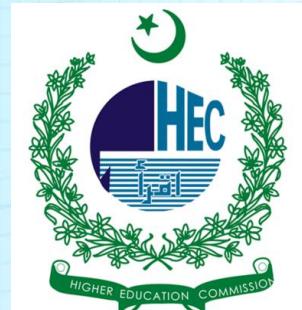


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**The Representation of Baba in *The Kite Runner*: A Corpus-Based Discourse Analysis**



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**Abstract**

This study investigates the representation of Baba in Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* using corpus-based critical discourse analysis. For the analysis of the study the researcher uses Ruth Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) as theoretical framework, which includes nomination, predication, argumentation, perspectivization, and intensification/mitigation strategies. The study explores that how Baba's character is discursively constructed. The analysis shows the text is elevating secular and Western-aligned subjectivities while marginalizing religious and resistant voices. Through these discursive patterns, the text supports the post-9/11 ideological tensions in which Muslim identities are represented through lenses of moral ambiguity, cultural displacement and emotional restraint. This research significant contributes to the representation of Muslim, Post 9/11 identities, diaspora fiction and corpus-based CDA by using linguistics patterns which reproduce Orientalist and neo-Orientalist discourses.

**Keywords:** Post-9/11 Literature, Muslim Representation, Corpus-Based Discourse Analysis and Diaspora Fiction

**1. Introduction**

Scholars have paid close attention to how Muslims are portrayed in post-9/11 cultural creation. Both authors and readers are still examining how terror, changing narratives of belonging, and world politics influence Muslim identities. In this context, literature has grown to be a significant arena where individual narratives interact with broader ideologies and geopolitical conflicts. The emotional, cultural, and human aspects of Muslim life that are frequently ignored in the media and political discourse can be revealed by writers through fiction. One such book is *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini (2003). It has significantly influenced how the world views Afghanistan, its people, and its Muslim customs as a widely read piece of South Asian and Afghan diaspora literature.

One of the most important characters in the book, Baba, is the subject of this analysis. It investigates how Baba is portrayed through the text's language using a corpus-based Critical Discourse Analysis informed by Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach. The research attempts to comprehend how Baba's identity is built and what

this construction reveals about bigger beliefs surrounding Muslims in the years following 9/11 by thoroughly examining word patterns, collocations, and discursive techniques. Because he embodies the conflicts between cultural values, individual hardships, migration, and the demands of adjusting to a new social environment, Baba is a particularly significant character. His persona provides insightful information about how Muslim masculinity and moral identity are portrayed in modern literature.

This work is based on Edward Said's theory of Orientalism (1978), which explains how Western narratives have historically portrayed the "Orient" as backward, irrational, or inferior. Following 9/11, these ideas took on new forms that placed even greater focus on Islam, Muslim men, and religious authority; scholars like Kerboua and Roy contend that this shift intensified neo-Orientalist patterns that continue to influence global perceptions of Muslims (Kerboua, 2016; Roy, 2011). While many studies have examined these issues in media and political speeches, very few have used corpus-based methods to examine *The Kite Runner*.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

Language is more than just a reflection of reality. It contributes to its creation, molding, and meaning. Deliberate linguistic choices made by authors in literature frequently convey deeper ideological implications. Discourses of dread, suspicion, security, and cultural otherness have often shaped how Muslims are portrayed since 9/11. Examining how Muslim characters are portrayed and what these portrayals suggest becomes crucial in this environment. This study examines how the discourse around Baba, who is portrayed as a culturally Muslim figure, shapes his identity. By examining these trends, the study clarifies whether his representation upholds or challenges the prevailing notions about Muslims that arose in the wake of 9/11.

### **1.2 Research Objectives**

- a. To investigate how Baba is portrayed in *The Kite Runner* as a Muslim figure
- b. To identify the discursive and power strategies used to construct Baba's identity
- c. To examine how the novel reproduces and reconfigures broader representational patterns of Muslims and the "Orient"

### **1.3 Research Questions**

- a. How is Baba represented as a Muslim character in *The Kite Runner*?

- b. What discursive and power strategies are used for the construction Baba's identity?
- c. In what ways does the novel participate in new forms of representing Muslims and the "Orient" in post-9/11 discourse?

#### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The study is significant as it interdisciplinary contributes to literature, Corpus Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis. It is helpful in understanding the politics of representation and role of discursive practices in the use of language. Moreover, the study reveals the representation of Muslims that how literature is used to frame new ideologies about the representation of others. The scholars and readers in the field of literature and those who are interested in reading fiction gets clear insight that how language and literature is used to represent others and they are able to read critically. Most importantly, the study brings the true face of Muslims through the analysis of the language of the selected novel.

#### **2. Literature Review**

Language is used to portray and represent reality in every sphere of life. It is used to not only portray the reality but to represent the reality affected by different factors. These factors may be cultural, social and historical. Therefore, it is needed to decode language to get the explicit and implicit meaning. The meaning of representation is to speak something meaningful about something or to represent the world meaningfully to the audience. The process of representation is significant to produce and exchange meaning among the users of the language. It is involved to use language, images and signs to represent somethings (Hall, 1997).

Foucault (1972) shifted the attention from 'language' to 'discourse' and studied discourse as a system of representation. Discourse is generally considered as a linguistic concept. It simply means passages of connected writing or speech. Normally, the term 'discourse' is used as a linguistic concept. It simply means passages of connected writing or speech. Michel Foucault, however, gave it a different meaning. What interested him were the rules and practices that produced meaningful statements and regulated discourse in different historical periods.

In terms of representation, Fanon might have critiqued traditional forms of

representation that reinforced colonial power dynamics, such as stereotypical depictions of colonized peoples as primitive or backward. He would likely advocate for more authentic and empowering representations that challenge colonial narratives and assert the humanity and agency of formerly colonized people. New ways of representation, such as post-colonial literature, art, film, and other media, would likely be seen by Fanon as important tools for decolonization. (Lazarus, N., & Decolonization, D. 1999).

It has been explored by Young (1999) that literary works contribute to knowledge of the world. Many writers claimed that literature has cognitive value and it assert truths. Other writers have concentrated and started rethinking on the concept of meaning. Literary works are the source of knowledge, which is the combination of truth and meaning, and any successful attempt in the literature which is a source of knowledge and is more venerable than those of truth and meaning refers to the concept of representation. In the recent times, representation has not received much attention in literature. It is claimed that literature represents and indicates how it does so. It remains to show how literature's power to represent is the key to responding to those who deny the cognitive value of literature. In his essay he fully defended the cognitive status of literature. It has been claimed that literature can represent the world and given some indication of the ways in which it represents. It is also claimed that literary representations can be a source of knowledge and understanding (Young, 1999, p. 127).

Edward Said's work *Orientalism* (1978) shows that Orientalist work was engaged with economic, military and political strategies of Western countries in East. Said's (1978) work is a multidimensional discourse which focuses on characterization of Arabs and Muslims of the other part of the world with a particular ideology. Chief element of this ideology was to distinguish the "backward" East from the "civilized" West (Said, 1978). This ideology gets its refection in American films, chiefly in the productions of the earlier phase, where Arab Muslims of Egypt are represented as boots, villains, barbaric, evil and irrational. Hollywood movies like *Hostage Series* (1986-1992) depict Muslims as beasts who are involved in rapes and killings of not only young girls but also elderly people. They lack moral characters, values and honor.

The pertinent point in this context is that Muslims and particularly Arabs needed American help for their survival. Without American help they are unable to protect their fundamental rights. "In *Three Kings* (1999) American Army protects Iraqi civilians from their oppressive government" (Arti, 2007, p. 2). Said (1978) asserts that reality was mingled with the history and myth with the reality in earlier productions of Hollywood movies in terms of harems, magic lamps, desert dwellers, mastery and decadence, irrationally and backwardness. Orientalism draws the conclusion that Orient is horrible place which is a serious threat to the world's peace so it should be controlled in order to bring an order in it. "This ideology paves the way for Western imperialism in East and it grants them a right to hold hegemonic power over the orient which ultimately provides Orientalism a durability and strength" (Said, 1978, p. 7).

