

**'Epiphany' as a Feature of Modernism in Khaled
Hosseini's *The Kite Runner***

**"لحظة التنوير" كأحد سمات الحداثة في رواية خالد حسيني
"عداء الطائر الورقية"**

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Abstract:

The objective of this research is to investigate epiphany as a feature of modernism in the light of two pioneers: Virginia Woolf and James Joyce. This feature will be applied on the characters of Khalid Hosseini's novel *The Kite Runner*. The points that will be elaborated in this paper are (1) what is epiphany? (2) Who is the founder of this literary term? (3) Epiphanies: James Joyce and Virginia Woolf. (4) Types of Epiphanies (5) Epiphanic Characteristics (6) Epiphanies in *The Kite Runner*.

Key words: epiphany, modernism, Types of epiphany, stages of epiphany, Epiphanic Characteristics, Khalid Hosseini, *The Kite Runner*

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Modern fiction appeared at the beginning of the 20th century and prevailed during the 30s of the 20th century in English literature. It was a movement of experiments in new technique in writing characterized by the “stream of consciousness”. The striking feature of *The Kite Runner* is its giving precedence to the depiction of the characters mental and emotional reactions to external events, rather than the events themselves. In doing so, the novelist abandoned the conventional usages of realistic plot structure, characterization, description, and their works became successions of “fleeting images of the external world with thoughts, half-thoughts and shadows of thought attached to the immediate present or moving back and forth in memory” (LIU,1993).

An epiphany (from the ancient Greek, *epiphaneia*, "manifestation, striking appearance") is an experience of sudden and striking realization. Generally, the term is used to describe scientific breakthrough, religious or philosophical discoveries, but it can be applied on any situation in which an enlightening realization allows a problem or a situation to be understood from a new deeper perspective.

An epiphany is variously described as “a moment of sudden and great revelation or realization” (oxforddictionaries.com), “a flash of recognition in which someone or something is seen in a

new light “(Nordquist, 1903), “momentary manifestations of significance in ordinary experience” (Nichols 1) or “a sudden sense of radiance and revelation that one may feel while perceiving a commonplace object . . . The sudden flare into revelation of an ordinary object or scene” (Abrams, 1993, p.57).

In Lord Jim, Conrad defines epiphany as “one of those rare moments of awakening [in which] everything [occurs] in a flash “(Langbaum, 1999, p.42). Woolf refers to it as “little daily miracles, illuminations, matches struck unexpectedly in the dark”.

Epiphanies are usually associated with the result of a process of significant labor, intensive study, or intense experience. Though the experience itself may appear to be a sudden, out-of-the-blue, flash of insight, it will more often than not happen at the end of a period of prolonged effort (Berkun, 2015, p.10).

Epiphanies are relatively rare occurrences and generally follow a process of significant thought about a problem. Often, they are triggered by a new and key piece of information, but importantly, a depth of prior knowledge is required to allow the leap of understanding.

When we think of epiphanies, principally, James Joyce is the first who comes to mind. Yet, Joyce may have coined this term he is not alone in having Epiphanic experiences, nor was he the first

to use them. Indeed, Joyce's word was even anticipated by the American writer Emerson, who employed it in a lecture of 19 December 1838: 'a fact is an Epiphany of God and on every facet of his life man should rear a temple of wonder and joy.

It was James Joyce who looked at epiphany as a secular term. Joyce was interested in, dramatic, sudden and remarkable moments which seemed to have raising significance and to be surrounded with a kind of charming aura. The famous reference is in *Ulysses*, when Stephen Daedalus is thinking to himself:

"Remember your epiphanies on green oval leaves, deeply deep, copies to be sent if you died to all the great libraries of the world, including Alexandria? Someone was to read them there after a few thousand years..."

The concept of the Joycean epiphany was first outlined in Stephen Hero (the early version of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*), when a casual incident in St., Dublin strikes Stephen. He collected many such moments together in a book of epiphanies. By an epiphany he meant a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself. He believed that it was for the man of letters to record these epiphanies with extreme care, seeing that they themselves are the most delicate and evanescent of moments. (Joyce, 1996).

