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## PASHTUN-BASHING IN KITE RUNNER: A PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATION?

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An eminent American historian Dr. Harry Elmer Barnes put it: “Truth is always the first war casualty. The emotional disturbances and distortion in historical writing are greatest in wartime.” Quoted in “Zundelsite-A few facts about the Institute of Historical Review”, electronic version [November 1, 2009]. In shadows of aggression, people have been deliberately manipulated by official propaganda and spinning media and experts into an attitude of hating a country, a race, a religion, an ethnic group, etc.

### INTRODUCTION

The Kite Runner is a penetrating, absorbing, distressing, emotional, and ideological novel by Afghan-born Dr. Khaled Hosseini which covers the tumultuous period of Afghanistan’s history since early 1970s. I read its first Riverhead paperback edition (2004) in November of 2009. Its hardcover was published a year earlier in 2003. He is culturally a non-Pashtun but ethnically a half-Pashtun: Dr. Hosseini’s mother, grandmother and great-grandmother belong to the Mohammadzai nobility of Pashtun heritage. Also, his aunt is the mother of Prince Mostapha Zaher, the grandson of King Zaher Shah (1914-2007). Dr. Hosseini cleverly organizes the story of his fiction, skillfully builds the suspense, and amazingly patronizes the Western audience by using “hot-button” cultural and political issues in a very traditional Afghan society torn by the ravages of war since 1978. In April of this year the Pashtun-led faction of the Soviet-

connected People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan took power, killed President of the new republic Prince Mohammad Daud and his family, and ended the reign of Mohammadzai nobility. The overwhelming majority of the Afghan people rejected the communist rule and its brutalities. They stood up against the new, leftist regime for national and religious (Islamic) reasons. These events were followed by the CIA operations against the Moscow-connected regime, which rushed the Soviets to invade Afghanistan on December 25, 1979.

Nearly six months before the Soviet invasion, U.S. President Jimmy Carter (1977-1981) signed the first directive for "secret aid" to the Afghan resistance (Mujahedeen), which "was going to induce a Soviet military intervention," National Security Advisor Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski wrote to President Carter on July 3, 1979-the same day Carter signed the directive.(See Brzezinski's interview, "How Jimmy Carter and I started the Mujahedeen", *Le Nouvel Observateur*, France, January 15-21,1998/electronic version[November 14, 2009]. Mujahedeen received international support through the context of the Cold War and regional Pakistan-India conflict. U.S. President Ronald Reagan (1981-1989) called the Mujahedeen "The moral equivalent of our own founding fathers" who were renamed terrorists/extremist Islamists after 9/11. On October 7, 2001, President George W. Bush's war on Afghanistan started officially, with which Pashtuns, Afghanistan and its government had nothing to do. According to two internationally renowned scholars Prof. Noam Chomsky and Prof. Gilbert Achcar, Taleban asked the U.S. to submit a "formal extradition request," along with evidence regarding the alleged criminal. But Washington "just didn't have any. In June 2002, about eight months after the bombing of Afghanistan, the head of the FBI, Robert Mueller...the most he could say is, we believe that the plot may have been hatched in Afghanistan, but the planning and the implementation were carried out in the United Arab Emirates and in Germany." (Chomsky and Achcar, *Perilous Power: The Middle East and U.S. Foreign Policy*, expanded ed., 2009, pp. 71-82) In the general euphoria of Afghanistan's "liberation" of 2001, Mr. Siddiq Barmak's award-winning film *Osama*, and Dr. Hosseini's widely-acclaimed fiction *The Kite Runner* emerged in the middle of the same year 2003. What a coincidence!

Dr. Hosseini's novel is designed to soothe the Western audience's conscience and to serve as a non-military "psychological operation" in the post-9/11 U.S. war urge packaged as liberty and democracy. It is a de facto defamation fiction, scapegoating Pashtuns ( who constitute the majority of Afghan population) while the author is exempting the upper stratum of other non-Pashtun minorities. He is touching on the legal conception of "defamation innuendo" (injury to reputation)? Dr. Hosseini does not seem to be thoroughly steeped in the history and culture of Afghanistan, particularly the period he is covering. Is his thinking co-opted?

## **CAST OF MAJOR ROLES**

The defining moment (the rape of Hassan, ethnic Hazara and Shiite) which is integral to the story is introduced in the very first sentence of the book: "I became what I am today at the age of twelve, on a frigid overcast day in winter of 1975"(p. 1)

The main character and narrator of the story Amir is the only["legitimate"] child of a privileged ethnic Pashtun merchant Baba . Amir is the only insecure son of Baba and

half brother of Hassan (both Baba's progeny), as well as adoptive father of Sohrab (orphan son of Hassan). Baba wishes Amir would stand up for himself. Amir often feels jealous of the attention that Hassan receives from Baba. Amir is "the unwitting embodiment of Baba's guilt" while Hassan is Baba's "other half. The unentitled, under-privileged half....The half that...Baba had thought of as his true son."(p. 359)

Hassan's mother is ethnic Hazara. He is best friend and servant of Amir. Hassan's supposed father is Ali, an ethnic Hazara, who could not have kids because of Polio, which Amir learns later. Ali is like a brother to Baba for whom he works. "For you, a thousand times over." (p. 2) This is said by Hassan to Amir as he runs Amir's last kite.

