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Metaphors a Power Signature in a Post Colonial Text: A Critical Discourse Analysis of The Kite Runner

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Abstract

This study aims to analyse power, dominance, racial discrimination, and power exercise that is narratively established through a subtle network of metaphors in a fiction work, *The Kite Runner. The Kite Runner* exposes the socioeconomic conditions in the borderlands of Pakistan and Afghanistan, revealing the differences between power manipulation and the domestic performance of powerful social groups. The work also explores how religious and status dichotomies circumvent the progress of minority groups and align their physical features with their receding power and financial features. An adopted model of critical discourse analysis (CDA) indicates power, economic, and racial dichotomies in the book while revealing the shades of metaphors through conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) in a post-colonial text. Dogmatic ideographs are perpetuated in every public sphere through language and established gradually through unprovoking tools of metaphors. The metaphors are uncovered through CMT, providing a helpful understanding of different conceptual domains. Rhetorically, CDA helped reveal the racial discrimination, human rights violations, and hatred against minorities embedded in the selected metaphors. This investigation is very significant in connection with the current scenario of cross-cultural studies, as it mainly depicts the prevailing social trends regarding two different settings. The study may benefit intelligentsia interested in post-colonial and decolonial discourse and diaspora literature.

Keywords: *Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Critical Discourse Analysis, Metaphor, Power Expansion, Racial Discrimination*

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Introduction

The term discourse is an interchangeable concept in different scholars, such as linguistics, communication studies, and social studies, proclaiming different meanings like print knowledge, spoken language, and even discursive practices. The epistemic understanding of the term circumference is the institutional practices that control, liberate and exercise ideologies and power through discourse. Gill (1998) defined Foucault's notion of the discourse as a set of ideas with existing norms that are institutionalised through discourse and unsure about the understanding by the groups these sets regularise. Foucault and Sheridan (1972) wrote:

> "In every society, the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organised and redistributed by a certain number of procedures whose role is to ward off its powers and dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its ponderous, formidable materiality". (p. 53)

Controlling discourse is not merely about regulating its content; rather, it entails control over publication, circulation, and the institutionalisation of that discourse. Discourse circumference all genres in such situations as religious discourse, national political discourse, and discourse on sex and sexuality. Critical discourse analysis reveals the hegemonic circumventing of discourse production that excludes or targets potential participants, navigating the notion that discourse is not always the undoing of power but also the reconstruction of a new power.

This research is an undertaking in the CMT and CDA epistemological knowledge to uncover the power structures in a post-colonial text. These two frameworks dissect the metaphors, revealing conceptual meaning extended through two domains and operating ideological and power norms through the context. Though different CDA analysts formulated different postulates in their theories, the central idea of CDA is power abduction in societies through class systems, racial setups, and religious dichotomies. Van Dijk (1993b) pointed out micro-structural and macro-structural levels of CDA.

In contrast, the micro-structural level is language usage, and the macro-structural level is the portrayal of certain ideologies and power expansion through linguistic clusters. Written and spoken discourse simultaneously operate micro-level and macro-level structures through linguistic tools like metaphors and illustrations. Metaphors could also be used as a tool of identification by performing as the substance between two parties. Burke argues that human beings (who perform as agents) construct identities through different substance functions, such as beliefs, values,

ideologies, occupations, and activities (Burke, 1917). Continually, I argue that oral traditions, oral literature, discourse, museums and ideology are used as substances to construct identities, create an audience and navigate an audience.

Discourse also operates as a substance to identify with a particular group; meanwhile, it assumes that the remaining people who cannot identify with the substance stay outside the container. Fairclough (2012) expresses that the fundamental aim of the CDA is to explain hierarchical changes in society related to social status, education, and power, as well as the reasons behind such social upheavals. The literary discourses of society represent the real picture of social structure and its dogmas. Literary discourse could also be used to propagate certain ideologies or propaganda as inclusive and exclusive strategies to dissect people into groups.

The novel is a specific type of discourse that reflects society's social, moral, and religious conflicts but also structures patterns that may negate or reify already set patterns. Stylistic devices are frequently used in post-colonial literary texts to subtly deconstruct racial and ethnic dissections. Metaphors are key devices to navigate the social conflicts prevalent in all colonised spaces and decolonise the internalised colonial praxis. This study focuses on the metaphors used in a post-colonial text *The Kite Runner,* by an American-Afghani diaspora writer, Khalid Hosseini. The study opens the metaphors with the help of CDA and CMT to deconstruct the internalised colonial practices in Afghanistan.

Literature Review

Critical Discourse Analysis

The discursive practices circumference hegemony, domination, racial discrimination, bias against ethnic groups and inequality of fundamental rights. Writers frequently use literary narratives to explore discriminative ideologies dissecting a society into unequal groups. CDA of such narratives helps culminate social injustice and unequal power distribution. Van Dijk (1988) defined microstructures as a language expressing interconnected relations to power and hegemony. The following diagram explains significantly how micro and macro structures intertwine syntactically and leave deeper semantic effects.