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The epiphany as an aesthetic category: Joyce began to jot down little character-revealing dialogues and various impressions, which he tried to perfect and rework into prose poems, sometimes spending a whole day in agitation writing half a page. This composite manuscript he called —Epiphanies. An intrinsic duplicity characterizes the word —epiphany, which indicates both any text included in Joyce's homonymous collection and an abstract theoretical concept in fact, the term can refer to an idea of poetic revelation which occurs in everyday trivial situations and is worded through the often babbling utterances of common spoken language . It is not possible to provide a description of Joyce's theoretical notion of epiphany without encountering major difficulties, since the available documentation on this subject provides scarce information. (Natali, 2004, p.2)

From 1900 onwards Joyce produced 71 epiphanies, of which 40 have survived in manuscripts at Cornell University and the University of Buffalo in the United States. These have been reprinted by Richard Ellmann, A. Walton Litz and John Whittier-Ferguson in James Joyce: Poems and Shorter Writings (Faber and Faber, 1991). The different kinds are represented. Some are snapshots of real life, mini-dramas that encapsulate banality and vulgarity; in others, elevated thoughts or perceptions occur in banal surroundings, and are so powerful and so indicative of some

higher reality that they take on the character of mystical vision. Some epiphanies are less spectacularly revelatory and significant, but they are harmoniously beautiful, as is this one (Richards-the English Review, 1991)

Joyce was the first to reintroduce the term epiphany into the modern vernacular using it to describe the sudden and profound insights of Stephen Daedalus- the central character of Joyce's book *A Portrait of The Artist as a Young Man* (Joyce, 1916). Joyce believed that artists used their insight into the events of daily life, by transmuting them into a celebration of humanity (Beja, 1993, P.71). What was distinctive about Joyce's contribution to the evolution of the term epiphany was the secular meaning he gave to it; a meaning that was more closely oriented to the Greek and Pagan definitions of the term than the divine meaning it was accorded in Christian mythology (Hayman, 1998).

Back to a literature overview, Denzin defines epiphanies as interactional moments that leave a mark on people's lives and have the potential to create transformational experiences for the person. At their core, epiphanies are existential crises that occur in those problematic interactional situations where the character confronts and experiences a crisis- the effects may be both positive and/or negative.

Through epiphanies, personal character is manifested and made apparent; it alters the fundamental meaning structures in a person's life. They are a catalyst for perceptions of new identity. These experiences, Denzin notes, always involve painful emotions and their meaning is always given retrospectively.

Denzin describes four types of epiphanies, the "major", "the accumulation", the "minor or illuminative" and the "relived": In the "major" epiphany, an experience shatters a person's life, and makes it never the same again...The "cumulative" epiphany occurs as the result of a series of events that have built up in the person's life ...In the "minor or illuminative" epiphany, underlying tensions and problems a situation or relationship are revealed ...in the relived epiphany, a person relives, or goes through again, a major turning point moment in his or her life.

Epiphany as a feature of modernism:

Edith Wharton differentiates between two types of epiphanies: the literary epiphany and the modern epiphany, which focuses on the materialistic side of aesthetic conception. Wharton connects between the historical fiction and the modernist one. James Joyce is the first to give this term a secular meaning. Epiphany has long been the core of Joycean studies and a remarkable feature of the modern novel, in authors ranging from Virginia Woolf to Thomas Wolfe. Modern texts pay a great deal

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of attention on the subjective and the secular in experience, as well as exerting an effort to find a way to convene the two together. Both are traits of the alienated modern sensibility and their separation is at the core of this alienation (Kim, 1950).

The Modern epiphany is harder to fulfill for the modern authors because, generally, truth is not clearly apparent to the writer in everyday objects as it was to the poets of earlier periods. Hence, Joyce's identification of the epiphany as a manifestation through "vulgarity of gesture or of speech" -the clearly mundane-, is alienated from truth to the point of seeming profane.

In Joyce's technique, epiphany replaces the role carried out in traditional narrative by the event; the collocations of numerous textual themes in associative moments are the events of the mature works, and they are multitudinous. Hence the reader should take his understanding of epiphany as axiomatic; explicitly identifying each one by the term "epiphany" would become excessively redundant.