Rahim Khan is ethnic Pashtun. He is business associate and close friend of Baba. He has a close relationship with Amir, who wishes Rahim Khan was his father. "There is a way to be good again." This is said by Rahim Khan to Amir to encourage him to help Hassan's orphan son Sohrab escape Afghanistan under Taleban and this way redeem himself (pp. 1,192, 226).

Assef is ethnic Pashtun. He has blue eyes and blond hair because his mother is German. He is an antagonist, the neighborhood bully, and firm believer in Adolf Hitler's leadership. He raped Hassan. Assef, who later becomes leader of Taleban, took Sohrab (son of Hassan) from the orphanage in Kabul and forced him to prostitution. Eventually Amir adopted his half nephew Sohrab. They go home to America, but Sohrab remains silent until the two of them kite fight together and win.

## **COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES**

The Kite Runner is organized around three "tortured souls" Baba (the father) and his two young boys with different ethnic heritages, who are best friends until one fateful act tears their relationship apart-and the quest one of them embark upon to right the wrong, to make up for his wrongdoing in the past, to search for "a way to be good again," as Rahim Khan suggested to Amir. This quest for doing good to overcome the guilt and shame implies religious element (redemption) although Dr. Hosseini's novel is addressing secular tangible life.

The Kite Runner shows parallels to previous American novels, for example, Mark Twain's *The Adventure of Huckleberry Finn* (1884); Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960); and Madison Jonen's *Nashville 1864: The Dying of Light* (1997).

Mark Twain's novel, which opens with Huck as the lead character, is often recognized as his greatest masterpiece. The book tells about two runaways: a white boy and a black man on their journey. Huck is a poor boy (with a drunken bum for a father) who helps Jim, a runaway slave, to escape up the Mississippi to the free states. Through his novel Mark Twain addresses painful contradiction of racism and segregation in American society claiming freedom and equality.

*Nashville 1864* is a short American Civil War (1861-1865) novel in which Steven Moore, the lead character, is a 12-year-old boy who experienced the Civil War. The story of two friends (one white and one black) has its roots in Mark Twain's *Adventure of*

Huckleberry Finn. The author of the novel tells of the occupation of Nashville, Tennessee, by Union soldiers. The Confederate army was defeated. The two boys Steven and his family's slave, Dink, were searching for Jason Moore (Steve's father) believing that he was in the nearby military unit of the Confederate army. On their journey Dink showed more wisdom than Steven. The death of Steven Moore's slave, Dink, hunt him for the rest of his life, much as Amir's memory was haunted by his betrayal: to watch in hiding the rape of his loyal servant and firm friend Hassan by Assef, leader of bullies.

The novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* is based on the author's observation of her surroundings, as well as on an event that occurred near her hometown in 1936, when she was ten years old: A white woman accused a black man of raping her. He was sentenced to death. But according to some letters that appeared, the black man was falsely accused. So his sentence was commuted to life in prison. The author of the novel challenged the social status quo (racial and gender inequalities, unjust society, and lack of compassion). For religious and comparative literary perspectives, see Judi S. Hayes, *In Search of Kite Runner* (2007), 104 pages/electronic version.

### **CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES**

The novel is timely because Afghanistan has become a pivotal point in global arena of imperial ambitions reinvigorated after the 911 catastrophe. It served as a non-military psychological operation. Dr. Hosseini's novel is a prelude to the idea of "setam'e meli" (national oppression) advanced by Soviet communism and adopted by non-Pashtun Afghan leftists.

Usually a novel is called historical when it replicates a period or event in history, often operates with historical figures as some of its characters, and the event described is at least 50 years old when the fiction is written down. For example, three best novels are worth mentioning here: (1) *Memoirs of a Geisha* by Arthur Golden (1997). The story of this novel starts before World War II in 1929, when a 9-year-old girl was sold to a renowned geisha house in Japan, where a girl's virginity was auctioned to the highest bidder. Geisha means trophy wife or distinguished mistress. (2) *Gone with the Wind* by Margaret Mitchell (1936) is an American Civil War (1861-1865) story, in which the success and failure of an individual is tested to adjust to the new environment, or fail. (3) *The Pillars of the Earth* by Ken Follet (1989). Its story takes place in the middle of the twelfth-century England during a time when social, political and religious conflicts collide. This chaos affects the progress of the exquisite Gothic Cathedral on which the novel centers.

The *Kite Runner* is written in a way that the reader can easily become caught up in the class struggle between under-privileged Hazaras (minority) and allegedly affluent Pashtuns (majority) and forgets that this is an ideological fiction. Hazaras have distinct Mongoloid features, which makes it easy to distinguish them from the neighboring ethnic groups. They live in Hazarajat (central Afghanistan), capital Kabul, Mazar-e Sharif, and Ghazni. Their overwhelming majority adheres to Imami Shiism, although a few are Ismaeli Shiite, or Sunni. Hazaras move to Kabul to find work. The population of Kabul consisted of Pashtuns, Tajiks, Uzbeks, Hazaras, and other ethnic groups. Pashtuns did

not give Hazaras the degrading name “tagha” (flat-nosed, narrow-eyed). Those who were ridiculing Pashtun as “Afghan-e ghool” (stupid Pashtuns) were not Hazaras. Pashtuns just ignored that expression. They believe that the term “Afghan-e ghool” (giant Pashtun) signifies “majority Pashtuns.” Some non-Pashtuns used the insulting charge “chiragh kosh”, a Farsi/Dari phrase for “light out!” defaming the (Ismaeli) Shiites for the alleged existence of sexual promiscuity in the very traditional society of Afghanistan!