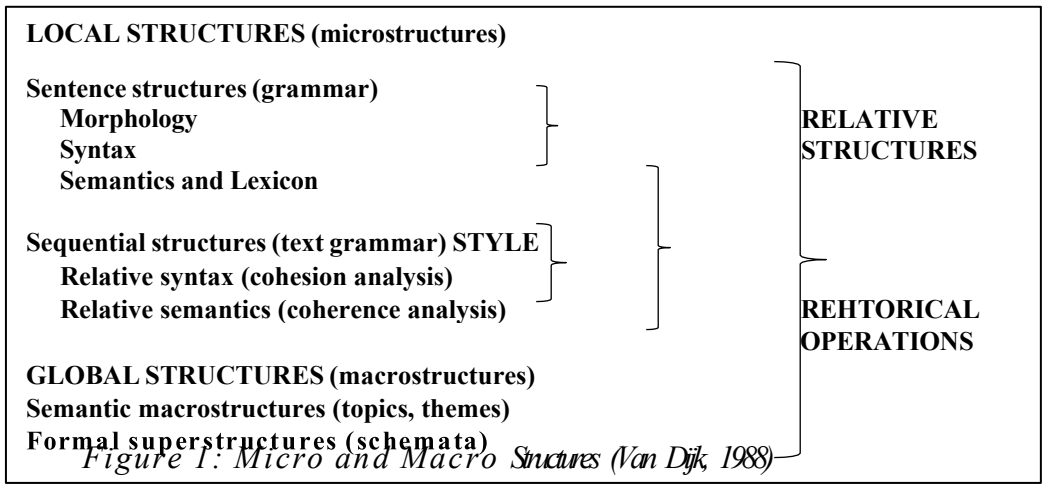


Figure 1: Micro and Macro Structures (Van Dijk, 1988)

Semantic and formal superstructures perform rhetorical operations and persuade the audiences to use effective strategies to navigate their course of action and provide them with a set of patterns to follow—ideologies and social norms. Van Dijk's (1988) micro and macro structures concern local and global domains and execute the function of substance. Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) stated that social life is a connected labyrinth of different social actions and different discourse structures. Social practice is the basic tenet of CDA because it acts as a glue to connect social norms and identities.

Social practices are defined by local structures and ideologies, and semantic patterns behind these practices are global structures. Wodak (2001) expressed that ideologies are the weaving networks that build social clusters where people feel strongly connected to a particular power group. He further illustrated that these groups lay out ideologies as a set pattern of their identity, producing discourse revolving around such ideologies and propagating via rhetorical speeches. Ultimately, they undo a power by constructing another power via establishing a discourse. Discourse production, access to discourse and its interpretation is a chain process of power dynamics. It is not always the deconstruction of set power patterns. When it does, it establishes new webs of power that may differ from the overthrown set of power tools.

In the hegemonic process of power creation, the public often has no choice but to accept a power pattern that fringes around a particular ideology (Gramscian, 1971). He further elaborates that dominance comes into existence when the power of a leading supreme group is incorporated into several small groups like public institutions, law implementation sectors, and discourse control groups, eventually becoming a hegemonic apparatus. The growing power or dominance then controls the minds of people and creates racial/status discrimination that leads to intolerance in society. A

controlling group exploits its power in routine matters of discrimination or prejudice and creates inequity in available reserves.

The most effective way to propagate a specific ideology is through discourse. Political or supreme groups, on the other hand, control discourse by controlling the narrative. Fairclough (2000) elaborates that there are different methods to construct power through ideologies, and these ideologies may be built through various groups and associations. Power balance is a substantial element for a prosperous society; dominant groups are responsible for power imbalance in society because it can create intolerance among different sectarian and racial groups. Foucault (1976) pointed out that those in power control the discourse. The power tools of a specific narrative are not overt initially; several techniques are used to hide the agent or goal of a particular agenda. Figurative devices like metaphors are used to show the audience how power could be performed in routine dialectical tensions via language.

Conceptual Metaphor Theory

Though myths are metaphorical extensions of realities. Metaphors are also myths and function in mysterious roles between two domains. Lakoff (1987) wrote that ideology is exciting and apparent to linguists and is masked in the form of metaphors and analogies that look very inquisitive to researchers. A critical discourse analysis of such devices used in literary text unveils many power mysteries and semantic and ideological patterns to the audience. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) explored the idea that perceiving one type of entity in the case of another entity is the primary function of metaphor. A metaphor is a linguistic and conceptual cartography of two different concepts from two different domains through the passageway of logic. Metaphors are conceptual, colloquial, and understood by the audience aware of such domains in their routine life.

