

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Men and women are distinguished by sex and gender. Sex refers to the way individuals distinguish from male to female through biological characteristics. Meanwhile, Pilcher & Wheelhan (2004) stated that gender refers as a line of boundary between biological sex differences and the way men and women behave which tend to be either masculine or feminine. Therefore, gender is not sex because it has their own characteristics but closely related. The statement is supported by Dobbie (2009) who said that sex is fixed and stable, while gender is not fixed.

It stands for the reason that gender is not born within a person but rather developed by social and cultural interpretations. According to Culler (1997), Gender is performative in the sense that “it is not what one is but what one does” (p.157). The statement indicates that gender is constructed. It refers to what Pilcher & Wheelhan (2004) has been stated where it is the degree to which a person see themselves as masculine or feminine given to what it means to be a man or woman in society.

Someone can be noticed as a male, but he might not have a masculine gender. It is his decision to choose what gender he will be, while often highly influenced by society. This statement is supported by Barry (2002), who says that gender is not seen as something simply ‘natural’ and unchanging, but rather as a construction and subject to change. It means that people can be what they want to be and do not follow what the tradition, society, and religion want or expect.

On the other hand, according to Stets and Burke (2001) being masculine is means having the qualities or appearance considered being typical of men; connected with or like men. In line with Connell (1995) who stated that self-imagining of being masculine has been inherited from generation to generation, through mechanism of

culture “inheritance--become a duty” which must be done. Connell (1995) then indicates that the more closely that a man conforms to the characteristics, the closer he is to being a real man.

Therefore, if an individual’s gender does not match with its labeled stereotypes, society would relatively neglect, thus, underline that there are certain expectations about gender (Stets and Burke, 2001). The beliefs could become a powerful forces in judgments to self and others.

In relation to the issue of masculinity, masculinity does not only appear in the reality or in the daily life, it often appears or reflected in the literary works. There are many authors who bring the issue of masculinity into their literary texts. It demonstrates that the issue of masculinity is interesting to be analyzed. There are many works seems to bring such ideas. For instance, masculinity performed in fiction books. The reason might be due to perception which suggest that issues appeared in fictional world reflect issues in our world (Cohen and Wilber, 2009). In line with Jett-Simpson & Masland (as cited in Manjari, 1998) who argued that gender bias exists in the content, language and illustrations of books. Mem Fox (1993, as cited in Manjari, 1998) also supported the argument and believes that everything we read constructs us; the way it makes us who we are, by presenting our image of ourselves as girls and women, as boys and men.

The reason behind the choice of *Kite Runner* (2003) by Khaled Hosseini as the object of the study is because it is one of the literary works which carries out the issue of masculinity. The novel presents male characters, where their masculine personalities are different and it became problematic. The main character seems more cowardly and timid boy, while boys are usually portrayed with brave, courageous, not timid and outgoing (Spence as cited in Archer and Llyod, 2002). This novel also brings the issue of fatherhood of what it means being a being a father in Afghanistan.

The novel tells about an Afghan man named Amir looking back on his childhood, back in Afghanistan. Amir grew up with his father, Baba, a successful Afghan businessman who is known for his brave and manliness. As a child, Amir desperately wanted his father's approval, which came with being more masculine and could stand for himself. Amir struggled with forging a closer relationship with his father because of his less masculine demeanor as an Afghan man in the eyes of Baba.

Never quite successful in this effort to prove to him that he was worthy of having been born to such a father, Amir behaved jealously toward Hassan, his best friend, who received more affection from Baba. Amir tried to assert himself by neglect and ignoring Hassan, thus loosening their friendship. However, Amir was not any happier. The invasion of Taliban forces, during the time made Amir and his father to flee to Pakistan before immigrate to America.

The new life in America was also hard for Amir and his Baba, especially Baba for his code of conduct and the honor as the Pashtun and also as the Afghani man. After several hardships overcome in his life, now the adult Amir recognized his selfishness and tried to redeem himself.

It stands for the reason that this paper discusses the male characters' in *Kite Runner*. It focused on masculinity and what it means to be an Afghan man. This research is expected to contribute in elaborating the cultural phenomenon of masculinity especially masculinity in Afghanistan setting. Hence, this study hopefully enriches masculinity field study.

1.2 Research Question

In attempt to answer the problem, research question is formulated as follows:

1. What roles are expected from men identified in *Kite Runner*?
2. What are masculine attributes identified in *Kite Runner*?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

Given the above research question, this research paper attempts to:

1. To identify expectation of men roles in Afghani society in *Kite Runner*.
2. To identify masculinity attributes that being expected in Afghani society

1.4 Scope of Study

The scope of the study is around the characters traits and roles of man identified in the novel. The study examines masculinity roles and traits operate within the male characters of the novel. It also seeks to find the meanings of being an Afghan man as depicted in the novel *Kite Runner*.

1.5 Significance of Study

The book is chosen for the study because the curiosity about the story and offers a different perspective in understanding the issue of masculinity particularly in Afghanistan setting. It is also due to the need of the research to enrich the studies of masculinity to the field of literary studies.

1.6 Methodology

The study applied descriptive qualitative method, conducted by using the textual analysis and masculinity theoretical perspective by Brannon (2004) and Beynon (2002). For masculinity in Afghanistan setting, research from Echaves (2016) is also provided. Qualitative research is aimed at describing the data intensively and considered appropriate to analyze data deeper (Bogdan and Taylor, 1998). Furthermore, qualitative method produces descriptive data in the forms of written words or oral from investigated character. This method is suitable because the data are in the form of words, clauses, sentences, dialogues, comments and descriptions in the novels (Strauss and Cobin, 1998).

The primary data are textual analysis collected from *Kite Runner* was written by Khaled Hosseini (2003). The data collected were analyzed by using the masculinity perspective to analyze the character's roles and masculine attributes in the novel. Textual evidence that presented is in the form of sentences and dialogues that explore masculine attributes and role(s) of men in the novel.

1.7 Clarification of the Key Terms

To avoid misconception and misunderstanding, there are some significant terms to be clarified.

1. Ghairat

Means pride, esteem, virtue, and dignity

Ba ghairat means honorable; a man who is labeled as proud, esteemed, dignified or virtuous because he fulfilled or performed his masculine responsibilities and roles.

Be ghairat means dishonorable; a man who could not fulfilled and performs his masculine responsibilities and roles (Echafez, 2016).

2. Masculinity

Masculine is having the qualities or appearance which considered the typical of men. Male is not born likewise with masculine character naturally, masculinity is established by culture (Barker, as cited in Nasir 2007).

3. Nafaqah means a man as the husband and father is obliged to provide for all needs of the family members (Echafez, 2016).

4. Namus refers to the integrity, modesty and respectability as the absolute duty of men to protect

5. Nang refers to a sense of honor, prides, bravery and shame. It has a close connection with ghairat and namus concepts. (Echafez, 2016)

6. Phastunwali refers to unwritten set of values and code of manner of Phastun community code.

1.8 Organization of the Paper

The study is organized into five chapters and as follows:

CHAPTER I

This Chapter provides background of the study, research question, purpose of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, research methodology, clarification of the key terms, and also organization of the study.

CHAPTER II

The second chapter discusses the theoretical background and the literature reviews as the foundations of the study.

CHAPTER III

In the third chapter, the discussion revolves around the research methodology describing the steps and procedures of the study as well as the data resources in the study.

CHAPTER IV

The fourth chapter presents the findings and discussion of the study.

CHAPTER V

The last chapter presents the conclusion of the study and the suggestion for further studies.