An epiphany is not necessarily positive or spiritual – especially not in Joyce. It might be a moment where a person suddenly has an insight into the insanity and infelicity of their condition, like a flash of lightening suddenly illuminating how lost they are. This is the negative epiphany, in the sense meant by William Burroughs when he described the phrase 'naked lunch' in

his introduction that "The title means exactly what the words say: *naked lunch*, a frozen moment when everyone sees what is on the end of every fork." (Kim, 1950).

Positive epiphanies exist in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries where the writer was overwhelmed by something, and seems to see in it a 'point of intersection of the timeless with time' (as T.S. Eliot puts it). A thing catches the light, and suddenly seems a window to eternity.

Ashton Nichols, suggests in his book;" *The Poetics of Epiphany: nineteenth century origins of modern literary moment*", that the main effect on the literary epiphanies of modernism came on the hands of Wordsworth. He tried in his poetry to capture what he called 'spots of time':

There are in our existence spots of time which with distinct preeminence retain a fructifying virtue, whence, depressed by trivial occupations and the round of ordinary intercourse, our minds especially the imaginative power are nourished and invisibly repaired such moments chiefly seem to have their date in our first childhood (Nichols, 1987).

Both D.H. Lawrence and Virginia Woolf also tried to make the novel an exploration of the folding and unfolding of consciousness. Sometimes the novelistic epiphany involves a

sudden sense of a hidden pattern behind the characters' history – they run into an old love (as in Dr. Zhivago) or an old enemy (as Bolkonsky does in War and Peace) and think – why them? Why now? Is this a coincidence or evidence that our lives are somehow weaved together, like works of art, if we could but glimpse the hidden pattern?

By contrast, in the modernist and romantic epiphany 'the powerful perceptual experience becomes prime and self-supporting. Interpretation of the event may be important but it is always subject to an indefiniteness that does not characterize the powerful moment itself', in the words of Ashton Nichols. He goes on: 'the visible reveals something invisible but the status of the invisible component is left unstated. Its mystery becomes part of the value of the experience.'

There are similarities and differences between Joyce's "Epiphany" and Woolf's "Moment of Importance". Joyce's epiphany and Woolf's "moment of importance" both are writing techniques of stream of consciousness in modern fiction. There are some similarities between them. First of all, both are artistically designed by their writers to represent the moment of mental experience. For instance, Little Chandler's epiphany in Joyce's short story *A Little Cloud* and the sight of the mark in Woolf's *The Mark on the Wall* are deliberately arranged to reveal

characters' complicated inner thoughts. In addition, both of them need the impact of the external world or stimulus on the human mind.

Thirdly, both techniques intend to show rather than to comment. The writers just present the characters' thoughts and emotional reactions but do not make comments on them, characters are introduced by their own thoughts, words and deeds but not outright by the authors, which leaves a large space for readers' imagination and thinking.

On the other hand, 'epiphany' and 'moment of importance' have some differences. Firstly, 'epiphany' is closely related to the plot of the story, while 'moment of importance' embodies the characteristics of promptness, randomness and fragmentation.

Secondly, in sense of time, 'epiphany' usually marks the abrupt, sudden climax of the story and when it occurred at the certain place and time, the story ends suddenly, while 'moment of importance' often represents a lasting continuous flow of the character's inner world. More specifically, the short story *A Little Cloud* reaches its climax and ends when Little Chandler found the truth of his life reality; while the character's lasting thoughts centered upon life's profound, philosophical thinking triggered by the mark on the wall seems to be interrupted or frustrated in the end of the story by someone's conversation and the narrator's

realization of the snail. Thirdly, 'epiphany' has a wider social impact and more profound moral significance while 'moment of importance' has a narrow and intimate focus on personal character.

A set of cores epiphanic characteristics were created throughout content analysis to the epiphanic literature (Kripendorff, 1980). The six core epiphanic characteristics that were identified include, 'antecedent state', 'suddenness', 'personal transformation', 'illumination/ insight', 'meaning –making' and 'enduring nature'.

Epiphanic Characteristics:

Epiphany is an antecedent state that is preceded by periods – from weeks, months or sometimes years of suffering, conflicts, anxiety, depression and inner turmoil. Most of times the one who goes through epiphany always feel painful emotions like abandonment, regret, anger, loneliness or suicidal ideation and in some cases all of them. The second feature that epiphanies have is being sudden; epiphanies are sudden and abrupt, but some types are featured by slowness and gradualism.

