

**Tribhuvan University**

**Epistemic Violence in Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* and Åsne Seierstad's  
*The Bookseller of Kabul***

**A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English, T. U. in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Philosophy in English**

**By**

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**Letter of Approval**

This thesis entitled "**Epistemic Violence in Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* and Asne Seierstad's *The Bookseller of Kabul***" submitted by Thakur Prasad Dhungel to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University for the partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy in English has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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## Abstract

This dissertation analyzes two postcolonial works of fiction: Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* and Asne Seierstad's *The Bookseller of Kabul*. Both the works deal with Afghanistan's socio-political and cultural issues after the fall of king Zahir Shah in 1973 and the situation after that. Both works take evil and violent aspects regarding their description of socio-political and cultural issues about Afghanistan. But, while dealing about the ideas of West, they describe with peace, happiness and freedom. This research takes such representations as privileging of Western values and committing of epistemic violence because Afghan socio-political and cultural issues are judged from Western lens. The study takes Gayatri Spivak, Stuart Hall and Ray Chow's ideas as basic methodological tools. It studies the terrific representation of Afghan scenario as a way of constructing negative episteme about Third World. It is a way of stereotyping Third World in terms of negative signifiers so that First World's neocolonial desire to impose its control over there can get success. In *The Kite Runner* Amir describes America in positive ways, and Pakistan and Afghanistan in negative ways. In the similar manner, the journalist narrator in *The Bookseller of Kabul* describes almost all the systems in Afghanistan as degraded one, and Western invasion over there as a kind of rescue from the suffering of Afghan people. In their description, both novelists try to prove that because of the silence of the natives that they are suffering a lot and need outer help to come out of this suffering.

This study, thus, analyzes such binary representations of two different worlds as problematic one because it valorizes one system by negating the other. To negate the other, it creates negative stereotypes about them, and its own as positive. In both works, such depiction of the Third World in terms of bad, evil or violence is what it concludes as epistemic violence over silent natives.

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