Examining pre-9/11 representation of Muslims, Suleiman (1999) contends that the idea of "Otherness" was central to the portrayal of Muslims in earlier Hollywood productions, marginalizing them as dangerous, primitive, and backward people who urgently require American assistance to advance civilization. He also believes that America utilized this misinformation to further its political and strategic goals, questioning why Hollywood has long been promoting a bad relationship with the Middle East. At the point where US interests clashed with Arab nationalism and the Iranian revolution culminated in this battle, he concludes, "the US started stereotyping of Muslims in general and Middle Eastern people in particular" (Suleiman, 1999, p. 5).

Ramanan (2010) explored that incident of 9/11 have changed everything even 'vocabulary' used in America. He quotes authors, Hodges and Nilep, who described the role of discursive strategies in constructing and negotiating identities in the result of 9/11. Ideologies have changed. The collective understanding of 'us' and 'them' were changed by applying word signals to show inclusion and exclusion in groups. Koller also investigated those discursive devices help in the construction of collective identities (Ramanan, 2010, p.127).

According to Hodges (2011), the story of the events that occurred in the United States now uses 9/11 as a point of reference for "before" and "after" in terms of time. Certain ideologies can be established by evaluating or anticipating the important events in a story, which leads to the creation of a distinct "us" and "them"

dichotomy. Hodges cites George W. Bush's well-known statement from September 12, 2003, which can be better described as a false dilemma, as an example of an either-or decision. "Either you are with us, or you are with the enemy," he declared in his speech. Chomsky went to the extent of calling this strategy as giving shape to imagined or invented threats to 'them' so that political agenda could be achieved. There is no doubt that careful discursive work is required to implement this strategy (Hodges, 2011, p. 45).

Although extensive scholarship exists on post-9/11 representations of Muslims in media and political discourse, comparatively little attention has been paid to literary texts using corpus-based critical discourse analysis. Existing studies on *The Kite Runner* primarily rely on thematic or moral interpretations, often overlooking the systematic linguistic patterns through which Muslim identities are constructed. This study addresses this gap by integrating corpus linguistics with Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach to examine how Baba's character is discursively produced.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Theoretical Framework**

The study is qualitative in nature, and it uses Corpus-based Critical Discourse Analysis approach, which is consisted of methodological synergy proposed by Baker et al. (2008). It combines the strengths of critical discourse analysis (CDA) and corpus linguistics (CL). Corpus linguistics helps the researcher to identify and extract the statistics patterns such as keywords, collocations and lines in the selected novels. The analysis supported by Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) (2015). It focusses on the sociopolitical and historical context of discourse. Wodak's DHA is used to systematically explore that how different characters are named, portrayed, evaluated, framed and positioned in the selected texts. The synergy of corpus linguistics and Wodak's DHA strategies is used for exploring the representation of Muslims in post 9/11 selected South Asian diaspora fictions.

#### **3.2 Corpus Description**

The entire text of Khaled Hosseini's 2003 novel *The Kite Runner* serves as the study's corpus. The book was cleaned up by eliminating paratextual components like page numbers and publisher details and transformed into a plain-text format. Character

names and other proper nouns were kept since they are important for analysis.

To maintain contextual meaning, lemmatization was not used. Because the British National Corpus (BNC) is indicative of general British English, it was used as a reference corpus for keyword analysis. Frequency lists, keywords, collocations, and concordance lines were created while using Sketch Engine.

### **3.3 The Concept of Corpus and Corpus Linguistics**

Corpus can be defined as "A collection of texts or a body of language stored in an electronic database" (Baker, Hardie, McEnery, 2006, p. 48). It is put together with certain intentions and represents a language or kind of literature (Leech 1992). According to Baker (2006), a corpus is seen as "a representative sample of a particular type of naturally-occurring language" that can serve as "a standard reference" and be used to "measure claims about language." The texts to be regarded as "a corpus need to be produced as language within specific communicative events, without the intervention of the corpus compiler," which naturally occurs in this case (Sinclair, 1991, p. 171). According to McEnery et al. (2006), a corpus is a group of "machine-readable, authentic texts (including transcripts of spoken data), which is sampled to be representative of a particular language or language variety". A corpus is electronically encoded, allowing for intricate computations to be performed on the lengthy text to uncover linguistic patterns and frequency data. If it is processed manually or by hand it would require days or even months to be completed (Baker 2006).

In this study, the corpora of the selected novels are created for the analysis of discursive patterns of the language comprehensively. Corpus linguistics is used to provide quantitative support to the qualitative analysis in the empirical data.

### **3.4 Discourse Historical Approach as a Methodological Procedure of CDA**

The discourse historical approach (DHA) is a theoretical and methodological paradigm of critical discourse analysis that follows critical theory's socio-philosophical emphasis (Habermas, 1996). According to Wodak (2001), the discourse historical approach aims to incorporate a vast amount of existing knowledge regarding historical sources and the context of the social and political spheres in which discursive occurrences are situated. Additionally, it examines the manner in which specific discourse genres are susceptible to diachronic change in order to

analyze the historical aspect of discursive actions (Wodak et al., 1990 & Wodak et al., 1994). In order to clarify the situation, social theories are also integrated. The idea of taking into account broader discourse contexts, which include the actual use of language (text); the relationship between texts, genres, and discourses; the institutional context of discourse; and the social, political, and historical contexts are among the features that Wodak (2009) emphasized for analyzing the text using the principles of DHA. DHA approach is relevant for the study as it supports to illustrate the events like 9/11, the geopolitical situation and Orientalist discourses that shape the representation of Muslims in the selected novels. It also allows and enable the researcher to explore the discursive patterns of language used by authors in the texts.

After establishing the rational, objectives, research questions, and explaining significance and key terms of the study, the following is a general overview of the thesis structure.

### **3.5 Corpus Techniques Used in the Current Research**

The current research is directed towards answering the two basic questions: representation of Muslims through corpus and the application of discursive strategies. Frequency lists, KWIC, concordance lines/sentences are generated by Sketch Engine are found very helpful in answering these questions.

#### **3.5.1 Frequency Lists: A Good Starting Point**

Making frequency lists aids in the researcher's investigation of the most crucial sections of the corpus and is a suitable starting point for discourse analysis. Notwithstanding the fundamental advantages, all researchers ought to be cognizant of the possible drawbacks associated with frequency lists. According to Baker (2006), word choice in any conversation is not arbitrary. Language decisions are never neutral and always follow a certain degree of predictability (Stubbs 1996). People are disclosing something about their ideological stance when they use one word to explain a problem over another. Each term or word has somewhat a distinct meaning, and the selection of the words is based exactly on their differing semantic connotations. While using the Sketch Engine software, the researcher uses the text of novels as a target corpus and British National Corpus is used as a reference corpus. On the basis of the extraction of frequency list, the researcher will be able to judge

that how many times a word has been used in the corpus.

### **3.5.2 Exploring key-words in context lists (KWIC)**

While some grammatical categories are included in the frequency lists, prepositions and articles, for example, they are not very important to a discourse analyst since they don't reveal much about how meaning is formed in a text. Because of this, corpus linguists have begun to concentrate on KWIC. Although they might not be the most common words in a corpus, key words indicate the keyness or aboutness of the corpus. A statistical comparison between a study corpus (SC) and a larger, more appropriate corpus produces this word list. The "reference" corpus is a huge collection of data that is utilized for comparison.

The software's Sketch Engine was selected in part because it offered a large selection of pre-made, built-in reference corpora for KWIC generation. One of the many options on the Sketch Engine interface is British National Corpus. It is an English language corpus composed of web texts. It is a member of the BNC corpus group. The BNC corpus family is made up of numerous corpora that target a word count of at least 10 billion on web texts. Nearly all of the corpora in this family, which span more than 30 languages, are accessible through the Sketch Engine. Both positive and negative key words are included in the KWIC lists, which are produced automatically via comparison. Negative key words are the most uncommon words, and positive key words are the ones that occur most frequently. Examining these two kinds of materials in particular made it easier to explore the intertextual theme.

### **3.5.3 Collocations**

Smadja (1993) defined collocations as lexical items that occur in the text under study with a probability larger than chance. As a result, the relationship is more than merely a word association at random. Examining this co-occurrence pattern can provide insightful information about how meaning is formed. One can compute the frequency and strength of a collocation in a variety of methods. The present study has determined to investigate the semantic prosody of collocations by use of a 9-word collocation window, so maintaining an 8-word margin on either side of the collocation span.