Thirdly, epiphanies are experiences of transformation in self-identity and profound change. This is the most prominent feature of the characters who go through epiphanic moments

which led them to view themselves and their world in a different way. These transformations are varied, for example, discarding old beliefs, about oneself or about the others. Most of the cases, these beliefs are based on a new deep understanding, or conscious recall, or spiritual tranquility.

Furthermore, epiphanies are simultaneous with illumination and insight due to their being as acute awareness of something new, something which the individual had been previously blind to when a character goes through epiphany, he/she experience a significant insight which affects illuminating elements of self-identity that had once remained in darkness.

Moreover, epiphanies are profound insights that are figured significant to the individual's life; it can be called a process of meaning-making. A process in which individuals feel the increased value or worth of life, the time that one creates a life purpose, the phase which forms the linking between childhood experiences with adult emotions and behaviors and the attribution of great importance and significant to an event, or a person, or other life circumstances.

In addition to these features, epiphanies are of enduring nature, it is a momentary experience, the personal transformation that brings out lasting and permanent results, and it is a powerful

new illumination coupled with the significance (meaning) attached to it.

Epiphanies represent a compromise of one's existential freedom, leading to a profound re-evaluation of life's projects and goals that are chosen freely (Heidegger, 1987, p. 154). The kind of freedom that is an outcome of an epiphany and which is best described as a newly created courage toward willingness and openness to reform new natures of self-identity; so that self-identity is experienced as "being-for-itself" (transcendence), as opposed to "being-in-itself" (immanence) (Sartre, 1943, P. 80). Human beings fight to gain their 'in-itself', however human consciousness is unable to remain stable. Human beings are always free to change, so that freedom is equated with uncertainty (Sartre, 1943, P. 55).

The epiphanic characteristics "illumination/ insight" was defined before as an acute awareness of something new, something to which the person had been previously blind to. The term itself is defined as throwing light upon that which had previously been in darkness. From a Heideggerian perspective the persons' epiphanies marked a new freedom toward openness (as opposed to closeness) and a clarification of their own being, their physical, social, personal and spiritual world (van Deurzen, 2002, pp. 62-93). The early stages of the persons' life-stories reveal they

had chosen to eschew their existential freedom. They had become closed off to the full range of their own possibilities for being and relating (Craig, 1988, p. 3).

The Kite Runner is a 'bildungsroman' novel, which means, characters are always in change through their life journey and go into new realization and see life from different angle. Then accordingly, they start to meditate everything in deeper perspective and start to behave in a different way. *The Kite Runner* depicts a peculiar form of suffering, which defers the catharsis typically provoked by narratives focused on the heroic martyrdom of innocent or helpless victims (Aubrey, 2016). That is, it explores the guilt of those who are responsible for or complicit with the victimization of others. As one reader puts it; while reading this book I wished to scream at the characters in the book, wished to tell them that they were making the wrong decision. But then I looked into myself and realized that I would have made the same wrong decision. At that point my hatred was toward myself.

Amazon readers proudly announce that the book made them cry, made them nauseated, made them lose sleep, made them feel beaten up? All of which suggest an intense bodily form of identification with Amir. "There were times I hated reading this book. I went days feeling physically sick from the story". "The

emotions are so deep and raw; I can't really go into it. This book is filled with such unspeakable sadness. Amir's guilt turned me into an insomniac-I was Amir. I felt all the pain and betrayal. I was Hassan. I was destroyed, elated, torn in two by the powerful emotions in this book"(Aubry, 2016, pp. 25-43).

Since the main purpose of this research is to acquaint the reader with a version of each of the protagonists' life stories. Each is presented in chronological order (i.e. childhood, adolescence, and adulthood) providing an outline of the protagonist's life up to the end of the novel and their most meaningful experiences (epiphanies) as they saw it during each stage. Each of the life stories then culminates with the protagonist's epiphanies, and the positive changes and transformation that occurred as a result.