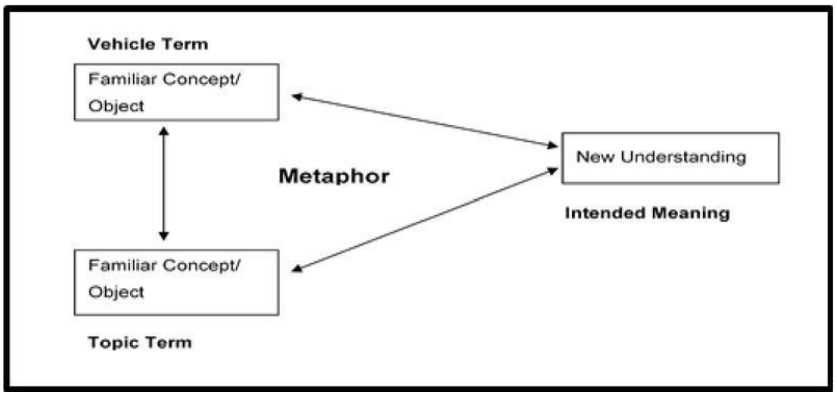


Figure 2: Metaphors as a Bridge to Understanding (Jensen, 2006)

Reddy (1979) explained that metaphor is indispensable to our ordinary life. He further explained that language is both a means and thought to intellectualise the world traditionally. Metaphors fill the gap of understanding in literal, political, religious, and spiritual spaces through conceptual illustrations portraying a crude idea in an allegorical simplification. Metaphors are a pervasive language tool for conceptualising the world's traditional concepts. Reddy was the first to uncover the conventional relation of metaphors with the world. Reddy (1979) wrote that language performs like a passage to transfer meaning and thoughts to other individuals, and metaphor adds up the meaning and extended understanding of the thoughts.

Lakoff and Johnson's work *The Metaphor We Live By* (1980) is based on Reddy's work *The Conduit Metaphor*. Lakoff and Johnson challenged the conventional point of view about metaphors and gave some claims about conceptual metaphors. Lakoff and Johnson are summarised by Kövecses (2002) summarised Lakoff and Johnson's understanding of metaphor. He wrote metaphors are tools to understand the properties of thoughts and concepts, and these metaphors operate as a critical function to unclose the conceptual understanding of ideas. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) wrote that understanding metaphors is based on the already-established schemas that help open the conceptual pathway of understanding.

Conceptual metaphors need correspondence between source and target domains to clear the opaque relation between two entities. Speakers of a particular language build schemas through ordinary lived experiences. These experiences play a fruitful role in understanding conceptual metaphors. Dominant groups conceptualise their ideologies and propagate their agendas through metaphors, a veiled technique that they construct through their understating of metaphors via lived experiences. Through critical discourse analysis of such metaphors, the hidden ideologies could be unveiled and brought into focus with the help of CMT, which cracks the verbal atom.

Contemporary Studies

Van Dijk’s concept of micro and macro textual analysis is prevalent globally in discourse analysis scholarly work. Talib and Fitzgerald (2016) used micro and macro levels of analysis of metaphors to understand the policy texts. They adapted Foucault and Nietzsche's argumentation to understand the theories of nature and brought relevance to critical discourse analysis through multilevel cartography of ontological concepts. Their work is an entwined essay on language analysis, philosophical valuation, and political economy. They analysed the use and context of metaphors to understand the evaluation of the nature of policy texts.

Agbo et al. (2018) also wrote a paper on the critical discourse analysis of metaphors used in Nigeria's political discourse. They adopted the essential model of metaphor analysis and critical discourse analysis to unveil the ideologies behind the metaphors. The authors stated that identification, language, and rhetorical devices are used for political purposes. The results showed that politicians used metaphors to enact power and persuade the audience to take action. Figurative devices are used to identify with the audience and to navigate their actions. Metaphors are used to manipulate the audience and get their sympathy to vote for them. This research is relevant to the essay I am working on, but my text is a novel, and Agbo analysed political speeches and other discourse.

Sipra and Rashid (2013) explored the critical discourse analysis of metaphors embedded in Martin Luther King's speech "When I Have a Dream" in a socio-political context. The paper showed that many stylistic devices are used in this speech to propagate the ideology persuasively. Specific repetitions in the speech are deliberate to contain the audience in a mantra of understanding and identification of racial discrimination and inequality based on colour. The linguistic clusters recapitulate the background, revealing the socio-relational values of the speaker. The paper concluded that MLK built connections between the oppressed and the powerful through metaphors and other stylistic devices.

Research Question and Gap

The recurrent use of metaphors in literary texts is pervasive. Writers and novelists used this device to open up the so-called ideologies of certain groups. *The Kite Runner* is written by Khalid Husseini, a Diaspora literary figure setting the plot in Afghanistan and the United States. The novel's settings are disputed territories where certain powers fight to hold the land. The novelist has frequently used metaphors to make human rights annihilation obvious through internalised colonial violent practices.

