

Political and social issues arising in buck by malo asante

[Sociology](#), [Racism](#)



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Political and social issues are commonly expressed within an author's novel or play. There are many aspects of political issues that can be discussed in an author's paper, yet it is the way that it is presented that causes a change in its perspective. With racial discrimination, black crimes, and numerous acts of gang activities, *Buck* by MK Asante is a tremendous story filled with the bearing political and social issues that were faced at that time.

Buck is a story about a young black boy, Malo Asante (author), who grew up around political issues. Within this story there are multiple incidents that illustrate the trials that Malo faced while growing up. Asante describes how his life has been since Uzi, Malo's older brother, was kicked out of the house that he resided in when they were younger. Within the story, Malo lost his best friend, Amir, to gun violence; running away with Ryan because they are too deep into the streets; and his mother being hospitalized. After these dramatic changes, Malo's life began to tumble downhill. By being surrounded by drugs, abuse, little guidance, and other forms of violence, Asante could not step onto the right path to succeeding. However, later in life, with the influences of his teachers and other adult figures, Asante started to advance to a better life. The political issue that is most commonly seen would be black crimes. Black crime is seen within the novel every time something unfortunate happens to Malo. When something ironic occurs in a novel, it is seen as important. This ironic situation is vital to the reasons why a character acts the way that they do.

In the story, Asante describes the events that were shared with Amir, before his tragic death. He states: Shots ring out, buck! buck! buck! The crowd

stampedes like the running of the bulls. Girls scream. This way, that way, everybody zigzagging. Police horses screech, kick high, and charge the crowd. I catch Amir's eyes- heavy, alert, and breathing like glowing coals. I lose him and Scoop in the chaos..... I walk home alone, thinking about the last time I saw Amir. The scene in Buck illustrates the importance of irony, which goes along with the issue of black crimes. After Amir's death, Malo began to become badly influenced, especially by his friend, Ryan. However, Malo is trying to control his feelings. He states, " A chunk of my soul is gone, and even offing the nigh that did it- if we knew who did it- wouldn't bring my best friend back." and " Amir wasn't even the target." These statements help with the ironic events that took place. The ironic play that Asante wanted the audience to receive was how other members of Malo's life (mostly his Dad and Nia) tried to warn him about the consequences that were to come with the participation of gang activities.

Additionally, the use of literary elements can benefit an authors' novel. Elements such as tone, irony, symbolism, and diction are ways that an author can draw the audience into the book. These few example of literary elements are used within Buck to help provide the author with excitement, as well as life lessons for the audience to learn. In Buck, for instance, symbolism that could be noticed is Malo's brother, Uzi. Asante states: And this is how it always goes; me following Uzi in everything, everywhere, like his little black Jansport, covered in Marks-a-Lot, strapped tight to his back-koala style..... I guess I just do it because Uzi's more than my big brother, he's my idol. Uzi is one of the first people that Malo looks up to simply

because he is the first person that stuck with Malo while growing up, besides his best friend, Amir. Diction is used throughout the novel in various ways. Asante includes vocabulary, such as 'jawn', in ways to get the audience to understand the type of language that they used at the time. It states: Jawn can mean anything-person, place, or thing. Sometimes if we're telling a story and don't want people to know what we're talking about, we'll plug jawn in for everything. The other day I was at the jawn around the corner with the young jawn from down the street. We get to the jawn, right, and the ngh at the door is all on his jawn, not knowing I had that jawn on me. Man, it was about to be on in that jawn.

Tone also plays a significant part in novels. In Asante's novel, the tone shifts from anger, sadness, calm, and even happiness. From the time that Uzi got arrested to Amir's death, the tone that Asante used depicts the mood of the chapter. Although these elements are not the most important ones, they still bring life to the novel. Social issues are the issues that are seen throughout the nation. These issues include poverty, racial profiling, and mental health... In the novel, Buck, social issues are distributed throughout the story as the plot unfolds. Poverty is the one that can be easily identified, whether it is a small issue or a large issue. Since Malo could remember, his family has been suffering from poverty ever since he found out about the bankruptcy. It states: " I go to steal my mother's car and there's already someone stealing it." then it states; "' We're bankrupt.'" " How?" " If you don't understand money, it grows wings and poof- it's gone." " What does that even mean... being bankrupt?". " It means we're broke, Daudi." She pops the orange pill. "

What about Dad?" He's bankrupt too... and in trouble with the IRS." The use of this social issue shows the significance of how African Americans were struggling. Due to the low-income jobs that African Americans were employed, there were often cases where bankruptcy occurred. In this case, Malo's family is suffering. This issue causes Malo to begin to make bad decisions. Yet, when Malo joins the UPK gang, this is where actions start to get unfavorable. Racial profiling is the use of race or ethnicity as grounds for suspecting someone of having committed an offense. Asante includes moments of his childhood to provide the audience the inside look of how they are treated, especially with white police officers.

In the novel, there is situation where Malo and his friends are at the park. However, a couple of policemen force them to leave. It states, "' This is the Philadelphia Police...leave the park immediately, leave the area immediately,' they yell over the bullhorn. If they catch someone they'll break their board and take them to the station." This statement from the novel is used to emphasize how racial profiling was seen through the eyes of children. Regardless of age, if a person or group of people are of color, then they will be treated differently, due to previous stereotypes that have prevailed. Mental health affects the African American population more than any other ethnical population because of the inefficient amount of medical attention that is received. Buck contains mental health, mostly when it discusses the mother, Amira. Malo discovers that his mother mentally ill when she is taken away from home and put into the " hospital", however Malo discovers that his mother has been dealing with an mental disability

since she was twelve. It states, “‘Leaving’ has been on my mind most of my life. My first attempt at suicide was at twelve. I tried to overdose on aspirins. I was eighteen when I tried again. I took an overdose of pills. I was hospitalized.” This quotation helps with the idea that mental illness can happen to anyone (at the most unexpected time in Malo’s case).

Further into the novel, Malo receives a call from Kianna, who tells him that his mother overdosed. It states, “ She’s frantic. Out of breath. Tells me my mom OD’d... that they don’t know if she is going to make it. Mental illness can cause numerous of problems within a family’s life. In Malo’s case, his mother in this situation causes him to change his attitude and try to do better, for his mother’s sake. The use of literary elements helps the author, Asante, helps with the development of the theme: you can make life better if you put in the effort. This theme is used throughout the novel in ways that the audience can connect important points together. With the political and social issues that are provided in the novel, there are points that are strongly tied into the black community that makes it hard for people to strive to get into a better environment. Asante, as well as other authors, use these literary elements to inform and explain the importance of that small ideas can have on the black community, as well as other communities.

Literary elements that Buck by MK Asante has would include: allusions, figurative language and dialogue to reveal the importance that is within the novel. The life lessons that are included in this novel helps with the political and social issues that are seen. These lessons help with the meaning of the issues at hand. Buck by MK Asante is a novel that expresses the struggles of

young African American children while also educated its' audience with vital information that may help them in life.