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**THE ETHNICITY VIEW IN KHALED HOSSEINI'S THE KITE RUNNER  
AND PAULO COELHO'S THE ALCHEMIST  
(COMPARATIVE LITERATURE STUDY)**

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**ABSTRACT**

This article is concerned with ethnicity view in two novel namely Khaled Husain's *The Kite Runner* and Paulo Coelho *The Alchemist* by using comparative literature approach. The problems which are proposed are (1) How are the ethnicity view in *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini and *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho?, and (2) What are the similarities and the differences of the ethnicity view in *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini and *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho?. To answer the problems, the researcher applies comparative literature theory and ethnicity theory and. In this study, the researcher employs a qualitative approach because several typical characteristics of qualitative are present in this study. In collecting the data the researcher uses the following procedures are used: (1) Selecting the novel, (2) reading the novel deeply, (3) selecting element of novels contain of ethnic view. After analyzing, the researcher finds After analyzing the two novels, it can be concluded that both of them have similarities and also differences. The similarities are both of novels same contain one of the conceptions driven by Marx is the primacy of the economic base over the cultural and thus superstructure. The ethnics who have economic power will control other powerless. *The Kite Runner* and *The Alchemist* clearly describe that phenomenon. The facts that people are honored because of their status and wealth are true. The tribal wars will produce the winner that has economic power for the weapons and so on. The groups of different culture are rooted economically. When once they win the tribal war by economic power, they will oppress the other ethnics which powerless in economy. In fact thus condition describe in both of novels. The differences both of those novels are: in *The Kite Runner* the ethnic's sentimentalism of the powerful economics (higher structure) is stronger, meanwhile in *The Alchemist* the sentimentalism of the powerful economics (higher structure) is lower. Although both of them were describe of the power of economic to oppress the poor tribal.

**Key Words:** *Ethnicity, The Kite Runner, The Alchemist, Comparative Literature.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Novel, a form of literary text may express human experience. If it does, it contains the record of people's value; philosophies, histories and the writer's experiences, and it can be said that the novel contains the way of life. Furthermore, the novel is the vehicle best equipped to present a picture of life lived in a given society against a stable background of social and moral values, and this is a kind of picture of life (mimetic). Similarly Luxemburg (1991: 15) states that Mimetic was begun since Plato and his student Aristotle era, as values that reflect the reality of live that cover many things like philosophy, culture, psychology, history etc.

Before World War II (1945) in fact, before Hitler surrender to Japan and they partner everything was determined by Europe standard, or well-known as *Eurocentricism*. For example literary work, music etc. was measured under Europe standard. If according Europe was good so the other country will categorize as good, and the contrary if according Europe was bad so the other country will categorized into bad.

After World War II *Eurocentricism*, was finished and all of standard which determined by Europe pass away, all nations may assume that they have their own national literature which is driven from literary works endorsed by the whole country. The national literature is expounded as bringing the national language and culture of that particular

nation. Various national works later are considered as the world literature, a term stated by Goethe (Kasim, 1996: 6). This concept of the world literature triggers a novel idea that literature is universal in nature, so it is not impossible to find the similarities within two or more different literary works.

As stated previously, two or more different national literary works may be related one another in many ways. The three ways to perceive comparative literature as argued by Wellek and Austin Warren (1995: 48-50) are the concept that it deals with other discipline, includes the study of two or more works, and studies of entire literature. In this study, the second way is used. There are two literary works that will be compared and the two has a different national literature.

As we know that every country has developed a sort of social groups with some cultural or physical consideration. The differences may or may not trigger discrimination or conflict. Ethnicity, according to Malesevic (2004: 13), does not deal with a new social phenomenon, because the questions about the cultural and physical group differences and social have been studied for centuries.

"*Kite Runner*" by Khaled Hosseini, received the south African Book Prize in 2004. It was the first 2005 best seller in the United States of America according to Nielsen Book Scan

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(<http://news.ninemsn.com.au/article>). “*The Alchemist*” by Paulo Coelho is published in 1988, a novel that explores this theme, and it launched him as international bestselling author and bring him to be the greatest novelist in the world. The Alchemist

has sold out more than 11 billion copies worldwide and it is has been translated into hundreds of language hundreds of languages as well as published millions of copies ([www.paulocoelho.com](http://www.paulocoelho.com)).

## RESEARCH METHOD

One of basis of the research problem, the approach employed in this study is a descriptive qualitative. This study is categorized into qualitative because several typical characteristics of qualitative are present in this study. The first characteristic is that this study relies much on natural setting. The message from the writer in *Serat wulang Sunu* script under the writer’s control; rather they run naturally, moreover, the contents of this script is containing of moral doctrine. The second, this study is in the form of words rather than numbers. Next, this study is concerned much with the contexts. Every utterance by the research by subjects is understood on the basis of the contexts.