Though there are two alternative options, log probability and MI Score, for assessing

the strength of collocations, Sketch Engine uses T-score statistics since its developers believe it to be a more dependable option. According to the T-Score, there is no chance in the word association. The frequency of the entire collocation is taken into consideration, not just the frequency of the individual collocation, when determining the value of their co-occurrence. In contrast, the other method of assessing the strength of collocations, the Mutual Information Score (MI Score), only considers the frequency of each word separately, which can occasionally produce inaccurate findings, particularly when dealing with very low frequency terms. This context is also used in this study to assess collocational strength.

#### **4. Data Analysis and Discussion**

The section presents a corpus-based discourse analysis on the representation of Muslims in the novel *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini, using Ruth Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA). The researcher combined the corpus linguistic approaches including keyword, collocation, and concordance analysis with critical discourse analysis (CDA) to identify that how Muslims are portrayed, and how Islamic references are used to discursively construct Muslim's identity in the selected novel. The study focuses to analyze only those characters who have high Keynes value, like Baba, Assef, Hassan, Taliban and Mullahs.

Wodak's DHA framework provides a comprehensive model for this investigation through its five interrelated discursive strategies: nomination (the process by which social actors are named), predication (the attributes ascribed to them), argumentation (topoi and ideological reasoning), perspectivization (the framing of events through viewpoint), and intensification/mitigation (the strengthening or softening discourse). The researcher applies each discursive strategy on every selected character to investigate how Muslim identities are shaped by historical, socio-political, and religious discourses embedded in the text.

The figure 4.1 shows that key word list and it is the procedure to analysis those keywords which has high Keynes value and are relevant for the study. It is decided to focus on the most frequent characters and terms which are related with representation of Muslims in SCKR.

Lemma	Frequency?		Frequency per million?		Score
	Focus	Reference	Focus	Reference	
1 baba	652	75	4,958.02	0.67	2,973.7
2 sohrab	271	1	2,060.77	< 0.01	2,043.6
3 soraya	195	20	1,482.84	0.18	1,259.6
4 assef	149	0	1,133.05	0.00	1,134.0
5 farid	152	8	1,155.86	0.07	1,080.0
6 rahim	140	13	1,064.61	0.12	955.1
7 hassan	494	436	3,756.54	3.88	769.8
8 agha	86	9	653.97	0.08	606.4
9 amir	166	130	1,262.32	1.16	585.6
10 hazara	49	0	372.61	0.00	373.6

Lemma	Frequency?		Frequency per million?		Score
	Focus	Reference	Focus	Reference	
11 taheri	49	4	372.61	0.04	360.8
12 kabul	138	253	1,049.40	2.25	323.0
13 sahib	51	29	387.82	0.26	309.0
14 khala	37	0	281.36	0.00	282.4
15 taliban	33	0	250.94	0.00	251.9
16 kaka	33	0	250.94	0.00	251.9
17 talib	30	5	228.13	0.04	219.4
18 wahid	29	5	220.53	0.04	212.1
19 peshawar	40	57	304.17	0.51	202.5
20 afghan	100	334	760.43	2.97	191.6

**Figure: 1 Keywords List in SCKR**

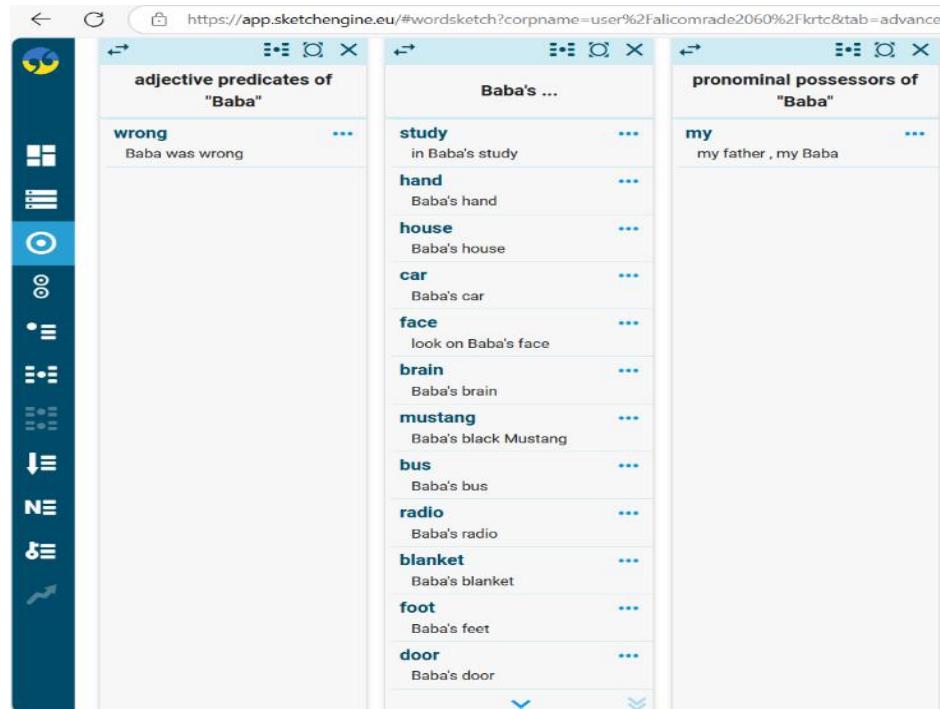
#### **4.1 Referential/Nomination Strategies: Baba as a Symbol of Traditional Afghan Morality and Masculinity**

In DHA, according to Wodak and Reisigl (2001), nomination means naming and categorization of social actors that help in the formation of their identities within discourses of power, ideology, and social connections.

In figure 1, the first keyword, and character is “Baba” which appears 652 times and has the highest Keynes score (2973.7) in the target corpus. The nomination/referential strategy in relation to Baba is one of veneration and familiar authority. He is almost exclusively referred to as “*Baba*”, instead of using his formal name, a Persian word meaning father. This kind of nomination construct him as Amir's father and also a representation and symbolic figure of Afghan patriarchy, morality and tradition. Using this kind of intimate kinship hazes the boundary between societal and personal authority.

On the basis of collocational analysis, the word “Baba” appears in possessive construction which shows baba's possessiveness as in figure 4.2.

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**Figure: 2 Collocations of the word “Baba”**

For deeper analysis the researcher extracted concordance lines, and are filtered for Baba's possessive case as in figure 3.

Details	Left context	KWIC	Right context
1	doc#0 n the vaulted ceiling.</s><s>Upstairs was my bedroom, <b>Baba's room</b> , and his study, also known as "the smoking room		
2	doc#0 and I parted ways.</s><s>I went past the rosebushes to <b>Baba's mansion</b> , Hassan to the mud shack where he had bee		
3	doc#0 ancestry only in passing.</s><s>Then one day, I was in <b>Baba's study</b> , looking through his stuff, when I found one of m		
4	doc#0 han who first referred to him as what eventually became <b>Baba's famous nickname</b> , _Toophan agha_, or "Mr. Hurricane		
5	doc#0 rs, pull the blanket over my head, and still the sounds of <b>Baba's snoring</b> ----so much like a growling truck engine----pene		
6	doc#0 he walls.</s><s>And my room was across the hall from <b>Baba's bedroom</b> .</s><s>How my mother ever managed to sle		
7	doc#0 s><s>I was so proud of Baba, of us.</s><s>But despite <b>Baba's successes</b> , people were always doubting him.</s><s>		
8	doc#0 tation for such transactions.</s><s>We were upstairs in <b>Baba's study</b> , the smoking room, when I told him what Mullah		
9	doc#0 rting sound.</s><s>That got me giggling again.</s><s> <b>Baba's stony eyes</b> bore into mine and, just like that, I wasn't lau		
10	doc#0 >I cried all the way back home.</s><s>I remember how <b>Baba's hands</b> clenched around the steering wheel.</s><s>Cle		
11	doc#0 ched and unclenched.</s><s>Mostly, I will never forget <b>Baba's valiant efforts</b> to conceal the disgusted look on his face		
12	doc#0 Nay."</s><s>"Then what?"</s><s>I heard the leather of <b>Baba's seat</b> creaking as he shifted on it.</s><s>I closed my ey		
13	doc#0 s><s>That evening, I climbed the stairs and walked into <b>Baba's smoking room</b> , in my hands the two sheets of paper or		
14	doc#0 ongoing era of bloodletting.</s><s>Just before sunrise, <b>Baba's car</b> peeled into the driveway.</s><s>His door slammed		
15	doc#0 ?"</s><s>I shrugged.</s><s>"I don't know."</s><s>On <b>Baba's radio</b> , they were saying that word, "republic," over and		
16	doc#0 uld hear us scream in this remote patch of land.</s><s> <b>Baba's house</b> was a good kilometer away.</s><s>I wished we'		