The researcher analysed the metaphors used by the writer in dialectical discussions where the power structure is hierarchical and operative via different means. I positioned this research question, "How are metaphors used as a power signature to construct and deconstruct power in *The Kite Runner?"* to understand the performance of metaphors as a tool to exercise power. It is quite significant to understand the internalised colonial violent practices to divide a cultural group and exercise monarchy. The work would be necessary for other scholars to see such colonial structures in other fiction works and deconstruct such norms via a research model.

Methodology

While reading the novel, I created the digital notes and organised them by theme, character and setting. Many metaphors were recurring imagery in the mind of the author and were used multiple times. I couldn't analyse all the metaphors because of time and page limitations, but I structured a narrative using significant metaphors that were used for power exercise.

I developed a narrative structure for data analysis, cracked the metaphors with the help of CMT and then elaborated on the motives of the users through CDA. Most of the metaphors used in this piece of writing have similar motives. Through these metaphors, we can trace back the colonial legacies and motives of class dissection and false superiority exercised in South Asia.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Current research is solely Qualitative, and Van Dijk's framework for macro-structural and microstructural analysis is used to unveil metaphors containing racial and ideological contents. Van Dijk (2001) presents two levels of analysis, i.e. micro-structural and microstructural analysis. Microstructural [local-structures] analysis concerns linguistics elements, and macro-structural [global-structures] analysis concerns thematic and semantic roles. CDA is an approach that builds a link between these two levels to reveal the ideologies of social actors, according to Alexander (1987), as mentioned in Van Dijk (2001).

Conceptual Metaphor Theory

Conceptual metaphor theory is used to interpret the metaphorical utterance in the Novel *The Kite Runner* by Khalid Husseini. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) explain that metaphor is a cross-mapping between two different domains, but a conceptual relation exists between these domains. Metaphors are taken from the source domain to express meanings of the target domain comprehensively and concisely. There is a systematic mapping between the source and the target domain of metaphor. When both domains build a conceptually systematic relation, then the entity of the target domain could be interpreted in terms of the entity from the source domain. The mapping between two domains is not whole; instead, it is partial, so all the elements of one domain cannot be expressed in terms of the other domain. CMT claims that cognitive schemas [experiences] of people help them to understand metaphors. (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

Integrating CDA and CMT

Conceptual metaphor theory links the domains of metaphors and interprets the meanings conceptually. CMT explains a clear cognitive structure of the metaphor but does not explain the ideological patterns veiled under this device, so CDA is essential for such pragmatic aspects. CDA covertly extracts the post-colonial ideological patterns conveyed through metaphors. The integration of these two theoretical frameworks is a significant decolonial model that opens the internalised colonial structures in post-colonial times. Pragmatic aspects assist a writer in using a precise metaphor in certain situations to signify a borrowed colonial tool that eventually produces comprehensive meanings in terms of post-colonial ideological patterns.

Results and Discussions

This section brings the metaphors under the microscopic observation through the lenses of CDA and CMT. Many types of metaphors are used in this novel based on nature, animals and inanimate elements. The discussion will focus on how zoomorphism is used as a power signature. Additionally, the writer has developed post-colonial characters through the metaphors used by these characters with a motive of oppression and violence. Framing leading characters as post-colonial personas is an essential literary skill that Hosseini manifested here.

The Kite Runner revolves around the protagonist's guilt and rectification of what he did in the past. Amir, the protagonist, tries to ameliorate his past sins. The significant shift we see in this character is from a passive post-colonial character to a decolonial persona. He is not directly responsible for many incidents, but his thoughts represent post-colonial motives. The novel starts with the protagonist recollecting memories of guilt and processing these agonies through sensory captivation like the breeze, lake water and willow tree while sitting in a distant space from the agonised past space.

Zoomorphism as A Power Signature

In the next section, the protagonist, Amir, goes to a cinema with his friend Hassan, a worker at his home, but his father gives him a unique space at home. Hassan lives with his father, Ali, in a nearby cottage. At the onset of the story, Hassan and Amir were walking towards the cinema when they saw some military men standing near the path. They recognised Hassan and started agonising him, mentioning her mother's reputation and body. The second example is from a family conflict where the head of the family is growling similarly.

> “You! The Hazara! Look at me when I am talking to you’ the soldier barked” (*Hosseini, 2003,* p.6).
>
> “When I had asked Baba he’d ever considered getting new servants. Hassan is not going anywhere, he’d barked” (*Hosseini, 2003, p. 197*).