One of the characteristics of qualitative research is descriptive. Bogdan and Biklen (1975: 29) define that the data collected in the qualitative are in the form of word or picture rather than number. They often contain quotation and try to describe what particular situation or view of the world like in narrative form. The written words are very important in qualitative approach.

This research included is both qualitative and descriptive, by some considerations: (1) the setting occur in natural setting, (2) the explanation needs some description of the research phenomenon in the form of words, clauses, phrases and sentences, that’s mean we do not use the form of numeric. It is also used in classifying of the above research, and analyzing the data, especially about the concepts based on Bang and Gall (1983: 512) who say that the context analysis is a research technique for the objective, systematic and qualitative description of the manifest context in communication.

The characteristics mentioned above are reflected in this study. First, the researcher in this study is the key instrument because she spent considerable time in the data analysis. Second, the data of this research are in the form of written discourse taken from *The Kite Runner* and *The Alchemist* novel. Third, in this study the researcher identify ethnicity view existed in *The Kite Runner* and *The Alchemist* novel by using comparative literature study so this research will more interesting.

In this study the researcher uses some technique in collecting the

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data: (1) selecting the novel, (2) reading the novel deeply, (3) Selecting the narrator or conversation

## DISCUSSION

The primacy of the economic base over the cultural and thus ethnic superstructure will be unraveled. It will show how the economic system grows groups of difference cultural. This chapter described and answered more specific of two research

### The Ethnicity View in *The Kite Runner*

*The ethnic are ruled over another because of the wealth or economic power.*

The economic life is the base over groups of different culture. This condition can found in *The Kite Runner*, while Hosseini draws an extreme difference between Amir's family and Hassan's family. Amir's family is from Pasthun which considered as highest class and Hassan's family from Hazara which considered as lowest class. This is can found in the quotation as follow:

*Everyone agreed that my father, my Baba, had built the most beautiful house in the Wazir Akbar Khan district, a new and affluent neighborhood in the northern part of Kabul. Some though it was the prettiest house in all of Kabul...On the south end of the garden, in the shadows of a loquat tree, was the servant's home, a modest little mud hut where Hasan lived with his father...In the eighteen years that I lived in that house, I stepped into*

in two novels that contain of ethnic issues, (4) Identifying the data of each ethnicity view in two novels.

questions: (1) How are the ethnicity view in *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini and *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho?, (2) What are the similarities and the differences of the ethnicity view in *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini and *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho?

*Hassan and Ali's quarters only a handful of times* (Hosseini, 2004: 4-6)

The quotation above, we can see that to be rich man to be honored. Amir's father is a rich man who was built the most beautiful house in Kabul, while Hasan's and his father Ali live in a small hut. They work as servants for Amir and his father. Even though Amir and Hassan are friends, but Amir seldom visits Hasan's little hut. That show how some ethnics are ruled over another because of their wealth or economic power.

*The group classification based on their wealth*

The group classification based on their wealth is clearly described by Hosseini. He attempts to exhibit how two ethnics in Afghanistan are treated differently because of their economic power and religion.

*I blew the dust off it, sneaked it into bed with me that night, and was stunned to find an entire chapter on Hazara history. An entire chapter dedicated to Hassan's people! In it, I read that my people, the Pashtuns, had persecuted and oppressed the*

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*Hazaras. The book said that my people had killed the Hazaras, driven them from their lands, burned their homes, and sold their women. The book said part of the reason Pashtun had oppressed the Hazaras was that Pashtuns were Sunni Muslim, while Hazaras were Shi'a (Hosseini, 2004:9)*

The quotation above describe that Pashtun consider higher ethnic because their economic power and Hazara (Afganistan) consider as lower ethnic because in economic view they are poor. Whereas Pashtun often oppress Hazara because they have economic power that enough to buy something moreover to buy authority. This condition show that in Hazara (Afganistan) found that group classification based on their wealth. It is mean all the more they rich so that they will more honored, on the contrary all the more they poor so that they will more scorned.

*The relationship between the powerful (economic power) and powerless (economic powerless) becomes a distance.*

In *The Kite Runner* these situations also take place. Assef , another rich of Amir , persecute Hassan because he is a Hazara and Shi'a which considered as ugly groups and poor man. He considered Hassan and his father as idiot because they want to keep Hazaras like Hassan and Ali in their house.