**Figure: 3 Concordance Lines for Baba's Possessive Case**

In figure 4.3, it shows that there is frequent use of Baba possessiveness which is 108 times like "Baba's study," "Baba's mansion," "Baba's car," and "Baba's smoking room,". This possessiveness construction reinforces the symbolic masculinity of Baba. Each of these collocations are socially symbolic and gender-coded, particularly, the study and smoking room are culturally perceived as male-only spaces where only males can do political discussion, intellectual discourse and can make bonding. Similarly, the home and vehicle serve a marker of wealth, status, and success of masculinity. Baba name is used inside the home and also in the larger sociocultural context, which constructs him as the central patriarchal authority.

These nominations serve two purposes. The first purpose is, these nominations construct Baba's identity on one level as a leader and provider, traditionally these roles are assigned to men in Afghan society. The second purpose of these nominations is to portray the power hierarchy that exist in the text. Baba is shown not only as a father but "the father", an authoritative, dominant and a representative of a generation shaped by discipline, honor, and material success. In figure 4.2, Baba is also used as pronominal possessor as *My father and my baba*. The use of possessive pronouns function as a linguistic tool to place and personalize the referent in a particular relationship and cultural context. This kind of nomination places "Baba" as a traditional Afghan ideal, shows masculinity and highlights Baba's significance as a key component of Amir's identity and moral compass.



**Figure: 4 Expanded Concordance Line for Baba's Nickname "Toophan Agha"**

In figure 4, The possessive concordance line of Baba is further expanded. Baba's well-known nickname is "Toophan Agha", which is translated as "Mr. Hurricane."

The first name Toophan/Hurricane itself has a lot of symbolic meaning, and the second name Agha signifies respect, seniority, and land-owning authority which is a culturally loaded name in Afghan patriarchal hierarchies. The term Toophan (hurricane or storm) means the overwhelming natural strength. The nickname Baba, can be delineated as a powerful, influential person whose presence cannot be ignored which is a cultural signifier in Afghan culture and tradition and this nomination makes Baba above the level of a regular man, and he is represented as Afghan patriarchal power and bravery.

The collocation *Baba's room*, *Baba's smoking room*, and *Baba's house* shows the male dominant spaces where male authority is exercised and preserved, and where women and children are not allowed to enter except being invited. This clearly portraying him as a custodian of male knowledge, culture, and leadership. Wodak (2001) refers to this as “discursive nomination,” where the repeated use of particular linguistic choices not only identifies a subject but also instils them with symbolic meaning. Therefore, Baba, is portrayed not only as an individual but as a symbol of strength, tradition, and patriarchal authority.

#### **4.2 Predication Strategies: Constructing Muslim Morality and Masculinity in Baba**

Within the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) approach the predication strategies are used to attribute specific traits, qualities, and values to social actors, and shape their discursive representation.

The researcher examines that how Baba is predicated in *The Kite Runner*, the researcher extracts concordance lines. Following extensive reading, the researcher focused on the concordance lines shown in figure 5.

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Details	Left context	KWIC	Right context
1	doc#0 an who first referred to him as what eventually became <b>Baba's</b> famous nickname, <u>_Toophan agha_</u> , or "Mr. Hurricane.		
2	doc#0 · hair and shook my hand too.</s><s>I was so proud of <b>Baba</b> , of us.</s><s>But despite Baba's successes, people w		
3	doc#0 ting sound.</s><s>That got me giggling again.</s><s> <b>Baba's</b> stony eyes bore into mine and, just like that, I wasn't la		
4	doc#0 ·I cried all the way back home.</s><s>I remember how <b>Baba's</b> hands clenched around the steering wheel.</s><s>Cle		
5	doc#0 ched and unclenched.</s><s>Mostly, I will never forget <b>Baba's</b> valiant efforts to conceal the disgusted look on his face		
6	doc#0 o listen.</s><s>But I couldn't listen, not really, because <b>Baba's</b> casual little comment had planted a seed in my head: t		
7	doc#0 plaster.</s><s>Most of the boys walked to school, and <b>Baba's</b> black Mustang drew more than one envious look.</s><		
8	doc#0 ·I would ever again ask me to read them to him.</s><s> <b>Baba's</b> motto about throwing parties was this: Invite the whole		
9	doc#0 'olleyball," I muttered.</s><s>I saw the light wink out of <b>Baba's</b> eyes and an uncomfortable silence followed.</s><s>"S		
10	doc#0 ness.</s><s>I didn't want to see the murderous look on <b>Baba's</b> face.</s><s>THE STENCH OF SOMETHING DANK, li		

**Figure: 5 Concordance Lines of Baba's Predication**

In this section, the researcher used second discursive strategy, prediction, of Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) to analyze how Baba's character is constructed through recurring linguistic patterns that distort Muslim identity, through the lens of masculinity. The qualities and traits through which Baba is described are closely align with patriarchal domination, secular authority and moral dogmatism than with a holistic or religiously faithful portrayal of Muslim fatherhood.

Through concordance-based analysis, it is evident that Baba's moral identity is shaped through a selective framework which emphasizes power, pride, silence, and judgment, while largely excluding ethical humility, religious language, and spiritual submission to God. This kind of strategy detaches Muslim identity from its religious foundation and it produced. This strategy results in a discursive construction that detaches Muslim identity from its religious foundations, producing a distorted masculine archetype.

In line 2, figure 5, Baba is predicated as man of a societal dignity and a source of honor. This predication is based on tribal pride and masculine success rather than in Islamic ethics. The collocational patterns focus on worldly status, echoing orientalist frames where Muslim men are exalted for their dominance and power but depriving them of their religious interiority.

In concordance lines 4 and 5, figure. 5, Baba is predicated as tolerant and emotionally reserved. The recurrent association of Baba with terms of secrecy, silence, self-discipline, self-control him in accordance with the Islamic virtue of *şabr*. Through

this predication Baba masculinity is constructed through religiously sanctioned emotional control and ethical composure.

In concordance line 8, figure. 5, Baba is predicated on his performative hospitality. The collocational pattern that contains of welcome and serving behaviors which reflects the Islamic social ethic of generosity. Baba is portrayed as a bearer of both material and ethical generosity, encoded him with moral legitimacy in accordance with prophetic traditions. Lines 1 and 7, figure. 5, predicate Baba as a figure of admiration and charismatic authority. His symbolic strength is linked to ideas of mechanical power and natural force which represent hegemonic masculinity. This representation impacts the masculine supremacy of Muslim cultural values and public respectability.

Lines 3 and 6, figure. 5, in contrast, predicate Baba as emotionally distant and morally authoritative. Lexical choices in these lines associate him with judgment and silence, framing him as a patriarch whose ethical stance shapes the narrator's subjectivity. The use of metaphors and psychological distance evokes the Islamic notion of adab, where moral correction is often implicit and observational rather than verbal. In contrast, in line 3 and 6, figure. 5, Baba is predicated as morally authoritarian and emotionally distant. The collocational choice in these sentences framing Baba with silence and judgment, as a father whose moral position determines the narrator's subjectivity. The Islamic concept of adab is implicitly portrayed through the use of metaphors.