King Amanullah (an ethnic Pashtun) became a national hero because during the third Anglo-Afghan war he won recognition of Afghanistan’s independence from the British Empire in 1919. U.S. historian and a leading authority on Afghanistan Professor Ludwig Adamec wrote in 1974 that King Amanullah “had been successful because of the assistance he received from Afghan [Pashtun] tribes in the ‘Independent Tribal Belt’ of the [North-West] Frontier.” (Adamec, Afghanistan’s Foreign Affairs to the Mid-Twentieth Century: Relations with the USSR, Germany and Britain. The University of Arizona Press, 1974, p.92). The North-West Frontier Province, a misnomer, was created by the British Empire in 1901 to curb the revolts of the Pashtuns and to destroy their identity with Afghanistan. King Amanullah (1919-1929) banned the practice of slavery and focused on education and development of his country. When a bandit of non-Pashtun heritage Habibullah Bacha Saqaw, who was supported by the British, overthrew King Amanullah in mid-January of 1929 and began his chaotic rule over Afghanistan for 9 months. Hazara population largely supported Amanullah. The late Soviet-Communist historian and a major expert on Afghanistan Reisner published a pamphlet in 1929. Referring to Bacha Saqaw’s movement, Reisner selected the following title of his pamphlet : “Peasant Movement in Afghanistan.” Bacha Saqaw (Son of Water Carrier) was defeated by Pashtun Nader Shah (Hazaras might have been in favor of him, rather than Bacha Saqaw?).

The reigns of power shifted two times in the twentieth century to the advantage of Tajik groups: The first time with Bacha Saqaw (also spelled as Saqao) for just nine months in 1929, and the second time approximately sixty-three years later with Tajik dominated Mujahedeen regime. Allied with pro-Soviet Parchamis and in good terms with the occupying military of the Soviet union, Jehadi forces of Masood-Rabani took power in Afghanistan (April 28,1992 to September 1996). Non-Pashtun groups with anti-Pashtun orientation were dominant in Parcham (Flag) and in Masood and Rabani organization(s). Their “holy” forces unleashed a reign of terror, rape, looting, and destruction. Approximately sixty-five thousand people lost their lives during that “unholy victory” of Mujahedeen. For Ahmad Shah Masood’s connections with the Soviets, see U.S. resourceful, but neglected, researcher and author on Afghanistan, Bruce G. Richardson: Ending the Reign of Soviet Terror (Maverick Publications, first edition 1996); Richardson, “A Perennial Charade,” Afghanistan Mirror, Serial Nr. 116 (November 2009), pp.5-7. This second power shift was called “The Second Reign of Water Carrier[Bacha Saqaw]”, a book of the same title by Samsor Afghan, first publication 1998 (1377 A.H.), second publication 2001(1379 A.H.). Published in Pashto(“Dwema Saqawi”). Publisher: Association for the Promotion of Afghan Culture, Germany. Once again, the anti-Pashtun warlords of the Northern Alliance were propelled to power by the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan after the 911 catastrophe, with a Pashtun “minor tribal leader” Hamid Karzai as CIA described him. This U.S.-imposed

“minority-crazy” is referred to as the “imperialist or third saqawi”. Afflicted by the ongoing turmoil, warlords’ dominance in the state bureaucracy, drug economy, and Pashtun alienation, renowned researcher Ahmed Rashid published his book (Descent into Chaos. Viking Adult, 2008). By supporting the Northern Alliance’s warlords, looters and rapists to marginalize the majority Pashtuns of Afghanistan, the Bush administration in fact became partner in the civil war, which in turn could lead to the territorial disintegration of Afghanistan.

The “terribly terrible” Taleban were a considerable source of stability in the region important to energy battlefield of Eurasia. Taleban’s harsh rule (September 1996-mid November 2001) deserve recognition for four functions: overthrowing Masood-Rabani chaotic rule, bringing law and order-however harsh it may be-to the most parts of society under their rule, preventing Afghanistan from territorial disintegration, and considerably reducing opium cultivation and corruption. After the 911 catastrophe President George Bush wanted Taleban to turn over the “prime suspect” Bin Laden to America. They responded that they would relinquish him to an Islamic country after the U.S. government would submit a formal request along with evidence regarding the alleged criminal. President Bush declared war, and U.S. forces attacked Afghanistan on October 7, 2001. Even eight months after that doleful October day, the FBI director Mueller was unable to identify the person responsible for the 911 horrific attacks on America. According to Prof. Chomsky, “The most” the FBI director could deliver was to “believe” that the idea of the plot might have emerged in Afghanistan, but its planning and implementation were done in United Arab Emirates and Germany. Yet, Afghanistan was invaded by the U.S. forces, and to the contrary United Arab Emirates and Germany were exempted from the U.S. military attack!? See, Prof. Noam Chomsky and Prof. Gilbert Achcar, *Perilous Power: The Middle East and U.S. Foreign Policy, Dialogues on Terror, Democracy, War, and Justice* (Paradigm Publishers, expanded edition 2009), pp. 71- 82. Instead of accepting “a carpet of gold” (black gold and blue gold/oil and gas business) before 911 attacks, Taleban received a “carpet of bombs” after the 911 catastrophe. Jean-Charles Brisard co-author of the book *Bin Laden: The Forbidden Truth (La Verite Interdite)*, interview with the author on November 15, 2001, see Julio Gody, “U.S. Policy Towards Taliban Influenced by Oil”, November 15, 2001, electronic version/Common Dream.org.