The word 'barked' can be harsh, loud, dominating, frightening, and traumatic in some postcolonial spaces. The source domain is a dog, and the target domain is a human. Dogs usually bark at strangers and frighten them. Here, the soldier is barking over Hassan to show his power and is trying to frighten him. Primarily, the metaphorical bark is a nexus between the soldier's intentions and Hassan's social status. Hassan belongs to a poor, outcasted family, so the nexus is insulting. Here, the character does not directly use metaphor. Rather, the author named the soldier's tone. The semantic pattern of the word 'bark' implies that the voice or tone of a soldier is harsh, loud, dominating, and frightening.

Ostensibly, the soldier is trying to show his power over Hassan, similar to how colonial forces treated the indigenous people. The writer has used this metaphor to show the powerful mindset of a soldier and the hatred towards an out-casted person, which is evident from his tone. Ethnicity is significant in South-Asian societies, and prestigious ethnic groups use their ethnicity as a substance to develop social and political relations. The soldier barked over Hassan, prospecting that the victim could not do anything is a colonial way of oppression. The same act could initiate violence if used against Amir. Van Dijk (2001) wrote that power is not absolute but works in maximum situations. Similarly, the soldier extended his power in this situation, knowing there was minimum retaliation. The word barked is used in several situations in this plot.

Baba's stereotypical personality is retained throughout the story. The second example uses the metaphor 'bark' to show Amir's father's forceful personality. Baba, another important character, has an intense relationship with Hassan and Amir; usually, there is a subtle tension between Amir and him. The motive of this metaphor is to frighten Ali and Amir about the thought of sending Hassan away from him. Baba is the head of the family and a successful businessman, so he yells over matters that go against his will, which shows how he manipulates his resources. Another plot twist that is exposed near the end is that Hassan is the son of Sanobar and Baba, rationalising Baba's anger over Amir's attitude towards Hassan. One day, Amir explores his father's library and comes across a historical book on Hazara ethnicity. He finds out how this ethnic group was framed in a postcolonial

time. The same metaphor is used in the second example by the antagonist, Assef, who internalises the colonial oppressive tools in his own way.

> The book said a lot of things I did not know. Things my teachers had not mentioned. Things Baba had not mentioned either. It also said some things I did know, like the people called Hazaras mice-eating, flat-nosed, load-carrying donkeys. (*Hosseini, 2003, p. 7*)

> "Your father won't find us out. Assef said. And there is nothing sinful about teaching a lesson to a disrespectful donkey" (*Hosseini, 2003, p. 66*).

Hosseini is an Afghani-American writer who understood the structures of power hierarchy in his country in a post-colonial time frame. Hosseini circumferences the ethnic dissection in Afghanistan through all leading characters. This post-colonial discourse has framed the Hazara group as a minority and barbarous, which is an overt colonial tool to create others. The donkey is usually considered a fool, submissive, hardworking animal in South-Asian settings. Undertaking the CMT, the vehicle 'donkey' is used for tenor 'Hazara People'. This group is racially discriminated against and sabotaged by the Afghani public. Hassan, as a Hazara, is marginalised within Afghanistan, reflecting the lingering effects of colonial-era ethnic hierarchies.

Critical discourse analysis of this metaphor explains the social status of the Hazara people. They are no less than animals used only for laborious work and deserve to be treated like animals. Hazaras work hard only for food and shelter and are considered as 'others' in such settings. This metaphor intensifies the racial discrimination among the social groups of Afghan society. The same metaphor is used in the second example, where Assef, another spoiled boy from a wealthy family, develops hostility towards Hassan because of his superior ethnic belongings. On the kite festival day, Hassan cuts a kite and runs to catch the fallen kite, and Assef stops him to teach a lesson. Hosseini fetishises the tension between Hassan and Assef at the start of the novel and this situation becomes the climax of the story.

The novel portrays Afghanistan's deep-seated ethnic tensions, particularly between the dominant Pashtuns and the oppressed Hazaras. These divisions are exacerbated by historical colonial influences and later exploited by the Taliban. Hassan, as a Hazara, represents the subaltern—his voice is suppressed, and he suffers systemic oppression, which is a key concern in postcolonial literature. The metaphorical utterance is provocative and exposes how borders work in such

situations. Hassan's facial features always travel with him and symbolise Hazara borders. People travel with their borders, and they are treated accordingly through their borders (Ono, 2002). Assef is a vagabond of the place where Amir and Hassan were living. He always confronts Hassan for no reason. Hassan remains silent in front of Assef because he knows the consequences of retaliation, just like colonised people, where the retaliation was the death penalty. The author frames Hassan in a way that he understands his class well. He knows his borders, and he performs accordingly.

Colonial Legacies and Neo-colonization

The leading characters—Amir, Hassan, and even Baba—can be seen as postcolonial characters because they navigate personal and national identities in a world shaped by colonialism, imperialism, and their aftermath. The author of this book is tracing back the colonial imprints internalised by the dominant ethnic groups in Afghanistan. Amir, Baba, Asif, and military men were framed similarly to the extent that they could oppress the people around them. Cultural hybridity and identity struggles are sought through the plot and mask different characters. The leading characters in The Kite Runner are postcolonial figures because they grapple with identity, displacement, social hierarchies, and the ongoing effects of imperialism in a fractured Afghanistan. Baba, once a wealthy and respected man in Kabul, faces a loss of status in America, highlighting the displacement often seen in postcolonial narratives.

