America.

### **3.2 The Struggles of Afghan Diaspora to Improve Their Life**

As Afghan diaspora keep moving on with their living in the new land, it urges the sense to improve their life within the new surroundings. There is no doubt that right adaptation will result in happiness and success for the individual as an achievement. When individuals take more responsibility for their own life, they will work hard to take more of good qualities of their surroundings seeing it as an opportunity. This kind of development focuses on improving their life as what they had valued and expected. This factor will help the individuals create the right

condition while progress in every aspect of their life, not just physical but also emotional.

Based on that fact, here are several struggles for improvement that Afghan diaspora, especially Amir and Baba, do to adapt into American society.

### **3.2.1 Working in a Gas Station and Establishing Business at Flea Market**

After the migration, in order to pay the cost for their living, Baba had to take a job as a gas station worker as soon as they get in America. However, Baba is still proud because he works hard to earn money with his own way. The situation can be seen from the excerpt below:

Just one month after we arrived in the U.S., Baba found a job off Washington Boulevard as an assistant at a gas station owned by an Afghan acquaintance— he'd started looking for work the same week we arrived. Six days a week, Baba pulled twelve-hour shifts pumping gas, running the register, changing oil, and washing windshields.

(Amir, 1963, p. 113)

As the passage implies, whether in private or professional life, every individual needs to complete a certain amount of task every day, which are more or less pleasurable to do because they need to accomplish their needs as motivation or stimulation. This fact encourages Baba to take opportunity to work even though just as a gas station worker. The main reason why Baba starts to work as soon as he arrived in America is to earn money to pay living bills for him and his son. There are even a lot more bills that need to be paid in order to gain their needs that consist of

many aspects of life because they start a whole new life in America without any material supports.

According to Nadja Damij *et al*, (2015), “Motivation in general comes from a wide range of personal or social factors, such as financial compensation (salary), recognition by the colleagues or superiors (prestige), or satisfaction coming from personal achievements.” From the statement we can correlate the reason why Baba starts his work as a gas station worker. Because they just started new life in America, they need to start to fulfill their needs from below what they already have back then in Kabul.

Later on, when Baba and Amir’s financial condition start to get stable, they also start to sell things at Flea Market, where most of Afghan’s work as a seller. In *The Kite Runner*, Amir (1963, p. 120) describes it as follows:

By midafternoon, we’d filled the back of the VW bus with used goods. Then early Sunday mornings, we drove to the San Jose flea market off Berryessa, rented a spot, and sold the junk for a small profit.

Through the quotation, it can be concluded that Baba and Amir try other option to support their financial condition which is to establish their little business at the Flea Market and make a small profit within the *garage sale* things they sell while also socializing to other Afghan diaspora there. Being a self-employment is much more comfortable for Baba, and a lot of Afghan diaspora did the same in America. According to Bailey Brandon (2007) in *The Mercury News*, “With roughly 40,000

visitors every week and as many as 2,000 vendors selling goods from used cars to fresh produce, the flea market bills itself as the largest outdoor market in the nation. But it's more than just a swap meet on steroids. It is a multicultural crossroads, a business incubator for blue-collar entrepreneurs – and an alternative urban center for local families who aren't part of the stock-option set.” This statement indicates how Flea Market is a center of business where a lot of people are establishing their business to earn money. Because, for the individuals to start a life from below make them want to see and take the smallest opportunity as the way for surviving and that factor will lead the individual to reach the fulfilled needs and satisfaction of life.