The legal note on the copyright page of Dr. Hosseini’s novel reads: “This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents either are product of the author’s imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, business establishments, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.” The novel (*The Kite Runner*) is organized around the confrontation between two ethnic and religious groups: the Pashtuns who adhere to the Sunni branch of Islam and are making up the majority of the Afghan population, and the minority Hazaras, whose overwhelming majority adheres to the Shiite branch of Islam. Thus, Hazaras and Pashtuns are the real names of real ethnic groups in Afghanistan. Besides, the author Dr. Hosseini is culturally of non-Pashtun Afghan heritage. His Afghan background tells us that using real names of the real Afghan ethnic groups (Pashtuns and Hazaras) is neither the “product” of his “imagination” nor is their “resemblance...entirely coincidental.” This method is based on a hidden agenda for blaming the Pashtuns (the majority of Afghanistan’s population) of oppressing the minorities (non-Pashtun ethnic groups).



This allegation, known in Afghanistan as “setam-e meli” (national oppression), originated in the former Soviet-Communist literature. This dichotomous conception was boosted during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan (1979-1989). The Soviet-Uzbek historian Nishanov became upset about the term “Afghan” in the Afghan constitution of 1964, which referred to all citizens as Afghans, and , consequently, all Afghans make up the Afghan nation. See, Nishanov, *The Constructive Revolution of April [1978]* referred to in Zirakyar, *National Oppression, Nationality and Khorasan* (original in Pashto), Publisher: Association for the Development of Pashtun Culture, Germany. Printed in Melat Press, Lahore, 2001. Unfortunately, Hazaras have long suffered from discrimination in Afghanistan. During the Soviet occupation the term “nationality” was propagated among the Afghan minorities(non-Pashtun tribes). Discrimination is unfair because it ignores the individual merit. In Afghanistan it resulted from different political, social and cultural interests of the elite crossing through all major non-Hazara ethnic and religious groups, not the masses of the people. Let me present a few cases:

(1) When the Soviet-connected People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan was in power (1978-1992), the leader of the government Hafizullah Amin of Pashtun heritage(April 1978-December 1979) gave weapons to Pashtun Wardag tribe to fight against Hazaras. The Wardags did not use them against the neighboring Hazaras , but turned them against the Communist government.

(2) Haji Mula Nasim Akhundzada is of Pashtun heritage. He was deputy commander to late Kandahari Mula Naqib, locally known as Mula-Gwal Akhund. Belonging to Alakozai-Pashtun tribe, Mula Nasim Akhundzada himself was an important Jehadi commander in Kandahar. He was allied with Northern Alliance and Islamic Society of Afghanistan run by commander Ahmad Shah Masood and his mentor Borhanuddin Rabani. [Nasim Akhundzada is currently advisor to a former Northern Alliance warlord in Kabul, personal information]. Abdul Nafe’ Hemat from Kandahar is of Alakozai-Pashtun heritage, as well as a poet and satirist. He learned about the inter-Mujahedeen fighting in Kabul (1992-1996) from other Alakozai-Pashtuns who participated in that distressing occurrence, the “unholy victory.” Abdul Nafe’ Hemat shared this information with a young Afghan journalist Abdul Rahim Shindandiwal. Regarding his information he interviewed Mula Nasim Akhundzada in November of 2009. His descriptions closely corroborated Shindandiwal’s information, which he shared with me as follows: Commander Ahmad Shah Masood complained to commander Mula Naqib that his Mujahedeen( fighters) refrained from attacking Pashtun positions in the Kabul area [Hekmatyar’s fighters]. Masood suggested to him that his deputy commanders should attack Hazaras instead. So under the command of two Kandaharis (Mohammad-Aka and Akhtarjan.), Mula Nasim Akhundzada’s Pashtun forces together with Ahmad Shah Mosood’s sub-commander Asad-e Choor’s brigade attacked the Dasht-e Barchi area up to Marastoon in the vicinity of Kabul and forced Hazara forces to flee [ most probably in 1992/1993= 1371/1372 A.J.] . But they left behind some three hundred women and approximately forty children and old men. Masood’s sub-commander Asad-e Choor (Asad the Looter, Plunderer) put the Hazara women in containers to rape them. They were crying for fear of being raped. When Mula Nasim Akhundzada noticed this misery, he immediately ordered his forces to thwart Assad-e Choor’s undertaking. He encircled the Kandahari Pashtun fighters to force them to hand over the Hazara women to him.

