

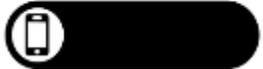
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**KHALED HOSSEINI'S AND THE MOUNTAINS ECHOED  
THROUGH THE EFFECTS OF REALISM**



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## Abstract

*Literary works reflect social realities which further underscores societal, cultural, political and religious paradigms of human existence. The literary writers of the world's literature hold a mirror in which the real picture of society and social life can be seen. The current research study aims to investigate Khaled Hosseini's *And The Mountains Echoed* through the effects of realism under the tag of theoretical framework of realism of Parkash Khuman (2010). The study uses descriptive qualitative methodology for the analysis of the selected texts. The data of this research study is qualitatively collected from primary as well as secondary sources and is described under the theme of realism. The text of the novel is used as primary source of the study and from secondary source, different research papers, research articles and books are used in order to bridge the gap between social life and its intended portrayal in literary works as literary realism.*

**Keywords:** *Social realities, realism, social life, literary realism*

### **Introduction:**

#### **Background of the study:**

Literature is reflecting social realities and acts as an imitation of human life and actions. In a social context, what people think and how they interact with each other. The role of literature as reflection of social life is widely acknowledged. Literature holds a mirror in which the real of a particular society can be seen. Literature articulates evils in the society and addresses adverseness of a social system. Therefore, the practical role and function of literature is more about instructing society and propagating moral values (Duhan, 2015). This means that literature plays a sort of corrective role in human life while projecting social under the prism of reality. Karnik Baharati and Showkat Ahmad (2015), claim that literature carries two main functions in society. First, the reflective role literature in which literature reflects social realities and social life and provokes ideas to raise questions against social injustices. Second, that literature deals with ideological grounds of individual as well as social life which engage people in particular cause.

"It is well said that man is a representational animal. Representation is a very flexible notion that ranges from 'carving a stone to man', to 'representing a man's life' through literary arts, novel, drama etc." (Qamar and Shakeel, 2015). This means that literary works draw narrative and depict social, ideological, and political paradigms of society. According to Bhagvanbhai H. Chaudhary (2017), state that literature is a documentation of what people usually believe of human knowledge in relations with moral, ritual and religious values of a society. Hence in this regard, John Sujit (2018) argues that literature serves as a catalyst of different social attitudes. These attitudes are associated with social, political and religious faces of a society.

Every writer of the world's literature writes in the realities of particular social, political and cultural history and serves as an inspiration of recording realities of human society (Duhan, *ibid*). Similarly, Khaled Hosseini is one of those writers who write in the real portrayal of Afghan society as Abadhesh Tundelkar (2016), states that Khaled Hosseini depicted all of his country's ills and evils and redeemed a remedy. For this exalted purpose, Hosseini wrote remarkable fictions which narrate the story of Afghan society, Afghan women, men and children and those who are caught in the political enigma and terrorism.

This study evaluates the literary works of Khaled Hosseini as reflection of Afghan society. It also reveals quests for social realities, and social and cultural representation of Afghan society through the eyes of Khaled Hosseini. The study draws deep indecorum of Afghan society particularly in Hosseini's novel 'And The Mountains Echoed'.

The title of the novel comes from William Black's poem "The Nurse's Song". The phrase And The Mountains Echoed belongs to the last line of the poem where Black speaks "and the hills echoed". The novel And The

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Mountains Echoed narrates the story of family of Saboor which includes a stepmother named Parwana, Abdullah, ten year old boy and Saboor son's from his previous deceased wife, three year old Pari, daughter of Saboor and own sister of Abdullah. The story of the novel starts with a mythical story of Baba Ayub and a Dev, an imaginary character of monstrous size, Saboor tells to his children (Jordan, 2013). According to Bagisha Sharma (2017), the novel *And The Mountains Echoed* is written as collection of short stories which is divided in nine chapters and each chapter is told with different character. The novel is mainly founded on the relationship of Abdullah with his three-year-old sister, Pari who later on faces the problem of human trafficking as her father decides to sell her to heirless rich couple in Kabul. Furthermore, Hanifa Omar (2018), writes the setting of the novel as country side of Afghanistan named as Shadbagh that is impoverished as compared to the postmodern world of globalized development. This maintains a critical realistic view of novel which covers the center of the story through the representation of the character as belong to poor and third world regions of Afghan geography. Moreover, Hiqma Nur Agustina (2016), states that Khaled Hosseini had lived in Afghanistan and therefore he knows the moves of Afghan life in the form of Soviet Union and invasion and political asylum of United States. Hence, Hosseini's depiction of Afghan life is based on what he saw as real and inevitable. This view represents Hossieni as representative of Afghanistan in the literary constellation of the world literature.