In the 9 and 10, figure. 5, the predication of Baba is strict and morally unyielding. The role of conventional Islamic authority systems is exercised through Baba by using the discursive surveillance and judgmental function of his gaze. Baba is depicted as the gatekeeper of values, and his presence disciplines ethical rigor as opposed to emotional participation. Wodak's predication strategy reveals that Baba is linguistically constructed the characteristics that together falsify fundamental aspects of Muslim identity. The lack of religious discourse, and the focus on secular pride, emotional detachment, and authoritarian control produced the masculinity character which is culturally Muslim but ethically secular. It is clear from the corpus-based approach, that the predication of Baba reinforces orientalist stereotypes which

contributes to a broader literary trend in which Muslim men are depicted as powerful but morally compromised. As a result, Baba's character functions as both a narrative device and a discursive site of deception where hegemonic masculinity is incorrectly confused with Muslim subjectivity.

#### **4.3 Argumentation Strategies: How Baba's Language Reproduces Discrimination through Selective Islamic Morality**

According to Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), argumentation strategies are used for a central mechanism through which ideology is communicated and naturalized. In argumentation strategies, *topoi*, are used to offer the implicit logic that supports particular statements, behaviors and certain actions. The recurring pattern of Baba's discourse reveals the marginalization or misrepresentation of Islamic religious and moral frameworks while validating his authority and worldview.

By drawing on corpus linguistic tools, particularly collocational patterns and concordance data, this section applies DHA's third strategy to examine how Baba constructs moral superiority and hierarchical identities. His discourse draws selectively from Islamic values (e.g., *sadaqah*, *'adl*, *amanah*) to elevate his own moral image, while simultaneously delegitimizing religious authority figures (mullahs) and essentializing class-based religious hierarchies. These patterns not only reflect but reproduce dominant, often Westernized, secular ideologies that frame Islam as culturally regressive or morally inconsistent.

In this section the researcher used DHA's third strategy, argumentative, to analyze how Baba constructs hierarchical identities and moral superiority while using the corpus linguistics tools, collocational patterns and concordance lines. Selected Islamic values (e.g., *sadaqah*, *'adl*, *amanah*) are used for Baba to elevate his own moral image, while at the same time delegitimizing religious figures (mullahs). These pattern not only mirror but also reproduced the dominant, Westernized, secular beliefs that portray Islam as morally dubious or culturally regressive.

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Details	Left context	KWIC	Right context
1	doc#0 hook their heads in awe at his triumphant ways.</s><s> Baba	paid for the construction of the two-story orphanage, jus	
2	doc#0 inks about sin?"</s><s>"Yes."</s><s>"Then I'll tell you," Baba	said, "but first understand this and understand it now, An	
3	doc#0 ots."</s><s>"You mean Mullah Fatiullah Khan?"</s><s> Baba	gestured with his glass.</s><s>The ice clinked.</s><s>"	
4	doc#0 ionkeys."</s><s>I began to giggle.</s><s>The image of Baba	pissing on the beard of any monkey, self-righteous or ot	
5	doc#0 his lap---and I'd been a fool to waste it.</s><s>"Good," Baba	said, but his eyes wondered.</s><s>"Now, no matter wh	
6	doc#0 ust like Hassan and I grew up a generation later.</s><s> Baba	was always telling us about the mischief he and Ali used	

***Figure: 6 Concordance Lines of Baba's Argumentation***

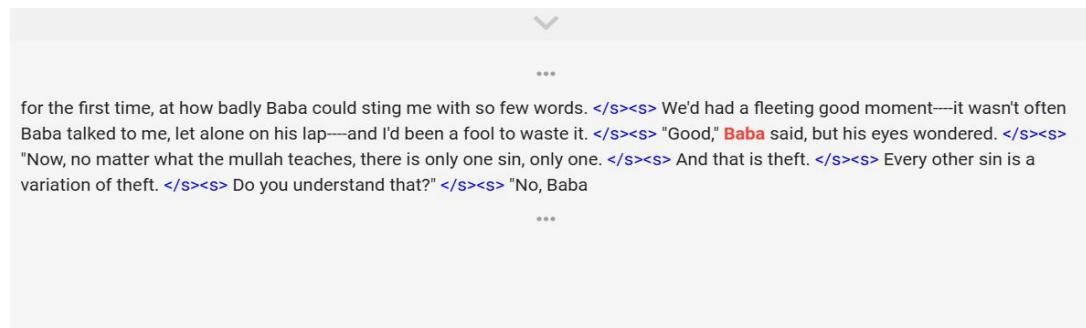
#### **4.3.1 Corpus-Based Argumentation Strategies in Baba's Discourse**

A typical line of reasoning, simply the underlying logic, that justifies a claim is called Topos. In discourse analysis, particularly in Ruth Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), topoi are used to explain and justify how language subtly conveys ideologies.

Wodak uses topoi in discourse to analyze and identify the argumentative strategies which are used to legitimize hierarchies, values and actions. By investigating and analyzing these patterns, DHA exposes that how ideology, power, and bias are naturalized through language, especially in political or cultural texts. To analyze Baba' character through the language which has been narrated, would be examined while using the following topoi.

#### **4.3.2 Topos of Moral Obligation**

According to Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach, the Topos of Moral Obligation is an argumentative warrant that uses an assumed ethical responsibility to support acts or policies, asserting that morally righteous things must be sought after and immoral things must be avoided (Wodak, 2001; Wodak, 2009).

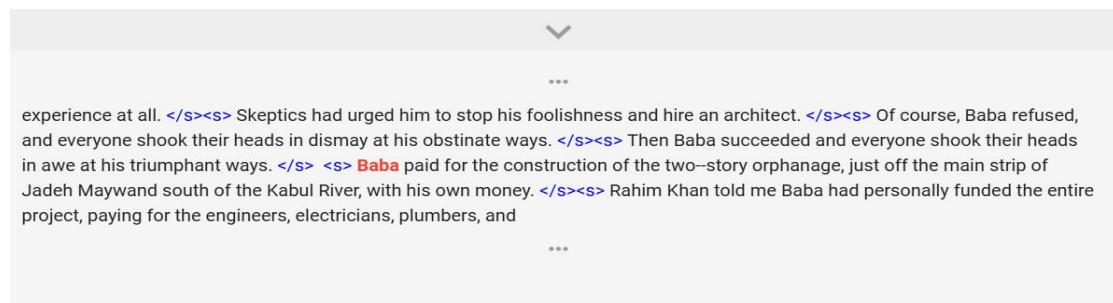


***Figure: 4.7 Topos of Moral Obligation***

In figure 4.7, the concordance line shows how Baba's moral teaching in a personal mantra, dismisses knowledgeable voices in favor of his own authority. Baba substitutes communal morality with individual judgment by reducing sin to a single idea and openly rejecting religious educators. This portrays, Baba as a morally superior person who needs no guidance, particularly from people who are publicly practicing their faith, which creates a false image of Islam.

### 4.3.3 Topos of Moral Capital (Legitimization)

In Wodak's DHA, the Topos of Moral Capital (Legitimization) is an argumentation warrant that uses an actor or institution's moral authority, trustworthiness, or integrity to support or legitimize claims (Wodak, 2001; Wodak, 2009).

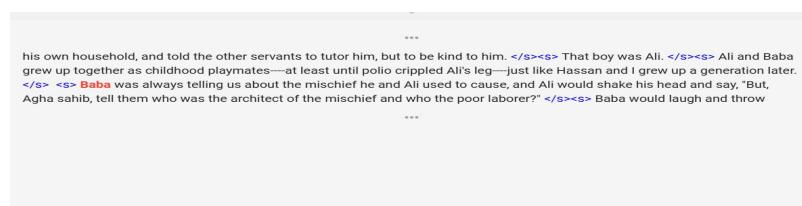


**Figure: 4.8 Topos of Moral Capital**

In figure 4.8, on the surface, the charity act implies selflessness and function as a tool for public moral branding. This portrayal shifts from the service to social performance, and subtly devaluing collective efforts and spiritual goal in favor of financial self-reliance. Further, this kind of wording symbolize charity as a mark of prestige rather than spiritual obligation, which undermines the religious ideal of silent.

### 4.3.4 Topos of Naturalization

According to Wodak's DHA, the Topos of Naturalization is an argumentation warrant that validates a proposition or behavior by portraying it as natural, self-evident, or inevitable. This implies that something must be regarded as normal and indisputable just because it is depicted as "natural" (Wodak, 2001; Wodak, 2009).