The Pashtun commanders told Assad-e Choor that (1) “In our tradition [Pashtunwali=the Pashtun code of conduct]” Pashtuns do not fight against women and children, and (2) accordingly, they will hand over them to the leader of Hazaras, Abdul Ali Mazari. Asad-e Choor attacked Pashtun forces but could not succeed, and consequently Masood ordered his sub-commander Asad-e Choor to withdraw from that area. Kandahari Pashtun fighters relinquished Hazara women and children to Abdul Ali Mazari, who reciprocated this action with sending gifts and releasing many Pashtun war prisoners.

(3) Safya was a non-Pashtun Shiite female teacher in Kandahar (Shiite are a very tiny minority in among Pashtuns in the city of Kandahar.) Kandahari Pashtuns called her “Amajan” (Dear Aunt), and Pashtun women in Kandahar elected her as the head of the provincial women affairs administration during the Karzai period.

(4) Educated in Germany, Engineer Gholam Mohammad Farhad was of Yousufzai-Pashtun heritage. The people of the capital city Kabul gave him the honorary title “Papa” (Father). He was the most prominent leader of Afghan Social Democratic Party (1966=1344 A.H.). Engineer Farhad was the first elected mayor of Kabul. He won the mayoral elections with Hazara vote. Also, in the parliamentary elections he relied on the Hazara vote and won the seat in the House of Representatives. Hazara elders are still in touch with Papa Farhad’s family members, especially with his brother, politician and historian Qodratullah Hadad Farhad.

(5) In cooperation with the Communist faction Parcham (Flag), Masood and Rabani took over the government (April 1992-September 1996). Their rule brought chaos, destruction and civil war to Afghanistan. For this reason, their rule was called “The Second Saqawi”(anarchy, banditry). In early October 1929, the progressive King Amanullah fell victim to the anarchy of a non-Pashtun bandit Habibullah Bacha Saqaw (Son of Water Carrier). Supported by the British, Saqaw forced King Amanullah’s abdication. In his struggle against Saqaw and the British, King Amanullah was supported by Hazaras.

(6) The speech of Abdul Ali Mazari, the leader of Hazaras’ Islamic Unity Party of Afghanistan, in July of 1993 (1372 A.H.) might be quite instructive for those who are beating on the drum of ethnic antagonism. Mazari believed that his people Hazaras have to fight together with other “Persian-speaking” people against the Pashtun domination. But “the issue of Chandawal and Afshar” [the killing of Hazaras in two sections of Kabul by non-Pashtun Masood-Rabani group, 1992] convinced Mazari that during the past 250 years not all Pashtuns, but “a power-hungry family”[yak khanadan-e jahtalab] had oppressed Hazaras. Since the day Masood-Rabani group came to power[April 2,1992] in Kabul, they “waged eight wars in the name of Islam against you[Hazaras],” Mazari emphasized in his speech. Masood and Rabani were referring to Hazaras as “the progeny of Genghis Khan.” (Genghis Khan or Changes Khan was the Mongolian warrior-ruler [c.1155-1227], who seems to have had controlled a larger territory than any other ruler in the history.) For original Persian text of Mazarin’s speech, see Nada-e Wahdat, No. 13/July 1993, quoted in Rahmat Rabi Zirakyar, X-Ray of Afghan National Consciousness (original in Pashto), Publisher Pashto Yoon, New York, submitted to publisher on 19 February 2001(30 Salwagha 1379 A.H.), printed in Peshawar, Pashunkhwa, 2003 (1382 A.H.)pp. 79-80, from the facsimile printed in Afghanistan



Mirror (Ayena-e Afghanistan, Vol.32/June-July1993=Jauza-Sartan 1372 A.H., pp. 71-72).

(7) Iran-educated Dr. Ali Razawi Ghaznawi is of Hazara heritage, as well as an Afghan scholar. He believed that Afghanistan was dominated by Pashtuns, “qaum-e ma’iyan wa khas”(the distinct and particular tribe). King Mohammad Zaher Shah, who ruled Afghanistan for the longest period (1933-1973), was an important member of that distinct and particular tribe, the Pashtuns. Apparently, the terrible events in Chandawal and Afshar sections of Kabul(see above #6), taught Dr. Ghaznawi to change his mind(most probably in 1992/1993): Under the prevailing circumstances of anarchy, destruction and killing, he “preferred” the leadership of “His Majesty”, the exile King Zaher Shah. For original Persian text, see Zirakyar, *ibid.*, pp. 71-72, quoted from Afghanistan Mirror (Ayena-e Afghanistan, Vol. 29/December 1992-January 1993(1372 A.H.)). The 79- year-old King Zaher Shah returned to Afghanistan on April 18, 2002 after 29 years of exile in Rome, Italy. He was the most prominent leader in the hearts and souls of his nation, but to CIA he was a “figure head” just to convene the Loya Jirga. He was given the ceremonial title “Father of the Nation” by the Loya Jirga (Grand Assembly) without being allowed to give in person his opening speech to that extraordinary institution of Afghan political culture and legal credibility. King Zaher Shah could not do but to accept the ceremonial title, and, by implication, he gave legitimacy to the decisions of Loya Jirga in June 2002 (ghbargolai 1381 A.H.). As a non-political symbol of “national unity” under the occupation, he died in Kabul on July 23, 2007.