The main characters in the novel suffer a powerful moment of epiphany. *The Kite Runner* is divided into three sections. The first part of the story takes place in Kabul. Amir, the main character and the narrator of the novel, describes his childhood in the early to mid-1970s and, especially, his relationship with Hassan. This section includes the pivotal event of the narration. The second section begins in 1981 after Amir and his father leave Afghanistan during the Soviet occupation. This part of the novel takes place in Fremont, California, a city south of San Francisco in the East Bay. Here, they live as part of an immigrant. This

section ends with the marriage of Amir to Thoraya and the death of Amir's father in 1989.

In the final section of the novel in 2001, Amir returns back to Afghanistan. This circular structure of the novel is a feature of modernist writings. The events end where it began from. Hosseini's character leaves home by choice, and between leaving and being back, many events lead to the character's transformation. In *The Kite Runner*, Amir must leave with his father in the wake of the Soviet invasion, but this departure allows him to leave his past behind him and indirectly gives him a chance to begin anew. He is able to follow his own interests and ambitions in a new culture more friendly to his ambitions and to renew his relationship with his father.

The opening paragraph of "*The Kite Runner*" already expresses one of the main causes of epiphany; that is guilt. Amir, the main character, is perpetually confronted by guilt. It is almost the end of the childhood phase in which Amir's character will change accordingly. These details are the accumulative childhood events that lead to the big moment of epiphany later in the novel after Amir grows up and learn more about Hassan's devotion and loyalty, even after being far apart from each other.

There is a strong relationship between guilt and epiphany because one way or another, these suppressed feelings of remorse

and redemption will lead one day to take an action weather deliberate or spontaneous one. There will be a reflection of these inside feelings in the human behavior. And this is what typically happened in Amir's case.

The details of Amir's life, whether joyful or sorrowful are, once again, as in his adolescence, dwarfed by events in Afghanistan. Amir and Thoraya celebrate his first novel as they struggle to have a child. In the third section of the novel which begins in June 2001, Amir receives a phone call from Rahim Khan- his father's closest friend-. Rahim Khan begins to tell Amir about Hassan; Amir knew about how far Hassan kept loyal and loving to him even after being apart from each other. This was left in Hassan's letters to Amir in which he tells some of his own story in three letters that he has written to Amir and given to Rahim Khan to deliver. They are murdered by the Taliban, who take over the house and send their son Sohrab to an orphanage. Rahim Khan tells Amir that one of the reasons he has asked him to come to Pakistan is that he wants Amir to go to Kabul to find Sohrab. Amir says that he cannot possibly go; he cannot risk everything.

As much as people enjoy routine, stability and predictability, they also expect their lives to change as well. Human lives are always in transition, however "some transitions, some periods of change, stand out as especially significant in the life-course. Amir

is in a moment of crucial choice between being having a wife and stable life in America and to free his inner guilt towards Hassan. He has to do this. This is exactly what Hassan has done for Amir even in his final act. Rahim Khan is angry with Amir knowing all that Hassan has done and suffered for Amir and his family. In a new moment of realization, it is at this point that he tells Amir that Hassan is Baba's son. Rahim Khan enlightened the darkness that Amir lived in all these years. He revealed the truth that has been hidden for years. He removed the dust of the buried truth. Amir is furious with his father for this deception and blames Rahim Khan for not telling him earlier.

This is Amir's epiphany; A side from being one of the most important plot moments in the novel, this is his moment of a new realization, the moment of knowing how long he had been deceived by his father. He wonders how he had not noticed all the clues suggested that Hassan was his half-brother. He wonders how his father could have lied to him and to Hassan all these years. It is much ironic now when he recalls his father's saying about sin. He told him that the only sin in life is theft and that lying is stealing someone's right to know the truth:" there is only one sin, only one. And that is theft. Every other sin is a variation of theft. When you kill a man, you steal a life... you steal his wife's right to a husband, rob his children of a father. When you

tell a lie, you steal someone's right to the truth. When you cheat, you steal the right to fairness... there is no act more wretched than stealing.”