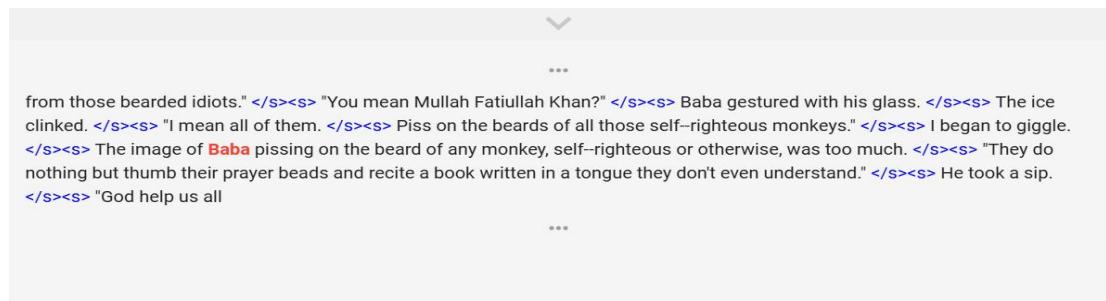


**Figure: 4.9 Topos of Naturalization**

Figure 4.9 delineates Baba's constant portrayal of Ali as a "servant" replicates a strongly embedded social hierarchy where class, ethnic and religious identity intersects converge. Despite of their shared and common upbringing, Baba did not accept Ali from his class. And he further implying that dedication and piety are traits of inferiority rather of equality. This kind of portrayal implies and reproduces stereotyping, without using explicit terminologies.

### 4.3.5 Topos of Delegitimization of Religious Authority

In Wodak's DHA, the Topos of Delegitimization of Religious Authority is an argumentative warrant that, by characterizing religious leaders or organizations as dishonest, cunning, or immoral, undermines their authority or credibility and justifies rejecting their influence or direction (Wodak, 2001; Wodak, 2009).

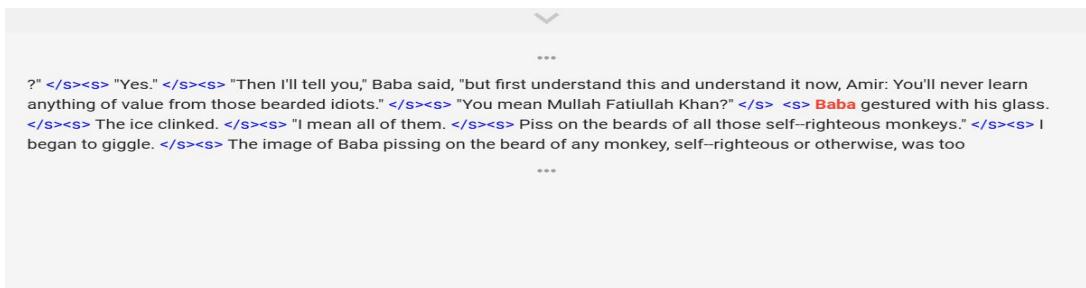


**Figure: 4.10 Topos of Delegitimization of Religious Authority**

Figure 4.10 shows Baba's violent rejection and using of such words about religious leaders reduce the real essence of "beards" and ceremonial customs that shows the profound cultural disdain concealed behind the guise of realism. When he used "I mean all of them" it reflects not only an individual but the also the outward manifestations of religion, equating piety with ignorance and unimportance. Through this discourse and rhetoric, he delegitimizes the Islamic leadership and knowledge in favor of a secular ideal of logical, westernized masculinity. It is quite hilarious that "God" is invoked in the midst of this disdain; it makes a gesture of belief but lacks spiritual depth.

### 4.3.6 Topos of Moral Superiority through Contrast

In Wodak's DHA, the Topos of Moral Superiority by Contrast is an argumentation rationale that justifies the in-group by drawing a comparison between the supposed inferiority, corruption, or immorality of an out-group and its alleged higher moral principles (such as justice, fairness, and compassion) (Wodak, 2001; Wodak, 2009).



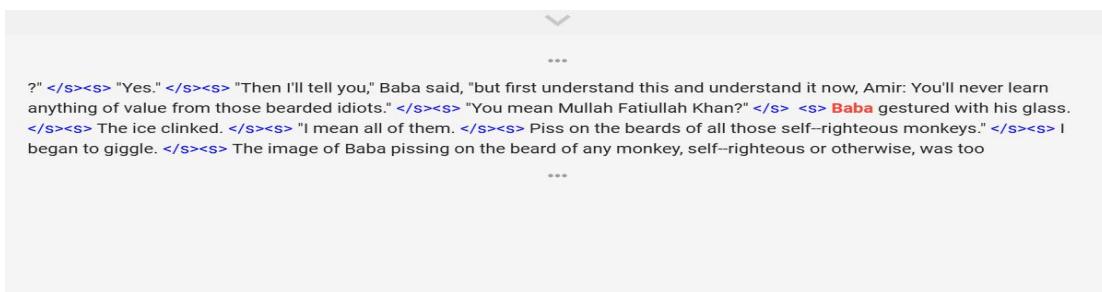
**Figure: 4.10 Topos of Moral Superiority through Contrast**

Figure 4.10 portrays that overt insult has significant symbolic weight. In order to disrespect and mock religious understanding and cast off sacred authority, the term "bearded idiots" is used to weaponize a prevalent outward indicator of Islamic scholarship. In many Muslim cultures, the beard is used as a sign of learning and devotion, and he made it as the object of ignorance and mockery. Through this narration, a secularized elitism, that portrays Islamic spirituality as archaic, stupid, and unproductive.

By using such broad wording, Baba not only discredits religious education but also promote a worldview that values individual and Westernized logic over faith-based understanding. Despite being based on a hypothetical story, this type of discourse reflects actual stories that help to defame Muslims and portraying the faithful as out of touch and unworthy of respect.

### 4.3.7 Topos of Secular Superiority

In Wodak's DHA, the Topos of Secular Superiority is an argumentative rationale that frames secularism as the better and superior framework for social and political life by defending secular institutions, ideals, or practices as being more reasonable, progressive, or just than religious ones (Wodak, 2001; Wodak, 2009).



**Figure: 4.11 Topos of Secular Superiority**

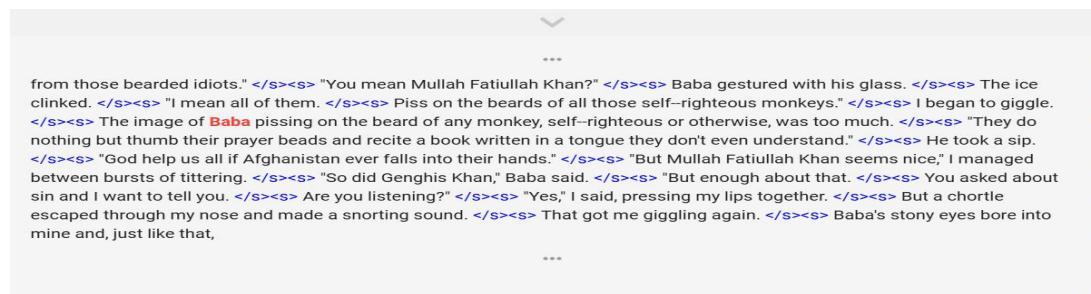
In figure 4.11 Baba's contempt for religious scholars demonstrates a secular, elite bias

towards

Baba's contempt for religious professors demonstrates a secular, elitist predisposition against overt religiosity. His rejection of mullahs as unimportant and stupid advocates to internalized Orientalist stereotype that links Islamic religiosity to regressiveness. Baba builds his own worldview as morally and intellectually better by separating himself from conventional authority, yet this viewpoint denigrates mainstream manifestations of faith and ignores the ethical plurality within Islamic discourse.

### 4.3.8 Topos of Catastrophe and Fear

The *Topos of Catastrophe and Fear* in Wodak's DHA is an argumentative warrant that legitimizes preventive or defensive measures by evoking the threat of disaster, insecurity, or fear, implying that unless specific actions are taken, catastrophic consequences will inevitably follow (Wodak, 2001; Wodak, 2009).