(8) Kateb Faiz Mohammad (1862-1931) was the son of Sayed Mohammad Moghol of Hazara heritage. This Afghan intellectual served under two kings of Pashtun heritage. Kateb Faiz Mohammad was a member of the royal secretariat and the biographer of the “Iron Emir” Abdul Rahman Khan (1880-1901). In 1888, this Emir conferred on an influential Hazara leader (Mohammad Azim Beg) the title “Sardar” (Lord, Prince). Sardar Mohammad Azim Beg was the son of Ali Zahid Khan, the leader of Sepai-Dezangi Hazaras. On the recommendation of Emir Abdul Rahman Khan, his son Prince Habibullah Khan married the daughter of Sardar Mohammad Azim Beg. According to a very cautious, well educated and resourceful high-ranking Afghan politician, a group of “professional” (maslaki) Hazaras in British India was sent by its government to Quetta, Baluchistan, to instigate unrest in Afghanistan. This way, the British forced the then Afghan Emir/King Abdul Rahman Khan to give in to their colonial demand for the so-called “Durand Line” of 1893, which divided the Pashtuns between Afghanistan and British India (current Pakistan). For more information, see British-educated Afghan historian Prof. Mohammad Hasan Kakar, *The Consolidation of Central Authority in Afghanistan under Amir Abd al-Rahman*[Abdul Rahman Khan], 1880-96, M.A., School of Oriental and African Studies, London, 1968; *Afghanistan in the Reign of Amir Abd al-Rahman, 1880-1901*, Ph. D., London, 1974. Also, see Afghan historian and politician Mir Gholam Mohammad Ghoobar, *Afghanistan in the Course of Time* (original published in Persian in Kabul, Afghanistan, 1967/1968), pp. 666-671. To forge a unified Afghanistan and a central administration, Amir/Emir Abdul Rahman Khan ruled his country with an “iron fist”: He relentlessly used his power against all rivals and rebelling individuals and tribes alike (Pashtun Shinwaris, Pashtun Ghilzais, non-Pashtun Nuristanis, and non-Pashtun Hazaras who suffered more). Kateb Faiz Mohammad of

Hazara heritage was a personal friend and court clerk of Amir (Emir) Habibullah Khan (1901-1919). Encouraged by this king, he authored the three-volume Torch of the Histories (Seraj-al Tawarikh) and worked for the ministries of education and foreign affairs. In his Torch of the Histories, Kateb Faiz Mohammad wrote regarding the name Afghanistan: "This country..." became "more" known during "the period of His Majesty Ahmad Shah [of Pashtun heritage, 1747-1773/1160-1186 A.H.]" (zyadtar mausoom ba Afghanistan shod). Quoted by Professor of History Azam Sistani (Barakzai) in his book: Is Afghanistan a Fake Name? A Collection of 20 Articles, Sweden, 2006. Original in Persian, printed by Danesh Book Center, Peshawar, [Pashtunkhwa], 2007 (1386 A.H.), 418 pages, here p. 410. The reformist, progressive and anti-British King Amanullah Khan (1919-1929) did not like his father Amir Habibullah Khan because he was pro-British. Since Kateb Faiz Mohammad was close to Amir Habibullah Khan, King Amanullah Khan may not have used his services. Kateb Faiz Mohammad was firmly tortured by the non-Pashtun bandit ruler Bacha Saqaw (January-October 1929). U.S. historian and prominent authority on Afghanistan Prof. Ludwig W. Adamec writes regarding the cause of death of Kateb Faiz Mohammad: He died in 1931 "purportedly from the complications of severe beating by Habibullah Kalakani [Bacha Saqaw from the Kalakan area] who had sent him to bring a document of submission from Hazarajat [central Afghanistan, where the majority of Hazaras lived]." Adamec, "Katib Author of Monumental History Books," electronic version/Katib Cultural Association, Denmark, [November 25, 2009]. Also, see Jafar Razai, "The Father of Modern History of Afghanistan (Padar-e Tarikh-e Moa'ser-e Afghanistan)", electronic version/Kateb-e - hazara.blogfa.com, [November 25, 2009].

(9) Prof. Abdul Wahab Sorabi of Hazara heritage was member of the Advisory Constitutional Commission (1964). He was the first Hazara cabinet member with portfolio (1967-69) under King Zahir Shah (1933-1973). Thereupon Prof. Sorabi became the cabinet minister, 1969-1971, Secretary of Planning (de plan wazir). Engineer Mohammad Yaqub Lali was also a Hazara and cabinet minister, 1967-69, Secretary of Public Affairs (de ama shegano wazir). Abdullah Khan, who was like a prince (sardar-e Hazaras) in his community, was chosen by King Zahir Shah as a member of the Senate. He was in fact close to the King. Barat-Ali Khan was also Hazara and quite influential in the National Bank. Let's take a look at U.S.: The first black U.S. cabinet minister was Robert C. Weaver, 1966-1968, Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development under President Linden Johnson. The first black female cabinet minister was Patricia Harris, 1977, Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development under President Jimmy Carter.