*He reached for something from the back pocket of his jeans. "I'll ask the president to do what the king*

*didn't have the quwat to do. To rid Afghanistan of like you and your father didn't take these people in, we'd be rid of them by now. They'd all just go rot in Hazarajat where they belong. You're a disgrace to Afghanistan" (Hosseini, 2004: 38-39)*

*Assef has the bad intention to get rid the Hazaraz of even if they are still young. He thinks that Hassan and his father is betrayal people for Afganistan. Moreover, he says that Hazaras are like garbage.*

*Assef's brow twitched. "Like pride in your people, your customs, your language. Afghanistan is like beautiful mansion littered with garbage, and someone has to take out the garbage" (Hosseini, 2004: 261)*

The quotation above illustrate that in fact powerful economic and powerless economic will make distance relationship. This condition also make the powerful economic as higher class (higher ethnic) and powerless economic as lower class (lower ethnic), stupid, poor and so on. Finally this situation will lead to the atmosphere that the powerful economic ethnic not required to be friends with powerless economic because their (powerful economic ethnic) are honored, but powerless economic are humble.

*The powerful ethnics control the poor tribe*

Having money means having power to get enough weapons for the tribal war. The powerful ethnic control the poor tribe. After the war, the weaker tribe becomes servants to

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the powerful one. As happen in *The Kite Runner*, when the Pashtuns won the war, they oppress the Hazaras and make them slave. The following is the description of such situation.

*“A loyal Hazara. Loyal as a dog,” Assef said. Kamal’s laugh was a shrill, nervous sound. “But before you sacrifice yourself for him, think about this: would he do the same for you? Have you ever wondered why he never includes you in games when he has guests? Why he only plays with you when no one else is around? I’ll*

### **The Ethnicity View of The Alchemics**

*The ethnic are ruled over another because of the wealth or economic power.*

In *The Alchemist*, Coelho creates a central character namely Santiago. He is a shepered who guides his flocks over the field and pastures of Andalusia. He is not rich, yet he falls in love with a merchant daughter. He always sells his wool to the girl’s shop in order that he can see her. Since the status of shepherds is not high in any social life, even when the boy wants to sell the wool he has to wait until the afternoon.

*“I need to sell some wool,” the boy told the merchant. The shop was busy, and the man asked the shepherd to wait until the afternoon. So the boy sat on the steps of the shop and took a book from his bag. “I didn’t know shepherds knew how to read,” said a girl voice behind him. The girl was typical of region Andalusia, with*

*tell you why Hazara. Because to him, you are nothing but an ugly pet. Something he can play with when he’s bored something he can kick when he’s angry. Don’t ever fool yourself and think you are something more.” (Hosseini, 2004: 261)*

When Hassan says that Amir and he are friends, Assef gets angry. He tells Hassan hat Hazaras are pets to Pashtuns. That is their fate, to be treated differently and discriminatively.

*flowing black hair, and eyes that vaguely recalled the Moorish conquerors. (Coelho, 2002: 5)*

It is obvious that shepherd becomes a less priority to the merchant. That condition makes Santiago wait until afternoon. While waiting, the merchant daughter greets him by questioning his ability to read. She does not believe her eyes that a shepherd can read a book well. The girl makes him fall in love for the first time. The boy wants to explain to the girl about his family background, a simple farm family that dreams to be honored. That is the reasons his parents take him to the seminary and wish him become priest one day.

*His family just fighting day bay day to get enough food and water to continue living. The economic life here is the base over group to different culture. To be rich means to be honored. That is shows how some ethnics are ruled over another because of their wealth or economic*

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power. In *The Alchemist*, the chieftains who rules over the oases are the rich and powerful person in their society.

Finally, after hours of waiting, the guard bade the boy enter. The boy was astonished by what he saw inside. Never could he have imagined that, there in the middle of the desert, there existed a tent like this one...The tribal chieftains were seated at the back of the tent in a semicircle, resting upon richly embroidered silk cushions. Servants came and went with silver trays laden with spices and tea. (Coelho, 2002: 5)

The boy is astonished and shocked of what he has seen inside the chieftain's tent which is very luxurious and it also shows the economic power of them.

### **The group classification based on their wealth**

The society will show respect to those who have respect to those who have a settled life is not new thing. When Santiago meets the King of Salem, he is told about the future he has a shepherd. His status as a shepherd will make the merchant thinks more to give her daughter to him.

"But baker are more important people than shepherds. Baker have homes, while shepherd sleep out in the open. Parents would rather see their children marry bakers than shepherds."

The boy felt a pang in his heart, thinking about the merchant's

daughter. There was surely a baker I her town.

The old man continued, " in the long run, what people think about shepherds and bakers becomes more important for them than their own destinies." (Coelho, 2002: 23-24)

Different from what drawn by Hosseini, Coelho writes how the crystal merchant, a Muslim, treats a totally stranger who ask to work for some meal.

"You didn't have to do any cleaning," he said.

"The Koran requires me to feed a hungry person."

"While then, why did you let me do it?" the boy asked.