> "Maybe Hassan was the price I had to pay, the lamb I had to slay, to win Baba (*Hosseini, 2003, p.100*)."

> Sohrab's eyes flicked to me. They were slaughtering sheep's eyes. They even had the mascara—I remember how, on the day of *Eid of Qorban*, the mullah in our backyard used to apply mascara to the eyes of the sheep and feed it a cube of sugar before slicing its throat. (*Hosseini, 2003, p. 262*)

In the first example, Amir is describing Hassan as a victim and lamb to express the power difference between them. Lamb a powerless metaphor to be ruled and trained like in colonial settings. Amir's journey from Afghanistan to America mirrors the experiences of many postcolonial subjects who leave their homelands due to political upheaval. His return to Taliban-controlled Afghanistan shows the consequences of neocolonialism and the destruction left in the wake of foreign

interventions. Amir's Americanized identity and his perception of Afghanistan through a Western lens demonstrate the impact of cultural imperialism. The second example shows a changed Amir after returning from America but again he looks at Sohrab, the son of Hassan as a slaughtered sheep that could be saved. Hosseini framed the 'returned Amir' as a saviour as colonisers claimed that they brought civilisation, education, and religion to save the Indigenous people.

This is another metaphor that is overrated not only in Asia but also in Europe. Putting it in parallel, the royal families of the United Kingdom are considered prestigious in all the colonised countries, and the phrase 'royal blood' is taken from colonial discourse. This meaning of royal blood is taken from the British Royal families because they colonised the subcontinent and left their epistemic colonised knowledge behind. This hierarchical class system, where even blood is superior, dissects the culture into unfathomable differences. Here, the tenor is Baba, and the vehicle is kingship or imperialism. The semantic patterns related to this metaphor are well-defined and prestigious. Here, the metaphorical use is about the character Baba. Royal blood means the blood of prestigious cultural groups and is related to the monarch's breed.

> When people scoffed that Baba would never marry well after all he was not of royal blood he wedded my mother, Sofia Akrami, a highly educated woman universally regarded as one of Kabul's most respected, beautiful, and virtuous ladies. And not only did she teach classic Farsi literature at the university, she was a descendant of the family. (*Hosseini, 2003, p. 14*)

On the face of it, the blood of emperors and monarchs is considered royal because they identify themselves with royal families. The royal term is used for them because they have a so-called prestigious lineage and are placed on a higher level of social hierarchy. The public was ironic about Baba, and they usually gave him derogatory compliments regarding the family lineage. Baba felt that insult and consequently married a woman of the royal family to maintain his social image. Another school of thought claims that royal blood could marry a person of royal blood and common lineage could not deserve such partnership.

Critical discourse analysis of this text reveals cultural binaries in Afghani societies rationalised by Van Dijk (2001), who mentioned that it is not in the hands of common people to think, change, or retaliate against the power structure, so consequently, they follow the established hegemony of a dominant class. The integration of CDA and CMT explores the power of certain social groups that select powerful linguistic clusters to define their role or status. The semantic

understanding of the word 'royal' is that monarchs have good blood, and the common public lacks royalty. The author frames weaker social groups as clumsy and dirty. Hosseini turns the plot towards Assef, who navigates the future of Afghanistan with his friends while out casting the Hazaras in the following words:

> "His people pollute our homeland, our watan. They dirty our blood. He made a sweeping, grandiose gesture with his hands. 'Afghanistan for Pushtoons, I say. That's my vision" (*Hosseini, 2003, p. 35*).

Assef navigates the future of Afghanistan through a homogenous Afghani community performing ethnic cleansing through violence and torture. The writer has used the metaphor 'royal' for those who belong to higher strata of society and now has used metaphors 'pollute' and dirty for people of the Hazara group. Assef internalises colonial tools by saying that Hazaras married in Afghanistan, and now their blood is mixing with the blood of Afghani people, so the blood of Afghanistan is dirty, and Assef takes the responsibility of cleaning the blood of Afghanistan. Hosseini opened up about the ethnic differences in the underdeveloped country of Afghanistan. Assef's hatred for Hazaras reflects how colonial and postcolonial societies often perpetuate divisions to maintain control over marginalised groups.

Critically, the metaphors 'pollute' and 'dirty' signify the racial discrimination against the people of Hazara. The discrimination is not based on education or jobs; rather, the community considers them dirty and impure. The words expressed by Assef have a Machiavellian background because he is thinking about power and ruling Afghanistan through his own rules. When a social group is using all means to establish hegemonic power, then executing that power is a Machiavellian apparatus to exploit human rights. Assef is also using all legal and illegal means to suppress other groups. Recessive groups usually do not have access to quality education, life, and discourse, so they remain in clumsy and problematic situations for generations. Baba, the father of Amir and another central character in this plot, used menacing words for a religious group in Afghanistan.