**Figure: 4.12 Topos of Catastrophe and Fear**

In figure 4.12 reflects that there is fear in Baba's rhetoric which shows that secular liberal fears rather than a sophisticated grasp of Islamic politics. It suggests that those who are pious Muslims who are at high authority positions will bring destruction. This reinforces colonial depictions of Islam as being incompatible with contemporary government.

### 4.3.9 Conclusion of Argumentative Strategies for Baba

In these concordance lines the researcher finds a multi-layered discursive structure that maintains moral authority while marginalizing Islam and devout Muslims when the researcher analyzed Baba's narratives using DHA's third approach, argumentative strategy. Baba frequently uses Qur'anic principles like justice and generosity, but he disentangles and detaches them from spiritual responsibility, reframes them as individual virtues and opposed the social duties. Baba depicted pious Muslims and mullahs as hypocritical, parasitic, or backward. Further, the researcher reinforces that

how Muslims are portrayed and thus supports orientalist divisions between modernity and religiosity.

Through this corpus-based DHA analysis, it is evident that Baba's discourse also reflects and reproduces prevailing secular ideologies that portray Islam as the *OTHER* which is morally dubious, politically hazardous, and culturally outdated.

### 4.4 Perspectivization: Framing Baba's Morality through Amir's Reflective Lens

Khaled Hosseini's presents a complicated depiction of Baba, a character whose moral ambiguities and emotional reserve are central to the narrative. Baba is portrayed as a powerful and influential person who is also shrouded in silence and internal strife. The researcher uses Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), the fourth strategy of perspectivization, to investigate that how Amir's narration presents Baba's character.

#### 4.4.1 Concordance Analysis: Amir's Interpretation of Baba Through Emotional Framing and Narrative Silence

The researcher extracts concordance lines while searching for the keyword "Baba" and used Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), the fourth strategy of perspectivization, to investigate that how Amir's narration presents Baba's character.

Details	Left context	KWIC	Right context
1 doc#0 use then everyone would see that he was my father, my <b>Baba</b> .</s><s>He turned back to the microphone and said he			
2 doc#0 im to his liking.</s><s>The problem, of course, was that <b>Baba</b> saw the world in black and white.</s><s>And he got to c			
3 doc#0 had.</s><s>Because the truth of it was, I always felt like <b>Baba</b> hated me a little.</s><s>And why not?</s><s>After all, I			
4 doc#0 n Khan said.</s><s>"And where is he headed?"</s><s> <b>Baba</b> said.</s><s>"A boy who won't stand up for himself beco			
5 doc#0 in and I would be revealed for what I really was.</s><s> <b>Baba</b> would never, ever forgive me.</s><s>And that led to and			
6 doc#0 e us to the bus station, Agha sahib?"</s><s>Then I saw <b>Baba</b> do something I had never seen him do before: He cried.			
7 doc#0 /s><s>But it was true, wasn't it?</s><s>As it turned out, <b>Baba</b> and I were more alike than I'd ever known.</s><s>We h			

**Figure: 4. 13 Amir's Interpretation of Baba through Emotional Framing and Narrative Silence**

In figure 4.13, each line demonstrates a partiality to frame Baba's behavior and inner life through use emotional introspection rather than an ethical analysis.

The very first concordance line, in figure 4.13, captured Amir's enduring love and respect for his father. The frequent use of the word "Baba" highlights a cultural and personal connection which reflects the customary need for filial respect. Amir has unconditional love for Baba which is not only in his actions but deeply rooted in his

parental role. This type of portrayal is aligned with cultural norms which shows one's love for his parents. Amir's narrative centers his emotional need for paternal approval, subtly deflecting attention from Baba's moral complexities.

The third concordance line, in figure 4.13, highlights Amir's persistent sense of inadequacy and emotional distance from Baba. The qualifier "a little" implies internalizing blame, which is a sign of Amir's desire for approval. This impression can result from Baba's own inner turmoil and his incapacity to make sense of his behavior in light of his moral principles. Amir illustrates how narrative silence prevents a more thorough examination of Baba's contradictions by concentrating on his feelings of rejection rather than questioning Baba's actions.

The second concordance line, in figure 4.13, highlights Baba's strict moral code that leaves little room for compassion and complexity. Amir's acknowledgment of this binary perspective implies a criticism of Baba's inflexibility. However, the narrative stops short of fully examining the implications of such perspectives, particularly in light of Baba's own moral shortcomings. Through perspectivization, Amir presents Baba's worldview as a given, thus preserves narrative sympathy while avoiding a thorough examination of its implications.

The fourth concordance line, in figure 4.13, highlights Amir's belief in Baba's unforgiving nature, which underlines his internal conflict with guilt and the desire for redemption. This perception may reflect Baba's emphasis on moral integrity and personal responsibility. However, neither Baba's forgiveness nor his own sins, such as his secret paternity of Hassan are explored in the story. Amir's story keeps Baba's moral inconsistencies hidden while emphasizing on his own fear of judgment.

The fifth concordance line, in figure 4.13, "Baba's silence was louder than his words," sums up Baba's unsaid feelings and the effect that his emotional reserve had on Amir. Baba's silence conveys expectancy, criticism, and internal conflict. However, Amir's narrative focuses on the effect of that silence on himself, rather than analyzing Baba's motivations for being taciturn. Again, leaving the moral paradox largely unexplored, with narrative sympathy favoring emotional rather than ethical insight.

The sixth concordance line, in figure 4.13, portrays Baba as an emotionally limited man by circumstance. Amir describes Baba as someone who is deprived of the

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chance to be kind, maybe as a result of his own moral obligations and cultural expectations of masculinity. This reflection invites sympathy but also suggests a lack of accountability. Amir disentangles Baba from the accountability his secrets could require by representing him as a victim of external pressures.

It is clear from the use of Wodak's perspectivization strategy that Amir's voice in *The Kite Runner* function as mechanism of narrative silence as well as a place for emotional contemplation. Amir's emotional experiences reflect Baba's moral conflicts, and it confines the room for ethical inquiry and obscures a straightforward moral evaluation. This emotionally charged narrative, which is rooted in implicit cultural standards and filial piety, creates a portrayal of Baba that is both evasive and sympathetic, echoing more general discursive techniques frequently used in the portrayal of patriarchal figures in environments with a majority of Muslims.

## 4.5 Intensification and Mitigation: Softening and Discursive Elevation of Baba's Moral Position

Baba is described in *The Kite Runner* as a multi-layered figure whose renunciation from the Islamic principles and customs exposes a false impression of Muslims through his dealings with religious scholars. Baba's character encounters traditional Islamic ideas while creating a personal moral code that opposes Islamic teachings. This can be better understood by examining his rhetoric utilizing Ruth Wodak's fifth discursive strategy, Intensification and Mitigation (DHA). In order to create a depiction that is consistent with a skewed view of Muslims, this analysis looks at how Baba employs language to both amplify his criticisms of religious authority and diminish the legitimacy of Islamic activities.

Details	Left context	KWIC	Right context
1	doc#0 lation for such transactions.</s><s>We were upstairs in	<b>Baba's</b>	study, the smoking room, when I told him what Mullah F
2	doc#0 at Mullah Fatiullah Khan had taught us in class.</s><s> Baba	was pouring himself a whiskey from the bar he had built	
3	doc#0 nks about sin?"</s><s>"Yes.</s><s>"Then I'll tell you,"	Baba	said, "but first understand this and understand it now, A
4	doc#0 onkeys."</s><s>I began to giggle.</s><s>The image of	Baba	pissing on the beard of any monkey, self-righteous or o
5	doc#0 ween bursts of tittering.</s><s>"So did Genghis Khan,"	Baba	said.</s><s>"But enough about that.</s><s>You asked
6	doc#0 parents.</s><s>"When you kill a man, you steal a life,"	Baba	said.</s><s>"You steal his wife's right to a husband, rob
7	doc#0 f the stadium's crowd.</s><s>I remembered something	Baba	had said to me a long time ago: Piss on the beards of a

**Figure: 4.14 Concordance Lines of Baba's Statements**

When Baba criticizes religious leaders for controlling people's spirituality, it is clear

that he views them as authoritarian:

By correlating mullahs with communists, both of whom are depicted as oppressive leaders, this comment furthers the derogatory representation of religious authority. By making this comparison, Baba restrains the power of religious leaders and repudiates their influence on spiritual and moral development. In addition to criticizing religious authority, this intensification subtly presents Islamic leadership as dictatorial and repressive.