Epiphanies are experiences that reveal one's terrifying freedom, giving essence to life (Sartre, 1948) and offering insight into the inter-relationship between inauthentic and authentic modes of self-identity. This creates a tension between two polar opposites, which van Deurzen (2002, p.55) claims "supplies the very energy of life". When a person experiences an epiphany, they encounter the conditions of existence and come to see their own inner condition as thrown (Heidegger, 1927).

This "cumulative" epiphany occurs as the result of a series of events that have built up Amir's epiphany. This moment of sudden shocking truth about his father. His father had dishonored his best friend Ali as well. Amir also realizes a very bad truth that is: Like father, like son, he himself more like his father. He betrayed the person who was most loyal to him. He thinks of how different Ali's and Hassan's lives could have been if Amir had not betrayed them. May be baba have brought them to the United States and may this could save them from death in Afghanistan.

Regret is a conscious negative emotional reaction to past actions or lack thereof. Regret differs from disappointment: regret is an outcome of actions, while disappointment is born from the

outcomes. Guilt is a deep regret for actions because they fell short of our own moral standards. Guilt is a prerequisite for remorse, which is more mature and proactive than guilt in that it also involves an impulse for repentance and reparation. (Burton, 2014). After thinking everything over, Amir realizes that his actions have had a grave effect on Hassan's life. He now thinks of Hassan as his brother and he recalls the unqualified love Hassan has given him. Amir thinks about his father's desire for him to stand up for something and to do his own fighting and realizes that this is the time to do it. He returns to Rahim Khan's house and tells him that he is going to Kabul to find Sohrab.

Amir keeps dreaming of Hassan every now and then. He is always in his mind and thoughts. He bears the burden of guilt towards Hassan inside him. Amir struggles with daily flashbacks, reminding him of what a good friend Hassan was and how he betrayed him, "The bear roars, or maybe it's Baba. Spittle and blood fly; claw and hand swipe. They fall to the ground with a loud thud and Baba is sitting on the bear's chest, his fingers in his snout. He looks up at me and I see. He's me. I am wrestling the bear" (295). The bear in Amir's dream symbolizes his guilt of betrayal of witnessing this horrid event that he had the power to stop. Now that Baba is gone, Amir is left to wrestle the bear on

his own and hopefully come out on top. Amir is utterly alone on his quest and he must continue to fight to make things right.

Now as epiphany always change person's life into new perception and new attitudes weather negative or positive. In Amir's case, he changed positively and tries to find a way to be good again through finding Hassan's son. Rahim Khan's reminder to Amir that there is a way "to be good again", and the way this edict becomes Amir's mission in the novel, reflects not just an individual dilemma that the "universal" reader can identify with, but the way in which "goodness" and "humanity" become imbricated in the politics of the familiar and the modern. Specifically, it reflects Mahmood Mamdani's recent engagement with how race, nation, and/or religion, as essentialized difference, may be transcended through the demarcation of an individual as "good". (Jefferess, 1879, 395)

Amir's one last shot at redemption is to rescue Hassan's son, Sohrab, from an orphanage in Afghanistan. While searching for Sohrab, Farid tells him that it is best to forget his past since nothing from it has survived. Amir said, "I don't want to forget anymore," he is ready to face his past and make up for his former actions and behavior by helping Hassan's son. Amir realizes that this is his one last gift that Hassan has placed before is his one last shot at redemption and he accepts the offer. If not for Amir's

guilty conscious, he might never have had the ambition to travel back to his war-torn country in search of a boy that was not his, it was just not his nature, but because of the guilt that he still had he took up the offer and stepped back into Afghanistan, the origin of his guilt and haunting flashbacks.

Foster wrote, “The quest consists of five things: (a) a quester, (b) a place to go, (c) a stated reason to go there, (d) challenges and trials en route, and (e) a real reason to go there” (3). We have our (a) quester: Amir. He must, (b), travel to Afghanistan. He must save his half-brother’s son, Sohrab, who is a victim of child trafficking. He (d) faces an initially unwilling companion, Farid, the dangerous Taliban and an unpredictable Assef.

He is remembering what he did in his past versus what he should do, and acting on this realization. Assef badly beats Amir, and in this particular moment, Amir feels healed although he is ironically being beaten terribly. “My body was broken—just how badly I wouldn’t find out until later—but I felt healed. “Healed at last”. (Hosseini, 2003, 289). Amir is finally being punished and getting what he deserved. The monumental moment took place during the fight is the end: Sohrab stands up for Amir just like his father did many years ago. This gives Amir some clarity and redemption from his guilt.