> "You mean Mullah Fatiullah Khan, Baba gestured with his glass. The ice clinked. I mean all of them. Piss on the beard of all self-righteous monkeys" (*Hosseini, 2003, p. 15*).

The metaphorical utterance 'monkey' is used by a famous businessman against a prominent religious icon. Religious people have long beards and take them as a symbol of a pious and virtuous

life. Baba uses this metaphor because religious icons usually copy other religious icons and make decisions without considering conflict and context. In fact, the character considers them propagandists who propagate their agendas with all means without understanding the rationale behind a conflict. Analysis of the metaphor conveys that the speaker is strong and dominant over the listeners in the situation.

Social and moral conditions are deteriorating in Afghanistan after the Russian attack. Meanwhile, Assef, the story's antagonist, exercised Machiavellian ideology in Afghanistan. He was killing Muslims and throwing their meat at dogs. Amir came back and met Assef. Assef, the antagonist in The Kite Runner, can be constructed as a postcolonial character because he embodies the violence, oppression, and ideological influences left in the wake of colonial and imperial histories. His worldview and actions reflect the legacies of colonial power structures, racial superiority, and authoritarian rule. Assef idolises Hitler and believes in the racial supremacy of Pashtuns over Hazaras, mirroring colonial ideologies that justified ethnic hierarchies and oppression.

Assef's background—having a German mother and an Afghan father—makes him a hybrid figure, blending Western and Afghan influences. His admiration for Western fascism suggests how postcolonial societies often internalise destructive ideologies inherited from colonial or imperial powers. In a postcolonial reading, Assef represents the instability and cycles of violence that follow colonial withdrawal. His rise to power under the Taliban mirrors how extremist groups often emerge in postcolonial nations due to the lack of strong institutions and the scars left by colonial rule.

> "We left the bodies in the streets. We left them in the streets for days. We left them for dogs. Dog meat for dogs. He crushed his cigarette" (*Hosseini, 2003, p. 243*).

The metaphorical utterance 'dog meat' is used for the dead bodies of humans; Assef was mad in power and authority. Conceptually, the similarity between the two domains is the deeply rooted ideology of Assef, who wanted a conservative Afghanistan since his youth. Afghanistan is a Muslim-majority country, but for Assef, all those who obey him are Muslims, and others are just

roaming dogs. CDA is explaining the power motives of Assef, which are dark and frightening. Afghanistan is only for the Taliban, which was the motive of Assef.

The concept of Machiavellian ideology is not constant for Assef. Assef's power structure is not similar throughout the novel. Initially, he was racist and sectarian against a single group, but at the end of the story, he changed his perspective and became a powerful icon for the Taliban. He kills all Muslims and non-Muslims who do not support his ideology and power. Assef's brutal nature and his later role as a Taliban leader represent the violent power structures that arise in postcolonial states. He benefits from the collapse of traditional Afghan society and thrives in the power vacuum left by foreign interventions, much like how warlords and authoritarian figures often emerge in postcolonial nations.

Hosseini integrates many types of metaphors in this book, but the imagery he uses for foreign countries is modern and opportunistic. Amir, the protagonist, embodies hybridity as he moves between Afghanistan and the United States. His struggle with belonging in Afghanistan and as an immigrant in America reflects the postcolonial theme of fractured identity. Following is the example. Amir, when he went to the USA after the Russian attack, uttered these words as escapism. "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" (*Hosseini, 2003, p. 11*).

The metaphorical utterance is a river that is used for America and its busy life. Amir indulges in memories and repents of his childhood. Conceptual metaphor theory explains that a river always flows forward and never turns backwards. Amir is taking America as the river that could take him forward, and he could never think about his past. Amir is aspiring for this stage of mental health so that he can get rid of his past and escape through these memories, but the American lifestyle cannot help him until he goes back to Afghanistan and saves Hassan's child, Sohrab. Assef captures Sohrab and Amir comes back to Afghanistan to save him. Before meeting Sohrab, Amir and Assef have a duel to win Sohrab. Assef boasts about his reclaim of Afghanistan and his apparatus to run Afghanistan, but he also wants to live in Australia. "Have you ever heard of Rockingham? Western Australia, A slice of heaven. You should see it, miles and miles of beach" (*Hosseini, 2003, p.248*). Hosseini again frames the Western world as modern and happy. Assef talks about Australia and uses the metaphor 'slice of heaven' for it. The tension that the author weaves between Assef and Hassan

matures till the end of the plot. The end of the story is again an oppressive conflict of Assef with Hassan's son, who dresses like a girl to be raped. Assef becomes a Satan, and Afghanistan revolves around his orders. After the Russian attack, Afghanistan was rubble and a land of ashes. Assef, who was worsening the condition of Afghanistan, is now turning towards the other prosperous land. His ideology was to create a homogenous community of Taliban, but he saw his failure and foresee his future. Assef, a man of Machiavellian apparatus, considered himself a righteous man who deserved a happy life.