### **3.2.2 Building Togetherness**

Afghan diaspora is one of communities that formed within America, based on their cultural background which is Afghanistan. According to anthropologist, Christie Kiefer (2007) “A complex integrated system of thought and behavior shared by members of a group — a system whose whole pattern allows us to understand the meanings that people attach to specific facts and observations.” From that statement, it can be understood that culture shapes identities and fosters notions of community, and it shapes how individuals and groups relate to each other, how meaning is created, and how power is defined. Furthermore, culture also shapes ideas about partnership, trust, and negotiation. This connection can be seen as illustrated below:

By that summer, Afghan families were working an entire section of the San Jose market. Afghan music played in the aisles of the Used Goods section. Tea, politics, and scandal, the ingredients of an Afghan Sunday at the flea market.  
(Amir, 1963, p.120)

This excerpt indicates that flea market setting is important for Afghan diaspora. It is not just a center of work, but also social life for the Afghans in California. In America, those Afghan diaspora will feel like home because they can sense familiar things within the flea Market. Afghan diaspora generally maintain their ways of living and cultural patterns, and get integrated into the new land's culture. At the flea market they will see familiar faces, familiar surrounding such as background music in that market, the language used and many more. Many members of the community meet and socialize at the flea market. Despite many difficulties that must be faced by the Afghan diaspora, they tried to assimilate into the culture of new land, but as well also maintained their sense of identity as an Afghan. Thus, simply referred to their love for their country that still continues no matter what injustice and cruelty are taking place in Afghanistan.

Another solidarity formed from the togetherness is through the process of Afghan diaspora develop their empathy toward one to another. In *The Kite Runner*, Amir (1963, p. 145) describes it as follows:

I could hear chatter from the other side of the door, laughter, and Afghan music playing softly—it sounded like a classical *ghazal* by Ustad Sarahang.



As the statement above indicates, it can be assumed that Afghan diaspora have a really solid bond toward one to another. They feel really comfortable and happy toward the familiar surroundings of their community. This is shown in the way they behave more freely and expressively within the familiarity of Afghan diaspora shaped while celebrating some occasion and being together. Moreover, another formed of empathy coming from the community is shown on how they treat each other in difficult situation. It is shown in the story, when Baba was still in recovery process at the hospital, many of Afghan people came to wish him a recovery. In *The Kite Runner*, Amir (1963, p. 139) describes it as follows:

The next morning, the waiting room down the hall was jammed with Afghans. The butcher from Newark. An engineer who'd worked with Baba on his orphanage. They filed in and paid Baba their respects in hushed tones. Wished him a swift recovery.

From the quotation, it can be seen that Afghan diaspora solidarity is really firm. It is really important for them to be there for each other. Thus in the new land, Afghan diaspora are far away from their homeland and they only have each other. The simplicity and little shape formed of attention and caring is one of the reasons they can still hold on and survive within the alien territory. There also another example of empathy formed within the Afghan diaspora where Amir is holding funeral of his father, Baba. In *The Kite Runner*, it is described by Amir (1963, p. 151) describes it as follows:

They filled the parking spots at the mosque in Hayward. On the balding grass field behind the building, cars and SUVs parked in crowded makeshift rows. People had to drive three or four blocks north of the mosque to find a spot.

The quotation above implies that the empathy among diaspora is really big. At the funeral of Baba, there are a lot of Afghans comes to give their condolence as Baba is a senior citizen which is respected in the community. This condition where a lot of people coming to there, shows there are many people who want to pay their condolence for Amir and Baba because they care and empathetic to their member of community, especially when it comes to hard condition.

Whether happy or hard condition, those members of Afghan diaspora are showing their high empathy for the other member within the community. Therefore, culture shapes the process of community engagement, and effective engagement requires an understanding of culture (Blumenthal et al., 2004; Dévieux et al., 2005; Silka et al., 2008). It means, those shaped engagement within the community make the members have a high empathy for the other member of the community. As Afghan diaspora, they realize that it is important to support each other because they only have each other because it is already hard to face and survive the new life in the new land.

### 3.2.3 Openness of Mind and Behavior

Even before Baba and Amir migrated to America, many aspects of Amir's life are influenced by American culture since Baba holds liberal values. Baba's way of thinking and life, taught Amir to be more open minded and prefer secularized Western way of thinking ever since he was a child. American's values also shown in the lifestyle and habit Amir does. In *The Kite Runner*, Amir (1963, p. 17) describes it as follows:

That was how I escaped my father's aloofness, in my dead mother's books. That and Hassan, of course. I read everything, Rumi, Hafez, Saadi, Victor Hugo, Jules Verne, Mark Twain, Ian Fleming.