## Problem Statement:

The present study addresses the problem of examining how realism operates in Khaled Hosseini's novel *And the Mountains Echoed*. Although the novel portrays Afghan society, culture, migration, and social struggles, there is limited research that analyzes it specifically through the theoretical framework of realism proposed by Parkash Khuman (2010). The gap lies in understanding how Hosseini transforms real social conditions into literary representation. Therefore, this study investigates the extent to which realism dominates the narrative structure and themes of the novel. It aims to explore how the text reflects the true social, cultural, and political realities of Afghanistan through realistic depiction.

## Research questions:

1. How realism dominates Hosseini's narrative in *And The Mountains Echoed*?
2. How Khaled Hosseini realistically portrayed Afghan society in *And The Mountains Echoed*?

## Objectives of the study:

1. To draw Hosseini's *And The Mountains Echoed* through the effects of realism
2. To investigate the realistic portrayal of Afghan society in Hosseini's *And The Mountains Echoed*

## 3. Significance of the study:

This study signifies a faithful image of social realities of Afghan society portrayed in Khaled Hosseini's novel '*And The Mountains Echoed*'. It highlights the social issues of Afghan society depicted in the novel. Particularly, this study is based on Hosseini's discern of political, social, and military chaos of Afghanistan under the label Of realistic representation of Afghan cultural and social life.

## Literature Review

### Historical context of Term Realism:

Based on the portrayal of nature and real life, realism began in France in the second half is nineteenth century as philosophy of rejection of romanticism and romantic beliefs as romanticism was felt as a world of utopia and imagination that has no concerns with real life. Realism as in literary sense, was the first recorded realist movement which focused more the experiences of real and rejected the traditional belief in literature of viewing world as part and product of mind rather than actions and experience. In the wake of history, realism seeks its development in French literature and art as real reflection of real life situation (Levin, 2015). This means that realism under the yoke of history, realism emerged as reaction against romantic traditions which started in last

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half of eighteenth century and realism questioned the pseudo real beliefs of the prior literary romanticism. According to Brenda Murphy (2019), realism got its birth in France and later spread to the other parts of Europe as an influence of real life and social realities. Khuman (2010) states that the historical conception of realism is an attempted portray of lives, appearances, problems, customs, and mores of the middle and lower classes, of the unexceptional, the ordinary, the humble, and the how life is seen from the prism of reality

## **Theoretical Perspective of Realism:**

There is a myriad of ways in order to deal with literature and literary works. Every perspective which is worth more to analyze a literary work from, has its own value and significance. Similarly, realism has its own importance and significance. Realism depicts the real life issues and experiences without exaggeration. The term realism, as erstwhile discussed us originated from France and then fe the Russian communism and international Marxism (Khuman, 2010). Furthermore, Khuman (ibid) states that realism is more like a technique of literary narratives which records the reflection realities in the literary works and prevails on the construction of literary realism. Parkash Khuman educates upon the lines of realism as that literary works hold mirror in which the true cultural, political, social and religious paradigms of human life can be seen as the realistic literature which developed in post-World War one Europe carries that how human are reflected in the spheres of reality of human actions which bring decay to moral and ethical principles. As Todorovic, (2019) claims that artist and authors' works based upon the realities of the societies in which they are present. So there is not any distinction between art and reality, realism uses both to highlights the common issues of common man. Khuman argues that the representation of truth is the main concern of realism for which Khuman cites George Eliot in his article;

"I am content to tell my simple story, without trying to make things seem better than they were; dreading nothing indeed but falsity which, in spite of one's best efforts, there is reason to dread. Falsehood is so easy, truth so difficult (Khuman, 2010, p. 94)

This reflects that truth is the façade through which the reality of a literary work can be known. More precisely, Khuman claims that literary realism deals with the realistic representation of a particular culture, political system, social life and religious of a community in a given literary work or fiction. Hence, this grounds the theoretical framework of realism which Khuman has explored in different literary works.

## **Methodology**

### **Research design:**

The current research study uses the descriptive-qualitative methodology for the analysis of the selected texts under the heading of theoretical framework of realism of Prakash Khuman (2010). Arthur Cropley (2015), claims that the main constructive point in qualitative research methodology is to highlight the personal approaches which are based on the experiences of real life. Moreover, Mohajan (2018) argues that the descriptive-qualitative methodology underscores some social actions which further prevail on the way people redeem their experiences in the best possible approach of stating reality and it includes the qualitative description of interviews, literary texts and diaries. More precisely, Hassan Nassaji (2015), states that discriptive-qualitative methodology deals with the description of particular phenomenon and it's characteristics under the qualitative analysis of texts and dialogues.

### **Data sources:**

The current research study collects from both primary as well as secondary resources. The text of the novel is used as primary source, and for secondary sources different research papers, research articles, and books are used in order to bridge the gap between literary realism and literary fictions.