Conclusions

This study exposes the mindsets and racial discrimination of dominant groups in Afghanistan. CDA and CMT have brought the ideological and semantic underpinnings together to analyse metaphors' nexus critically. CMT helps understand the literal and intended meanings of the metaphors used, while CDA extracts the covert agendas behind using metaphors. Most metaphors are used in a dialectical relation. Power exploitation is implied through metaphors, and the intended ideologies are expressed covertly. It is seen in the discourse that most Afghanis are above Hazaras in power, and they breach moral boundaries in everyday life. In the end, the Taliban group is the sole power, and it creates hegemony and becomes dominant over all other social groups.

Assef, the villain, uses Machiavellian apparatus throughout the plot to achieve his goals. He uses metaphors to expose his motives and ideology to others, particularly to Hassan, who knows his social standing and never retaliates. He uses the stylistic substance to include Afghani nationals like Amir and exclude Hassan and the Hazaras. He calls Hassan a 'donkey' and 'dirty', who pollutes their homeland. Such stylistic substance is a Machiavellian apparatus to negate Hassan as Afghani. Another important metaphor is 'barked' to represent the voice of the dominant and powerful interlocuter in any conflicting situation.

Assef becomes a leader of the Taliban, and then he uses his Machiavellian ideology to exclude Afghani people from his league of superiority. The majority of Afghani refuse to support him, and he calls them dogs and kills them. Hosseini has used different fictional and non-fictional techniques to show Afghanistan's misery and social dirt. He subtly reveals that Hazaras are others and travel with their features, and their features become their borders. They cannot get rid of this in an Afghani society. Assef is not just a villain but a product of Afghanistan's postcolonial struggles.

His racial ideology, violent rule, and ability to exploit postcolonial chaos make him a figure that embodies the darkest consequences of colonial legacies in a fractured nation.

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Appendix:

Serial #	Source Domian	Metaphor	Target Domain	Text Example	Page #
01	Animal /dog	Barked	Soldier's voice	'you ! The Hazara !Look at me when I am talking to you' the soldier Barked	6
02	Animal Load-carrying –donkeys	Donkey	Hazara-People	The book said a lot of things I did not know. Things my teachers had not mentioned. Things Baba had not mentioned either. It also said some things I did know, like the people called Hazaraz mice-eating, flat nosed, load carrying donkeys.	9
03	Monarch's Families	Royal	Blood of Aristocratic families	When people scoffed that Baba would never marry well-after all he was not of royal blood---he wedded my mother.	14
04	Animal	Self-righteous Monkeys	Religious icons	You mean Mullah Fatiullah khan' Baba gestured with his glass. The ice clinked. I mean all of them. Piss on the beard of all self-righteous monkeys.	15
05	Venomous Animal	Sting	Referred to Amir	'yes, Baba Jan,' I muttered, marvelling , not far the first time, as how Baba could Sting me with so few words.	15
06	Useless Animal	Donkey	Boy	Hey, you flat nosed Babalu, who did you eat today? Tell us you slant-eyed donkey	34
07	Barbarian Society	Savage-grin	Turned	They stood before us, three tall boys dressed in jeans and T-shirts. Towering over us all, Assef crossed his thick arms on his chest a savage sort of grin on his lips	34
08	Environment	Pollute And	Hazara	His people pollute our homeland, our watan.They	35

		Dirty	Hazara Community	dirty our blood. He made a sweeping, grandiose gesture with his hands. 'Afghanistan for Pushtoons, I say. That's my vision.	
09	Insult [abstract]	Disgrace to Afghanistan	Hazara boy	They'd all just go rot in Hazarajat where they belong. You are a disgrace to Afghanistan.	35
10	Useless Animal	Disrespectful Donkey	Hazara boy	'Your father won't find us out.' Assef said. And there is nothing sinful about teaching a lesson to a disrespectful donkey.	66
11	Nature	Unmindful River	USA and its Life	America was different. America was a river, roaring along, unmindful of past.	119
12	Animal	Barked	Baba's Power	When I had asked Baba I he'd ever consider getting new servants. Hassan is not going anywhere, he'd barked.	197
13	Animal	Dog meat	Human body	We left them in the streets for days. We left them for dogs. Dog meat for dogs.	243
14	Ecclesiastical Concept	Slice of Heaven	Australia and its Prosperity	''Have you ever heard of Rockingham? Western Australia, a slice of heaven. You should see it, miles and miles of beach. Green water, blue skies.''	248