The excerpt above indicates how those readings obviously impact the way he shaped his perspective towards individual and society condition which makes him appear to be more American. Thus, Amir's inherent values and ideologies are also westernized. This part indicates that the impact of colonization has influenced culturally and intellectually. As Said (1978, p. 6) states that the colonizer which is called as the Occident is the power holder toward the Orient or called as the colonized. It means that the relationship of power, domination, varying degrees of a complex hegemony is accurately occurred. The colonizer imposes their culture on the colonized people through various meaning in activities.

Another example of how Amir's perspective is influenced by the Westerner is the way he deals with Soraya issues before they get married. Thus, he accepts Soraya

as his wife despite her background in the past. In *The Kite Runner*, Amir (1963, p. 144) describes it on conversation with Soraya as follows:

“Does it bother you enough to change your mind?”

“No, Soraya. Not even close,” I said,

“Nothing you said changes anything. I want us to marry.”

From the conversation, it can be seen that even Soraya doubt him when she speaks up the truth about herself and thinks that Amir will give up the idea of marrying her according to Afghanistan custom and values, in which does not happen. He accepts Soraya as his wife, even though Soraya had run away and slept with another man in the past. This westernized inherent of value that Amir had, makes him evaluates the gender position in Afghan society. Middle-east customs and values absolutely condemn her which makes her looking as a dirty woman who will never get married because of that incident. The Afghanistan patriarchal values, makes the distinction where the standard is set for man and woman. Afghan society only applies social repercussion to women, but the man never gets the blame. This is really different from Western perspective. Western society who holds liberal construction in which promote the freedom of human beings and loosen the moral codes has more loose response to the same problem about the standard set for man and woman.

Another indicator of Amir evaluates the double standard Afghan people set for woman is his sympathy and tolerance which are showing as he holds American standard about gender equality. His way of thinking is strongly influenced by his Baba. It makes Amir adapts way easily and quickly, because ever since he was child

Baba already provides him Western way of life and thinking which is liberalism. As condition faced by him also makes him appear wiser on how to make interaction and building interpersonal communication.

### **3.2.4 Cross-cultural Adaptation Accomplishment**

Many immigrants and refugees leave familiar surroundings of their home culture to resettle into new place in search of a new life which requires extra effort to face various circumstances. For this condition, it is important to establish and maintain a stable and reciprocal relationship with the new land. For the individual, to become a competent and to survive the struggle in the adaptation process, it requires active participation in the interpersonal and mass communication processes of the local community as stated by Kim Young Yun (1988). Thus, adapting to new place that mostly refers to the process and time it takes an individual to assimilate to a new land's culture, surrounding and environment will be unfolded through the adaptation's emotional growth dynamic for the individuals' effort from the interaction that is shaped by their owns and the new land's society.

For Amir and Baba, both experience different process to survive the adaptation. Baba, who migrates in his old age, experiences harder adaptation process than Amir who migrates in his young age. In fact, elder people usually give up the ideas to learn new things, especially the ones that are totally different from their local who already attached to their identity. Whereas, this cultural challenge is something



that needs to be accomplished in order to adapt in right away and survive within the new land.

For this research, to describe the adaptation process which is different for each individual, it will compare Baba and Amir's process of adjusting into the new land. For Baba, who is overwhelmed by the new surroundings is described by Amir (1963, p.110), as illustrated below:

But the Bay Area's smog stung his eyes, the traffic noise gave him headaches, and the pollen made him cough. The fruit was never sweet enough, the water never clean enough, and where were all the trees and open fields? For two years, I tried to get Baba to enroll in ESL classes to improve his broken English. But he scoffed at the idea. "Maybe I'll spell 'cat' and the teacher will give me a glittery little star so I can run home and show it off to you," he'd grumble.