His character is different now; he – without thinking- tells Sohrab that he and Hassan are brothers. He is not hiding anything anymore. Once Sohrab recovers physically and Amir safely brings him to America, He sees the Hassan he saw after the rape: the sunken eyes and tired face, silent, and constantly sleeping or keeping to himself.

Amir sees a man selling kites, and immediately is back in the kite flying days of his childhood. He buys one and asks Sohrab to join him, and to his surprise Sohrab accepts the offer. Amir and Sohrab cut another kite and Amir is brought back into that day in the winter of 1975 before the rape: the triumph, victory, happiness, and glory. He is brought back to the day that changed the course of his entire life. Sohrab smiles, which means everything to Amir. He now has the choice of what to do: he can redeem himself of his previous actions or be the person he was. He decides to be the person he should have been. He runs the kite for Sohrab, telling him “For you, a thousand times over”.

It was only a smile, nothing more. It didn't make everything all right. It didn't make anything all right ...But I'll take it. With open arms. Because when spring comes, it melts the snow one flake at a time and maybe I just witnessed the first flake melting. I ran. A grown man running with a swarm of screaming children. But I didn't care. I ran with the wind

blowing in my face and a smile as wide as the Valley of Panjsher on my lips...I ran” (Hosseini, 2003, 371).

This closing passage shows the progress Sohrab and Amir are making. The snow melting symbolizes the hardship for Sohrab and the wall he has put up from others. The snow is being melted by spring coming, the start of a relationship between Amir and Sohrab. Amir is running for Sohrab like Hassan ran for him. He is giving Sohrab the love he should have given Hassan. Although it does not make Amir’s sins and regrets disappear, it gives him some clarity and a feeling of redemption. He is being the person he should have been throughout his entire childhood and life.

The Amir we knew in the beginning of the novel is a completely different Amir by the conclusion. The guilt he lived with for all those years helped to transform him into a different person and allowed for him to find a way to become good again (Hosseini, 2003, 168) on his journey towards redemption.

This is how Amir found his way to be good again after all these years of redemption and feeling guilty. Finally, he had a transformation in his character to be better than he was in the beginning of the novel. It is evident now that it is a bildungsroman novel. The bildungsroman, however, has as a focal point, the development of the main character from childhood to

maturity of mind and body. To gain this maturity, the character may leave home and family, learn about him- or herself through the experiences that life provides, rather than through formal schooling, and then return with newly acquired wisdom.

Without the sense of guilt that Amir and Baba felt, they would not have been determined to achieve what they did in their lives. Baba would not have tried to be the best, attempting to hide his moral sin under the extravagance of his good deeds, and Amir would not have gone back into Afghanistan to save a young boy. Without guilt, there would have been no reason for these two men to go up against the odds, to help others less fortunate than themselves, and to put their lives on the line for the well-being of others.

These feelings of remorse led to the change that follows epiphany. i.e., every epiphany is preceded by the following: (1) conflict (2) complication and obstacles are faced (3) confusion (4) crisis (5) Compliance (6) Comprehension (7) Catharsis (8) Clarity (9) Change (10) Consequences (11) Construction and finally (12) conclusion. Therefore, the character that lives epiphany forms his/her new identity step by step, he/she moves from strength to strength to reaching a defining point of self-actualization, to a better degree of self-knowledge, a crucial personal battle has been won and is better prepared for the next (Schouten, 2014, 31).

An epiphany is a rewarding experience precisely because we never know how and when it will happen, or whether we will be rewarded for our efforts; it is not the predictable and calculable result of a conscious process of reflection and consideration. Amir's epiphany is an accumulative one, he endured all these years. Hosseini ends his novel on a positive note assuring the idea that after epiphany, a transformation happened.

The bildungsroman is the name affixed to those novels that concentrate on the development or education of a central character. This genre intends to lead the reader to greater personal enrichment as the protagonist journeys from youth to psychological or emotional maturity. The protagonist's adventures can be seen as a quest for the meaning of life or as a vehicle for the author's social and moral opinions as demonstrated through the protagonist.