"Because the crystal was dirty. And both you and I needed to cleanse our minds of negative thoughts." (Coelho, 2002: 48)

The crystal merchant in *The Alchemist* shows his kindness to Santiago when he says that according to his religion, feeding a hunger is required for free. On the contrary have been discussed before concerning Psthuns and Hazaras, Coelho picture the beauty of tolerance and freedom to express one's belief. *The relationship between the powerful (economic power) and powerless (economic powerless) becomes a distance.*

One ethnics are differed according to their economic power, the relationship between the powerless becomes a distance. Coelho exhibits how a king would talk to a simple man like a shepherd

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because it is written in the Bible that when the Baby Jesus was born, it were the shepherds who knows the news for the first time.

“They were given to me as a present by a king,” the boy said. The stranger didn’t answer; instead, he put his hand in his pocket, and took out two stones that were the same as the boy’s.

“Did you say a king?” he asked.

“ I guess you don’t believe that a king would talk to someone like me, a shepherd,” he said, wanting to end the conversation.

“Not at all. It was shepherds who were the first to recognize a king that the rest of the world refused to acknowledge. So, it’s not surprising that kings would talk to shepherds.” (Coelho, 2002: 72)

When Santiago told his friend, an Englishman, about the stones given by the King of Salem, he thought his friend will not believe him. Yet, his friend sets an example in the Bible about the honor given to the shepherds. The boy’s opinion is reasonable because it is considered as rude if the ordinary people talk to a king.

*The powerful ethnics control the poor tribe.*

Having money means having the power to get enough weapons for the tribal war. The powerful ethnic controls the poor tribe. Money makes friends is what describe in *The Alchemist*. In their journey to the Pyramids, *The Alchemist* and the boy face tribe of desert. They arrest them,

but they treat them well because *The Alchemist* takes the boy’s money and give it to them.

“What is a foreigner doing here?” asked another of the man.

“He has brought money to give to your tribe,” said *The Alchemist*, before the boy could say a word. And seizing the boy’s bag, *The Alchemist* gave the gold coins the chief.

The Arab accepted them without a word. There was enough there to buy a lot of weapons. (Coelho, 2002: 147)

The quotation above implicitly describe that ethnics who have money (rich) have power and strong position in the society, moreover they control or authorize poor tribe (poor society who weak their economy).

*The similarities of the ethnicity view in The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini and The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho*

Both of novels same contain one of the conceptions driven by Marx is the primacy of the economic base over the cultural and thus superstructure. The ethnics who have economic power will control other powerless. *The Kite Runner* and *The Alchemist* clearly describe that phenomenon.

The facts that people are honored because of their status and wealth are true. The tribal wars will produce the winner that has economic power for the weapons and so on. The groups of different culture are rooted economically. When once they win the tribal war by economic power,

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they will oppress the other ethnics which powerless in economy. In fact thus condition describe in both of novels.

*The differences of the ethnicity view in The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini and The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho*

The differences between those novels are: in *The Kite Runner* the ethnics sentimentalism of the powerful economics (higher structure) is stronger, meanwhile in *The Alchemist* the sentimentalism of the powerful economics (higher structure) is lower. Although both of them were describe of the power of economic to oppress the poor tribal.

The ethnics sentimentalism of the powerful economics in *The Kite Runner* can be seen in this quotation:

*He reached for something from the back pocket of his jeans. "I'll ask the president to do what the king didn't have the quwat to do. To rid Afghanistan of like you and your father didn't take these people in, we'd be rid of them by now. They'd all just go rot in Hazarajat where they belong. You're a disgrace to Afghanistan"* (Hosseini, 2004: 38-39)

Beside that can also found in the other quotation: *Assef's brow twitched. "Like pride in your people, your customs, your language. Afghanistan is like beautiful mansion*

*littered with garbage, and someone has to take out the garbage"* (Hosseini, 2004: 261)

The quotation of *The Kite Runner* describe that the ethnic sentimentalism in Hazara (Afganistan) is stronger than the ethnics sentimentalism of the powerful economics in *The Alchemist* can be seen in thus quotation: *"But baker are more important people than shepherds. Baker have homes, while shepherd sleep out in the open. Parents would rather see their children marry bakers than shepherds."* The boy felt a pang in his heart, thinking about the merchant's daughter. There was surely a baker I her town. The old man continued, *"in the long run, what people think about shepherds and bakers becomes more important for them than their own destinies"* (Coelho, 2002: 23-24)

The quotation of *The Alchemist* above indicate that the ethnics sentimentalism of the powerful economics in Brazil is lower. From both of the quotation above describe that the ethnics sentimentalism of the powerful economics (higher structure) is stronger, meanwhile in *The Alchemist* the sentimentalism of the powerful economics (higher structure) is lower.

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