The quotation above indicates about how Baba misses his life back in Afghanistan. The homesickness that keeps coming, makes Baba becomes a sensitive and melancholic person. As the familiar physical landscapes are replaced by the new land's surroundings, it will impact the individual's way of dealing to the differences. Baba hates the condition in America when he is already migrated to the country. It seems that he cannot be satisfied and be sensitive even at the smallest everyday life things which stimulate his emotion.

Baba also does not like to learn English. Baba may like the culture of America, but when he needs to study English because it is necessary for him, he

rejects that. It is implicitly shown on the quotation that Baba feels like a kid when Amir asks him to enroll in English class. In his old age, being told to learn something, especially in institution, makes Baba feels ridiculed by the younger people. Another statement made by Amir about his father's poor adjustment in America is shown through the narration described as the following:

Baba loved the idea of America.  
It was living in America that gave him an ulcer.  
(Amir, 1963, p.109)

From the statement, it can be assumed that Baba is not happy living in America. Baba may love the idea of America back then when he lived in Kabul. It is proven to his life back then in Kabul, Baba's personalities and traits are shown to be influenced by Western culture, especially America. Baba dislikes the boundaries and limitation that conservative system sets, especially rules set by the religion in Afghanistan. He prefers Western lifestyle that is free and moderate. His habit and behavior reflect his preference. Unfortunately, when Baba arrives in America, the feeling is completely different with his perspective when he lived in Afghanistan since he is not accustomed to the situation and culture shaped by the new land.

After the migration, in order to pay the cost of their living, Baba had to take a job as a gas station worker which also drained his old body. Compared to Baba's life in Kabul, it indicates that his life experiences degradation after his migration to America. The degradation of life, from wealthy and successful business man to a

worker at gas station makes Baba need to work so hard with his old body. This factor influences the emotional process of adaptation in which Baba becomes more sensitive toward his new surroundings. Since Baba is already old, it becomes hard for adjust with something that is “new” to him, because it is not only making him tired on physical but also emotional. The movement from the homeland to a new place is especially hard on those who were successful in Afghanistan. It is not just about leaving the place behind, but also leaving the life in there. As Amir is adjusting quickly to life in America, he realizes this fact as he keeps seeing his father worrying behavior. Furthermore, Amir (1963, p. 113) describes his father unhappiness toward the host country as follows:

“You were happier there, Baba. It was more like home,” I said.  
“Peshawar was good for me. Not good for you.”

The conversation between Baba and Amir indicates how much Baba sacrifices for Amir’s happiness. Even though Baba and Amir is starting a new life together, the emotional feeling Baba experienced is the opposite from what Amir experienced. Amir, who is worrying about his father emotional and mental behavior cannot stay quiet after that incident, offers her father that it is better for him if they go back to their homeland. Baba is more likely to give up his desire to go back to Peshawar because of Amir. It makes Amir sad that his father cannot adjust but still prioritize Amir’s happiness over his own.

From the findings about Baba's poor adaptation performance, it can be concluded that Baba is in the *Hostility* phase of cross-cultural adaptation, where he keeps comparing the differences between the host culture and his home culture. At this stage, the individuals will begin to experience homesick as the feeling of isolated, out of place, tired, sick, depressed, angry or frustrated will result to the blaming the host culture for their problem. In line with this fact, according to Winkelman (1994, p.122) cultural (or culture) shock is a multifaceted experience resulting from numerous stressors occurring in contact with a different culture. That statement means that culture shock can be described as the anxiety or stress an immigrant feels immediately due to the unfamiliarity of social practice in the host country.

Culture shock may occur at various levels such as an explosion of anger, frustration, depression, and homesickness (Black & Gregersen, 1999). This statement explained the way Baba's responses toward some cases because when people are exposed to knowledge differences, they can have intense emotional reactions. The characteristics of culture shock is shown from Baba's words, gestures, facial expressions, customs or norms as he loses all the familiar signs and symbols he accustomed back in Afghanistan. The case is especially harder for Baba who is already very old at that time. As we also learn that people spend a great deal of time and energy learning what the culture considers to be appropriate knowledge until the individual get accustomed to the surroundings.