(10) In mid-1990s (most probably in December of 1995) the Afghan "royal Shiites" (tashayo-e darbari), namely the Tajik Shiites Mohseni, Akbari, and Sayed Fazel, had launched a campaign to incite Afghan refugees (mostly Shiite Hazaras) in Iranian cities (Qom and Mashhad) against the "Giant Pashtun" (Ghool Pashtun). A declaration by Mohseni in Qom and Mashhad reads: "The strategic alliance with Pashtunism and Communism was an irreparable mistake in the history which pushed Hazaras backward for one hundred years." This is reported by an honest and concerned Afghan Shiite (most probably Hazara) who condemned the Iranian involvement in Afghan affairs. He also

rejected Mohseni's hate campaign against "Pashtun brothers." For original Persian text, see Zirakyar, X-Ray of Afghan National Consciousness, op. cit., pp.74-78.

## **STEREOTYPING PASHTUNS**

Two things may contribute to the creation of a poor historical novel: (First) the oversimplification of historical issues (ignoring essential details of historical subjects), and (second) a perceived or broad generalization about a particular social or racial group (a stereotyping of the "good" and "bad" guys). In contrast to this, a good historical novel usually depends on the author's ability to thoroughly understand the history of the period he/she is covering. The following passages from the novel will illustrate that Pashtuns are singled out and negatively impacted, which do cause injury to their reputation (defamation innuendo). Amir is the lead character and narrator of the story. King Zaher Shah and Amir's father, both Pashtuns "got behind the wheel of their father's Ford roadster. High on Hashish and mast on French wine, they struck and killed a Hazara husband and wife on the road." (p. 24) The character Assef is Pashtun and a bully, who raped the Hazara boy Hassan. "Born to a German mother and Afghan father, the blond, blue-eyed Assef towered over the other kids." He admires Hitler: "About Hitler. Now, there was a leader. A great leader. A man of vision." Assef's "blue eyes flicked to Hassan [the Hazara boy]" and said: "Afghanistan is the land of Pashtuns. It always has been, always will be. We are the true Afghans, the pure Afghans, not this Flat-Nose here. His people pollute our homeland, our watan. They dirty our blood." Assef "will ask the president [Prince Mohammad Daud, the founder of the Republic of Afghanistan in 1973] to do what the king[Mohammad Zaher Shah, 1933-1973] didn't have the quwat [power] to do. To rid Afghanistan of al the dirty, kaseef Hazaras." (pp. 38-40) Assef brought Amir a birthday gift. "It was a biography of Hitler."(pp.96-97) Assef, who became leader of Taleban, took Sohrab (son of Hassan) from orphanage in Kabul and forced him to prostitution: "How is that whore these days?" While Assef was present in his office, "One of the guards pressed a button and Pashtu[or Pashto is the language of Pashtuns] music filled the room" and Sohrab "danced in a circle."(pp. 278-280) The Taleb with the whip "shouted something in Pashtu."(p.272) Or the guard said "something in Pashtu, in a hard voice"( p.279). Or "One of the guards said something in Pashtu"(p.291). The tribe of the Taleban is Taleban. But the author tries to connect Taleban and Pashtuns through their language Pashto and this way diminish and discredit the majority Pashtuns, succinctly to dehumanize them. Soon after the 911 catastrophe, "America bombed Afghanistan, the Northern Alliance [a collection of non-Pashtun warlords who collected U.S. \$70 millions within the first few weeks of the war] moved in, and the Taliban scurried like rats into the caves."(p. 362) Dr. Hosseini's statements are embedded in social discrimination based on basic psychological impulses of fear and Pashtun-bashing. "...the kind of thinking which presents any ethnic or national group in terms of a crude, unflattering caricature is undesirable and sloppy at best." Dr. Michael F. Connors, *Dealing in Hate: Anti-German Propaganda*. Institute of Historical Review, Newport Beach, CA, 1996, 48 pages. Electronic version [Nov. 11, 2009].

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Why is Dr. Hosseini, who belongs to a well educated family, involved in Pashtun-bashing? He is originally a "Sayed" (honorific title used for male descendants of the