#### **4.5.1 Disdain for Religious Practices**

In figure 4.14, concordance line 4, Baba furthers his disapproval of religious leaders by highlighting their hypocrisy and lack of merit by use foul and combative language. This disparaging epithet, "self-righteous monkeys," reinforces the unfavorable perception of religious people and fits with the notion that Islam is only sporadically or hypocritically practiced. Baba's statement casts these individuals as disconnected from contemporary issues and undermines any legitimate influence they may possess.

#### **4.5.2 Rejection of Islamic Teachings on Sin**

Baba's selective interpretation of sin disregards the broader moral guidelines of Islam: Baba oversimplifies Islam's complex ethical principles, which encompass many facets of moral and spiritual life, by reducing sin to merely stealing. The idea that Islamic teachings are unduly simplistic and divorced from a comprehensive moral framework is reinforced by this selective view of sin. The complexity and richness of Islamic morals are diminished by Baba's rejection of more general Islamic ethics, which prioritizes his own code of conduct over established religious doctrine.

#### **4.5.3 Critique of Religious Observance**

Baba criticizes religious rituals as shallow and meaningless:

Baba's depiction of religious leaders as participating in pointless rituals that are divorced from true spiritual awareness is strengthened by this comment. Baba challenges the legitimacy and applicability of Islamic customs by drawing attention to the ignorance. His remarks subtly undermine the value of religious instruction and practice by implying that religious attendance is pointless and ineffectual if it is not coupled with personal knowledge.

#### **4.5.4 Undermining Religious Practices**

Baba further diminishes the importance of religious observance with his aggressive rhetoric:

Baba once again intensifies his hatred of religious leaders by portraying them as hypocrites deserving of no regard through the use of disparaging language. This dehumanizing depiction, which reduces Islamic authority and customs to simple mockery, contributes to a skewed perception of Islam. Baba's remarks reinforce a false portrayal of Muslims and the idea that religious leaders are self-serving.

#### **4.5.5 Comparison to Historical Figures**

Baba intensifies his critique of Mullah Fatiullah Khan by comparing him to a notorious conqueror:

Baba harshens his criticism of religious authorities by linking them to violent historical figures by comparing Mullah Fatiullah Khan to Genghis Khan. The reader's perception of religious authority is weakened by this analogy, which depicts it as oppressive and harmful. Baba's speech supports his belief that religious leadership is tyrannical by downplaying any favorable or neutral attributes that might be connected to it.

#### **4.5.6 Rejection of Religious Authority**

Baba continues to reject the legitimacy of religious figures with harsh language:

Baba further undermines religious leaders' legitimacy by calling them "bearded idiots," making them seem unworthy of deference or thoughtful analysis. This claim casts religious leaders' teachings as detrimental or irrelevant, undermining their credibility. Baba's portrayal of religious leaders as "idiots" contributes to the false impression of Islam as a contemptuous and uneducated faith.

#### **4.5.7 Critique of Religious Leaders**

Baba criticizes the actions of religious leaders as destructive and unhelpful:

Baba's criticism of religious leaders is heightened by the analogy to Genghis Khan, which implies that their deeds are just as destructive and disruptive as those of a historical conqueror. This analogy helps to present religious leaders as oppressors and warlords rather than as sources of peace or spiritual direction. Any chance of empathy or understanding for religious leaders and their function in society is diminished by

Baba's speech. Sympathy toward religious leaders and their role in society.

#### **4.5.8 Dismissal of Religious Teachings**

Baba expresses his disregard for religious education, further diminishing its value:

By implying that religion teachings are neither useful or relevant to the real world, this assertion undermines their legitimacy. Baba's disdain for religious education feeds into the myth that Islamic principles are impractical, which perpetuates a false perception of Muslim communities as obsolete or irrelevant in the contemporary world.

#### **4.5.9 Critique of Religious Observance**

Baba continues his criticism of the superficiality of religious practices, this claim reinforces the idea that religious leaders are shallow and only participate in rituals without any real dedication or knowledge. Baba's criticism highlights the discrepancy between seeming religious practice and true spirituality, which helps to paint Muslims as being untrue to their faith.

By using intensification and mitigation, Baba develops a personal moral code that defies and undermines traditional Islamic teachings. His antagonistic language and limited religious perspectives contribute to the creation of a negative perception of Islam that emphasizes its shortcomings and fosters harmful misunderstandings. By analyzing these instances using Wodak's sixth DHA approach, we can better comprehend how Baba's rhetoric influences how people perceive religious authority and contributes to misleading Muslims in *The Kite Runner*.

In this section, it has been deduced that how Baba's character in *The Kite Runner* functions as a site of discursive representation of Muslim identity through the methodical application of Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA). Together, the five discursive techniques of nomenclature, prediction, argumentation, perspectivization, and intensification/mitigation create a culturally embedded but morally distinct form of Muslim masculinity from the religious principles of Islam. Although Baba is linguistically constructed as a representation of traditional Afghan masculinity and moral authority, this authority is framed primarily through secular values like pride, status, material success, and rationalism rather than Islamic virtues like *ihsan* (compassion), *taqwā* (God-consciousness), *sabr* (patience), and *adab*

(etiquette). In addition to his possessive naming structures and symbolic titles (such as "Toophan Agha"), which further elevate him to a mythic stature detached from religious humility, the referential technique portrays him as a celebrated father figure "Baba" whose public and private spheres represent patriarchal domination.

By continuously linking Baba to qualities more associated with hegemonic masculinity than Islamic spiritual leadership, such as emotional restraint, moral absolutism, and charismatic power, the prediction strategy perpetuates this image. Although some behaviors (such hospitality and giving) are in line with Islamic principles, they are secularized because they are presented as moral decisions made on an individual basis rather than as religious duties.

Baba uses topoi that support the delegitimization of mullahs, the naturalization of class hierarchies, and secular moral superiority in order to argue against religious authority and teachings. In addition to undermining Islamic scholarship, his frequent disparaging remarks about religious scholars as "bearded idiots" and "self-righteous monkeys" reinforce Orientalist stereotypes that associate religiosity with ignorance and backwardness. These language trends support a personal, westernized moral code that is independent of divine authority while undermining traditional Islamic knowledge.

The perspectivization technique shows how Amir's emotionally driven narration softens Baba's moral conflicts. Baba is protected from critical moral inspection by Amir's reverence, internalized shame, and desire for paternal approval, which perpetuates a faulty perception of Islamic fatherhood. Lastly, Baba's rhetorical criticisms of Islamic institutions and practices are magnified through amplification and mitigation, while the breadth and depth of Islamic moral discourse are lost or concealed.

## **5. Conclusion**

Collectively, the corpus-based discourse analysis demonstrates that Baba's character is discursively constructed through a constellation of strategies that foreground secular authority, emotional restraint, and patriarchal dominance while marginalizing explicitly religious forms of Muslim ethical subjectivity. Through repeated patterns of nomination, predication, argumentation, perspectivization, and

intensification/mitigation, Baba emerges as a culturally Muslim but intellectually secular figure whose moral legitimacy is grounded more in individual rationalism, social power, and material success than in Islamic spiritual frameworks.

These discursive patterns align with a broader literary tendency in post-9/11 diaspora fiction in which Islam is frequently decontextualized or selectively invoked, allowing secular and patriarchal values to function as normative standards of moral authority. While *The Kite Runner* employs a sympathetic narrative voice and offers nuanced emotional insight, the linguistic evidence suggests that its representation of Muslim masculinity privileges hegemonic, Western-aligned moral frameworks over religious epistemologies rooted in Islamic ethics.

As a result, Baba's character functions not merely as a narrative father figure but as a discursive site through which Muslim identity is reframed in ways that obscure the spiritual, ethical, and communal dimensions of Islam. This study therefore illustrates how literary discourse, even when empathetic in tone, can participate in the reproduction of partial and ideologically inflected representations of Muslims. By combining corpus linguistics with the Discourse-Historical Approach, the research underscores the importance of examining how seemingly individualized character portrayals contribute to wider cultural narratives surrounding Islam and Muslim identity in the post-9/11 context.

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