It is more likely Baba already realizes that he is not happy living in America. The sense of longing that keeps bugging him impacting his emotional condition. He

keeps missing his homeland in the new land. And despite that, he endures it all for Amir. He cannot control his emotion when he feels that something is strange and different which resulted in his behavior. He also cannot behave as what society expects him to do because of the feeling that keeps bugging his adaptation effort. This gives impact to Baba's way of communicate and interpersonal connection to other individual. Those depression and anxiety make Baba not happy and become over sensitive toward his new surroundings which make him has a poor performance of adaptation.

Meanwhile, for Amir, who experiences easier adjustment that is shown in his behavior toward his new land, is also supported by the idea that Amir can adapt well in the new life in America. Amir (1963, p. 118-119) clearly describes his fondness toward America as follows:

Almost two years had passed since we had arrived in the U.S., and I was still marveling at the size of this country, its vastness. Beyond every freeway lay another freeway, beyond every city another city, hills beyond mountains and mountains beyond hills, and, beyond those, more cities and more people.

The quotation above implies how Amir is still fascinated by America. It is not only about observing but also familiarizing himself with the surroundings of the new land's physical landscape. America itself is a chance for Amir to start a new life. The idea of America liberates him, the living heals him. This realization of Amir also defines as the following:



America was different, America was a river, roaring along,  
unmindful of the past. I could wade into this river, let my sins  
drown to the bottom, let the waters carry me someplace far..  
If nothing else, for that I embraced America.  
(Amir, 1963, p. 119)

Through the passage, it indicates how much Amir values America. His suffering in Afghanistan is replaced by the new life in America which is more comfortable for him to live in as himself. In America he can forget Hassan and his sins. America gives Amir a chance to be happy again. It is also the life in America that gives Amir a chance to pursue his education and dream to be a published author. It is described by Amir (1963, p.117), as illustrated below:

I would enroll in junior college classes in the fall, I told Baba the day after the graduation. He was drinking cold black tea and chewing cardamom seeds, his personal trusted antidote for hangover headaches.  
“I think I’ll major in English,” I said. I winced inside, waiting for his reply.  
“English?”  
“Creative writing.”

Through the passage, it implies that in America, Amir can pursue his education based on his passion. Back in Afghanistan, his dream to be an author would be ridiculed. His hobby about poetry is rejected, his hobby to read literature and writing all taken as something ridiculous. But in America, it is all accepted. In America, Amir can grow up to be an adult as what his true calling according to his

characteristics. America accepts Amir as who he is. America also supports him to be what he wants and pursue his dream.

Another thing that supports Amir's adaptation process is how he associates with American society in school and college, also his job as an author in America makes his workplace surrounded by the American. According to research conducted by Ward and Searle (1991) about international students in New Zealand, found that an interaction and support from host culture will increase cultural knowledge and identifying with the host culture resulted in less difficulty adapting to the host country culture. This connection can be shaped from the relation that is built between the diaspora and host country's local people, as example in friendship, working partner and neighborhood. This makes Amir become accustomed to the people and values that American people holds as their custom and system for their culture. This is different from Baba that spent his time mostly with Afghans. As he rejects the offer to study English which only make his range of improvement for the adaptation become limited.

From the findings, we can conclude that Amir is in the *At Home* phase of cross-cultural adaptation, where he senses that "new" culture is no longer new, instead, the "foreign" country he lives in now feels like another home. His language skill improves noticeably as his English is better than his father as it shown on the classes he takes and his English novel get published. Amir also begins to understand the situation and actions shaped by the host culture. He also feel the sense of

belonging and a part of America as he accepted the fact that he is a citizen of America but also an Afghan diaspora as he mediate both culture in himself.