Islamic Prophet Mohammad.) However, his mother, grandmother and great-grandmother are members of the ruling lineage of nobility (Mohammadzai-Pashtuns). So he is half Pashtun (Mohammadzai nobility) and half non-Pashtun. Besides, Dr. Hosseini's aunt is the mother of Prince Mostapha Zaher, the grandson of King Zaher Shah (he died in Kabul in 2007). But culturally Dr. Hosseini is a non-Pashtun, or apparently an anti-Pashtun non-Pashtun. In 1973 Prince Mohammad Daud overthrew his nephew King Mohammad Zaher Shah (1914-2007), declared Republic and proclaimed himself president. The Pashtun faction of the leftist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan overthrew Daud and thereby ended once and for all the reign of the Mohammadzai nobility. This might be one of the reasons why Dr. Hosseini (as the privileged half) has taken revenge on Pashtuns as collectivity. Culturally non-Pashtun Dr. Khaled Hosseini's biography reveals that he had limited opportunity to expand his knowledge of Afghan history. He "feel[s] like a tourist in my own country" (p.231). Farid (a character) who escorted Dr. Hosseini to Afghanistan, told him: "Agha Saheb[Sir]....You? You've always been a tourist here" in Afghanistan (p.232). To transcribe Afghan terms, Dr. Hosseini uses in his novel Iranian Persian (Farsi) pronunciation rather than Dari (Afghan version of Farsi) phonetic transcription. For example, "Ghargha" Lake (p.13), "Sabzi challow" (p. 173), "Maghbool" (p.178), and "Topeh chasht" (p. 245). Their Dari-Farsi pronunciations are: "Qargha" Lake, "Sabzi chalau", "Maqbool", and "Tope chast". Khaled Hosseini was born in Kabul, Afghanistan in 1965. In the early 1970s he lived with his family in Teheran, Iran, where his father worked for the Afghan embassy. In 1973, he and his family returned to Kabul, and in 1976, Hosseini and his family moved to Paris, France, where his father was assigned to the Afghan embassy. The Hosseinis were still in Paris when the Soviet army invaded Afghanistan on December 25, 1979. The 15-year old Hosseini, along with his family, left Paris for the United States of America, where they arrived in the fall of 1980. From this, I can assume that Dr. Hosseini is a victim of his superficial knowledge of the Afghan history. I am assuming that "Setam-e meli" ideology was influential in his political socialization. Setam-e meli (national oppression) looks like a class struggle, which is based on the alleged oppression of non-Pashtun minorities by the Pashtun majority. The concept of Setam-e meli originated in the former Soviet-Communist literature, and it influenced the outlook of non-Pashtun leftists. The Soviet Union needed this ideology to divide Afghanistan into north and south regions. The Soviet design was to integrate ten Northern provinces into a "submissive, civilized" Socialist Republic of Afghanistan and to merge the southern provinces into a "resistant, less civilized" Democratic Republic of Afghanistan as a buffer zone for the defense of the civilized North. Who would think that U.S. strategist Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski cannot learn from Soviet Arbatov?! The idea of dividing Afghanistan was also appealing to non-Pashtun Ahmad Shah Masood, the leader of the Northern Alliance, who might have been interested in establishing "Masoodistan" in Northern Afghanistan. This anti-Pashtun mutation became intensified during the Soviet occupation (1979-1989), Parcham rule (1980-1992) and during Masood-Rabani chaotic "unholy victory" (1992-1996). Dr. Hosseini may have been influenced by the opinions, suggestions and/or guidance of other Afghans. They could have used his historical-political inexperience and his excellent writing skills for their own political-ideological orientation. Or presumably, someone has co-opted his thinking? *The Kite Runner* by Dr. Hosseini is a biased book. It is patronizing the Western audience and plays into war

mongering. It is a common feeling among Pashtuns that this novel participated in dancing to the drum of Bush's war which was a virtue of supreme importance in the post-911 political and cultural climate. The war party will move heaven and earth to make sure the war, propaganda, collapse of mainstream media integrity, and the proliferation of doublespeak are working harmoniously. (See *Cold War Fantasies: Film, Fiction, and Foreign Policy* by Prof. of Political Science Ronnie D. Lipschutz. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, October 2001.

The World Factbook by CIA is published in the middle of each year. Until 1991, this type of "finished intelligence" registered Pashtuns as majority of the Afghan population (50% as ethnic group and as language group). Almost a year later in April 1992, the Northern Alliance (Masood-Rabani group) took over the power in Kabul. The World Factbook 1992, considerably lowered the statistical significance of the Pashtun ethnic group and their language (Pashto): 38% as ethnic group, and 35% as language group. In World Factbook 2009, statistical data for Pashtuns shows improvement as ethnic group (42%) but remained the same as language group (35%). For the record, a six-year survey and research project (1991-1996) was conducted by WAK-Foundation for Afghanistan, the results of which was published in 1998 (1377 A.H.). According to this source, from the total population of Afghanistan, Pashtuns make up 62.73 percent as ethnic group and 55 percent as language group. (See *The Ethnic Composition of Afghanistan* by Wak-Foundation for Afghanistan. Published by Sapi's Center for Pashto Research and Development, Peshawar, Pashtunkhwa, 1998=1377 A.H., 250 pages). An eminent U.S. expert on Afghanistan Bruce G. Richardson took notice of this phenomenon shortly after 911 catastrophe: "Of late, we have been subjected to a variety of published ethnographic data in the broadcast and print media in which we are assured that the Pashtun majority is barely a majority at all and that the time has come to end 'Pashtun domination of Afghanistan.' The source for much of this data is reported as 'taken from CIA analysis.' But is this data reliable? Or is this data self-serving, a cover for U.S. support for minority rule in Afghanistan?" (Richardson, "Post-Taliban Afghanistan", *Afghanistan Mirror*, Serial Nr. 87/ January 2002, pp. 10-12; *Dawat*, Vol. 134-135). Dr. Hosseini's novel has functioned successfully as a non-military psychological operation in the service of U.S. "Congress-Military-Industrial Complex's" war on Afghanistan (October 7, 2001). Soon after the U.S. troops conquered the city of Kabul, I saw the then Secretary of State Colin Powell on TV talking enthusiastically about a boy whose kite was flying in the sky of that city. Powell might have been implying that kite flying was symbolizing the independence of Afghanistan under the occupation of foreign troops?