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## Data analysis technique:

This study collects data in three sequential steps. Firstly, the researcher read the novel *And The Mountains Echoed* very thoroughly and deeply. The researcher reread the novel in order to get the trustworthiness of the data. Secondly, the researcher took notes of and highlighted the particular extracts which will further be analyzed under the yoke of theoretical framework of realism. Finally, the data which is collected through note taking is qualitatively analyzed under the theme of realism in Hosseini's *And The Mountains Echoed*.

## Discussion and Analysis

Khaled Hosseini is a prominent and well-known novelist of the contemporary fiction. Hosseini's novels depict a very lucid and true image of Afghan society. In this regard, Hosseini's novels can be best subjected to analysis of realistic perspectives. In this section of analysis, the selected text of Hosseini's *And The Mountains Echoed* is analyzed through relevant description of realism

Critical acclaim shows that *And The Mountains Echoed* is a true depiction of Afghan culture and life. In the novel, Khaled Hosseini draws careful representation of Afghan values, cultural norms and traditions. Hosseini includes ordinary Afghan men and women as characters of the novel which truly reflects the reality and real face of society and culture. The creation of life like characters in the novel plays very important role in the depiction of reality of Afghan society. In the novel, Khaled Hosseini shows the historical realities of migration from Afghanistan to the Western hemisphere as Afghanistan twice went through the rages of wars and clashes. Hosseini draws the expatriate experiences which show the real life in Afghanistan was full of hurdles. To prove these facts, Saboor narrates to his children the life of Afghan expatriates when *div*, a fictional story, reveals the life of Ayub Baba's mysteriously abducted son. Saboor tells his children:

*Your son does not remember you, the div continued. This is his home, and you saw for yourself his happiness. He is provided here with the finest food and cloths, with friendship and affection..... He wants for nothing. Someday when he is a man, he may choose to leave, and he shall be free to do so. I suspect he will touch many lives with his kindness and bring happiness to those trapped in sorrow (Chapter 1, p.11).*

This reflects lives and experiences of those Afghan people who migrated to the west in order to live a peaceful life and provide their children the best future and good education and this was impossible in the war trodden Afghanistan. This means that the above extract shows a real picture of Afghan life and society as in the present novel, Hosseini's characters such as Pari, her mother Nila and brother Abdullah along with Bashiri's family shows the consequences of migration of Afghans to countries like France and England.

Furthermore, the cultural representation of Afghan social is also visible in the novel and such reflections are very deep-rooted and faithfully investigate the culture of Afghanistan. The portrayal of traditions, rituals and customs of Afghanistan carries a very significant role in the over all development of the novel. The characters of the novel also reflect the theme of cultural realism and social realities. As subsequently, Hosseini narrates Abdullah:

*"When he arrived home, he found his step mother, Parwana outside the hut, hunched before the tandoor, melting the daily naan".(Chapter 1, p.20)*

The terms tandoor and naan (in italic style) represent the social culture of Afghanistan. More precisely, these terms signify the social realistic construction of the novel. In the novel, Hosseini sets a broader perspective of cultural representation in the wake of history and social mobility of Afghan life. Being a first Afghan-American writer, Khaled Hosseini portrays the true colors of Afghan culture and, society purposefully under the light of long historical chaos and trouble of international wars and invasion. The setting of the novel shows the reflection of Afghan culture. The description of Kabul educates on the significance of cultural portrayal of the novel. As Hosseini describes

*Abdullah had never been to Kabul. What he knew about Kabul came from stories Uncle Nabi had told him. He had visited a few smaller towns on jobs with father, but never a real city.....Everywhere he saw traffic lights, and teahouses, and restaurants, and glass-fronted shops with bright multicolored signs (Chapter 1, p.34).*

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This shows the realistic portrayal of Afghan society through epitome of description of Kabul. The culture reflection of life accentuates the novel as a blend of reality in the nearest approach to the modern day Kabul. The narrator precisely draws a picture of social and cultural life in the capital city of Afghanistan. Moreover, the novel projects the social realities of Afghan society in the form of cultural poverty, culture of Afghan families and culture of patriarchy.

## Conclusion

Hark back to the realistic representation of Afghan society; Hosseini's novel *And The Mountains Echoed* reveals a fine mirror of social life. The novel reflects the society, culture and life of Afghanistan. The characters of the novel represent the ordinary Afghan citizens in a fictional narrative of Hosseini. In a nutshell, in *And The Mountains Echoed*, Khaled Hosseini holds a mirror of Afghan society. The cultural forces of Afghanistan are highlighted in the novel which forges the social realistic nature of the novel. The characters of the novel are realistically portrayed under the influence of irregular history of wars, social chaos and external invasion which makes the core construction of the novel. The core construction of the novel is the realistic depiction of social and political issues along with lines of traditions which shapes everyday life of Afghan society.

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