Those traits of Amir's behavior are the keys for his success adaptation in America, as like the research which was done by Zee and Oudenhoven (2000) that refines five dimensions of personality traits: emotional stability, social initiative, open-mindedness, cultural empathy and flexibility. Those traits are experienced a lot in people who are still in young age, where they tend to welcome challenges. This is also reflected in Amir. His adjustment in America becomes less hard than Baba since he migrated in his young age. Along with the condition to live as an Afghan diaspora in America, Amir showed how he slowly and deliberately perfected his traits as he adjusts to the whole different culture and surrounding.

According to Albrecht *et al* (2014) working and living in a different country are different from traveling to a different country for a short vacation, it requires the openness of individuals to embrace the differences and challenges. As what depicted in Amir's traits, where he chooses to be more welcomed toward the new changes and challenges from the adaptation process. He is not afraid of the difficulties, instead he confronted the problems and try to solve them as soon as possible. Parallel with this condition, how people perceive their new environment and behave themselves in the host country are deciding factors in their adjustment process (Wang et al. 2013). This factor makes him adjust quickly to his new life and make him happier in emotional aspect as an individual. Moreover, he already accustomed to the American lifestyle ever since he was still a kid. His open minded natures, is showing contrast response

comparing with Baba toward the immigrant life situation problem. This depiction describes how Amir assimilates quickly into the new land's culture.



## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This chapter consists of conclusion and suggestion. The researcher concludes and summarizes the main discussion that has been discussed in the previous chapter. For suggestion, it contains about suggestion for the following researcher that wants to analyze the same material object of this study.

#### 4.1 Conclusion

Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* represents the story about the life of Afghan diaspora in America. It depicts the individual's process of adaptation which is different from one to another depicted through the main characters which are Amir and Baba. From the story, it reveals that Afghan diaspora experienced and learnt many things through the adjustment of the life changes.

The problems of Afghan diaspora, as depicted in *The Kite Runner*, are divided into internal and external factors which impact the emotional and behavior of the individual. As Middle East, including Afghanistan holds conservative system which is the opposite of Western society who holds liberal construction which resulted in the different rules and systems. Mostly, this is the source of the problem in which the differences will be obvious and the immigrants need to improve their life while still in the process of accepting the condition given to them.



Moreover, the adjusting is overwhelmed by the sense of longing far away from home. However, to overcome those problems, firstly the Afghan diaspora has a way to deal to the homesickness through building togetherness within the community. Also, as they compromise to the problems, they would struggle by trying to improve their life through working and establishing business.

Through the story, it can be seen how the adaptation process is different to each individual. It is shown on the analysis about the completed phases from the two main characters in which Baba only reaches *Hostility* stage, while Amir successfully reaches *At Home* stage. This adaptation process can cause cultural shock to the individual, as experienced by Baba who represented the old Afghan diaspora who is overwhelmed by the sense of longing far away from his homeland as he tried to adjust to the new life in America. It is different from Amir who represented the young Afghan diaspora who seeing the life in America as opportunity and has a good ability to adjust to the new surroundings. This result shows that age influences individual's way of adaptation. Despite that, the knowledge and perspective of the individual also make an impact to the way they survive through the struggles. Those factors make the individuals become more open minded and welcome to the differences, which also increases the willingness to accept things as a part of life.

#### 4.2 Suggestion

Amir is the main figure of Afghan diaspora in a novel entitled *The Kite Runner*. Throughout the story, the author portrays how Amir changes after he did his migration to America. He has changed to be a confident, wiser, independent, and broad minded individual, different from his life back in Afghanistan. In line with this situation, as can be understood, Khaled Hosseini is also an Afghan-born American novelist which is similar to the main character of *The Kite Runner* novel. It can be seen through his biography that he also experienced the migrating from Kabul to the West area.

In fact, this novel is also related with Khaled Hosseini as the author. Therefore for suggestion, the following researcher is suggested to relate every single part of Khaled Hosseini's autobiographical aspects to the main character's, Amir, ways of surviving the struggle as an Afghan diaspora as seen through the comparison of adaptation process of both. To say the least, using different approach, aims to avoid the same theme in discussion.

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