Referring to the description of bildungsroman, it becomes evident how Hosseini's novel fit into this rubric. the character reaches transformation and maturity throughout the events; and does not stay the same character. The novel is about self-development and epiphanic experiences.

At the end, *The Kite Runner* end on mixed notes. The chance of happiness is evident, but the characters have so much to

overcome to reach that happiness. For Amir, his happiness is tied up in Sohrab's well-being.

Conclusion:

It was perhaps Charles Taylor who first identified modernism as an epiphanic philosophical moment in the discourse of modernity. Instead of focusing on the accepted history of modernism as a reaction to the crisis of modernity and the rejection of its established doctrines on such important issues as the idea of unitary self, identity, time consciousness and instrumental reason, Taylor concluded *Source of the Self* with the claim that modernism represented the epiphany of modernity –its moment of revelation and insight (Doyle, 2013, p. 32).

Taylor's radical assertion was that epiphany was itself a sign of newness of modernism, of its accounting for the gap between the objects of modern life and existing conventions of representation that were found inadequate. As the basis for "non-representational art," Taylor argued, modernism was the European artist's search for a new way of accounting for experiences that could not be reflected through "the surface of ordinary things"; the epiphanic was the mode of recuperating "something only indirectly available, something the visible subject can't say itself but only nudges us towards" (469). Accordingly, Taylor argued, modernism arose in response to a problem that had to come to

haunt the culture of (European) modernity in the nineteenth century: how to achieve" a kind of unmediated contact with the fullness of life"(469)

By its very nature, modernism sought to promote ideas about culture and forms of representation at odds with what Taylor called "the deadening, routinized, conventional forms of instrumental civilization"(469). But what exactly was involved in this deployment of an epiphanic moment was very much a matter of debate: "Did it mean simply throwing off the old forms and achieving a kind of unmediated contact with the fullness of life?"(469) or was the epiphanic a continuation of older forms of social mediation?

Taylor's conclusion, derived from a careful reading of the artistic philosophies of a range of early –twentieth-century writers and artists, including James Joyce, T.S. Eliot, was that modernism sought the inner depths of life through something that comes "close to merging with the other"(471). What the other was for the modernists – and for us- continues to be one of the most vexing questions in the study of modern culture and its aesthetic ideology .

In order to analyze the protagonist's epiphanies, the narrative approach was the best methodology with an initial theoretical introduction to the feature of epiphany. Understanding

epiphanies from a narrative perspective enabled a temporal understanding of the phenomenon which provided a deeper and fuller account of the protagonists' epiphanies and its impact on their lives. The chapter went through details to bring greater clarity and understanding to each epiphany. With testing the set of core epiphanic characteristics developed in the beginning of that chapter with the actual epiphanies contained in the life-story of the hero in *The Kite Runner*, revealing a high level of support and evidence for the six core epiphanic characteristics.

The protagonist experienced a period of depression, anxiety and inner turmoil prior to his epiphanies. He acknowledged and encountered the condition of existence of (freedom, responsibility, choice, time, meaning and death) which provided the impetus for re-appraisal and questioning of his basic assumptions, values and beliefs. This period was characterized by intense, by reflection and introspection, during which, he began to piece together the various unconnected and disparate elements of his life, when suddenly and abruptly he summoned a powerful new insight or perspective into consciousness. This was triggered by a range of occurrences that include a chance to encounter with a significant person, a dream containing a symbolic encounter, feelings of great frustration, incarceration, and the reminder of one's childhood vulnerability and innocence.

The protagonist's analysis and reflection on their situation in the world, and the final profound insight or change in perspective (the epiphany), enabled him to make vital connections between the disparate elements of his life. This brought unity, purpose and meaning out of the chaos and meaninglessness of existence.

The protagonist's new insight and perspective also had the effect of illuminating areas of life that had once remained in darkness. So momentous was this experience that it precipitated a resolute decision to change the way they viewed himself and his world. The highly significant nature of the new insight and the resultant decision to transform meant that each protagonist believed that it was no longer possible to continue living the way they had. This momentous insight, or change in perspective, set him on a new path from which he felt there was no turning back.

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