

# Presentation of the kite runner

Literature, Russian Literature



## INTRODUCTION

This paper copes with the analysis of Hosseini's Kite Runner using Marxism approach. Marxist theory mainly deals with the literary works and evaluates the works by the examining of its historical, social and economical background. Marxism evaluates the work how it is influenced by the time in which it was produced as well as social, political, economical sphere (Chowdhury, 2011). Thus, this paper will focus on: (1) The Marxist Approach To The Kite Runner; (2) The relationship among characters as a representation of the differences between social classes; (3) The relationship between Baba and Ali serve as a representation materialism versus spirituality; (4) Baba as the representation of economic power in his society in the period of time; and (5) Cultural and political hegemony as representation of situation in Afghanistan.

### 1. The Marxist Approach To The Kite Runner

The marxist approach to literature is based on the philosophy of Karl Marx, a German philosopher and economist. His major argument was that whoever controlled the means of production in society controlled the society— whoever owned the factories “ owned” the culture.

This idea is called “ dialectical materialism,” and Marx felt that the history of the world was leading toward a communist society. From his point of view, the means of production (i. e., the basis of power in society) would be placed in the hands of the masses, who actually operated them, not in the hands of those few who owned them. It was a perverted version of this philosophy that was at the heart of the Soviet Union.

Marxism was also the rallying cry of the poor and oppressed all over the world (Kurtz). To read a work from a Marxist perspective, one must understand that Marxism asserts that literature is a reflection of culture, and that culture can be affected by literature (Marxists believed literature could instigate revolution). Marxism is linked to Freudian theory by its concentration on the subconscious—Freud dealt with the individual subconscious, while Marx dealt with the political subconscious. Marx believed that oppression exists in the political subconscious of a society—social pecking orders are inherent to any group of people. The four main areas of study are economic power; materialism versus spirituality; class conflict; art, literature, and ideologies.

2. The relationship among characters as a representation of the differences between social classes On the beginning of the novel, Hosseini briefly contrasted the high class layer from low class layer in several ways. a. From physical appearance of the characters.

Baba and Ali.

Baba and Ali are much different. Baba was a strong, and powerful man. “ It was Rahim Khan who first referred to him as what eventually became Baba’s famous nickname, \_Toophan agha\_, or “ Mr. Hurricane.” It was an apt enough nickname. My father was a force of nature, a towering Pashtun specimen with a thick beard, a wayward crop of curly brown hair as unruly as the man himself, hands that looked capable of uprooting a willow tree, and a black glare that would “ drop the devil to his knees begging for mercy,” as Rahim Khan used to say. At parties, when all six-foot-five of him thundered into the room, attention shifted to him like sunflowers turning to the sun”

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(ch. 3). Ali was a weak, flawed and men. “ But polio had left Ali with a twisted, atrophied right leg that was sallow skin over bone with little in between except a paper-thin layer of muscle”... (ch. 2), in other hand, the novel states that “ Ali’s face and his walk frightened some of the younger children in the neighborhood. But the real trouble was with the older kids (ch. 2).

#### Amir and Hasan

Physically, Amir and Hassan were different. Though Amir was older than Hassan, but Hassan was stronger than Amir. Hassan can run faster than Amir. When they were running to catch the kite one day, Amir looked very tired. “ They called him “ flat-nosed” because of Ali and Hassan’s characteristic Hazara Mongoloid features. “ For years, that was all I knew about the Hazaras, that they were Mogul descendants, and that they looked a little like Chinese people” (ch. 2)

#### Sofia Akrami and Sanaubar

Sofia Akrami, Baba’s wife (Amir’s mother) was from a rich family. “ When people scoffed that Baba would never marry well–after all, he was not of royal blood–he wedded my mother, Sofia Akrami, a highly educated woman universally regarded as one of Kabul’s most respected, beautiful, and virtuous ladies. And not only did she teach classic Farsi literature at the university she was a descendant of the royal family, a fact that my father playfully rubbed in the skeptics’ faces by referring to her as “ my princess” (ch. 3). Sanaubar, Ali’s wife, was a beautiful woman. “... a beautiful but notoriously unscrupulous woman who lived up to her dishonorable

reputation. Like Ali, she was a Shi'a Muslim and an ethnic Hazara. She was also his first cousin and therefore a natural choice for a spouse.

But beyond those similarities, Ali and Sanaubar had little in common, least of all their respective appearances. While Sanaubar's brilliant green eyes and impish face had, rumor has it, tempted countless men into sin, Ali had a congenital paralysis of his lower facial muscles, a condition that rendered him unable to smile and left him perpetually grimfaced. It was an odd thing to see the stone-faced Ali happy, or sad, because only his slanted brown eyes glinted with a smile or welled with sorrow. People say that eyes are windows to the soul. Never was that more true than with Ali, who could only reveal himself through his eyes.... " I have heard that Sanaubar's suggestive stride and oscillating hips sent men to reveries of infidelity" (ch. 2).

b. Tribe's difference.

Hosseini exposes two different tribes between Pashtuns and Hazara in some points of view. ? Oppression of Pashtuns to Hazara. Pashtuns is a high class layer while Hazara is a low class layer. This can be shown from the citations as follow: " An entire chapter dedicated to Hassan's people! In it, I read that my people, the Pashtuns, had persecuted and oppressed the Hazaras. It said the Hazaras had tried to rise against the Pashtuns in the nineteenth century, but the Pashtuns had " quelled them with unspeakable violence." 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 Pashtuns had oppressed the Hazaras was that Pashtuns were Sunni Muslims, while Hazaras were Shi'a' (ch. 2).

The insulting to Hazara.

As it has been pointed out that Hazara was low class layer, Hazara's people were placed as a minority and they were mostly insulted by people around them. Ali, who belongs to Hazara, was chased by children around. " They chased him on the street, and mocked him when he hobbled by. Some had taken to calling him \_Babalu\_, or Boogeyman" (ch. 2). Hassan, who was known as Ali's son, was very often insulted by his neighbours when he walked with Amir. Amir says that " It also said some things I did know, like that people called Hazaras \_mice-eating, flat-nosed, load-carrying donkeys\_. I had heard some of the kids in the neighborhood yell those names to Hassan. Amir's teacher even said that " That's the one thing Shi'a people do well," he said, picking up his papers, " passing themselves as martyrs."

He wrinkled his nose when he said the word Shi'a, like it was some kind of disease (ch. 2). Assef really hated Hazara people. In another occasion, when he met Amir dan Hassan, Assef strictly said to Hassan: His blue eyes flicked to Hassan. " Afghanistan is the land of Pashtuns. It always has been, always will be. We are the true Afghans, the pure Afghans, not this Flat-Nose here. His people pollute our homeland, our watan. They dirty our blood." He made a sweeping, grandiose gesture with his hands. " Afghanistan for Pashtuns, I say. That's my vision" (ch. 5). Amir and Hassan, on one day walked around and met Assef on the way. Assef says to Amir " How can you talk to him, play with him, let him touch you?" he said, his voice dripping with disgust. Wali and Kamal nodded and grunted in agreement. Assef narrowed his eyes. Shook his head. When he spoke again, he sounded as baffled as he looked. "

How can you call him your ‘ friend’?” \_But he’s not my friend! \_ I almost blurted. \_He’s my servant! \_ Had I really thought that? (ch. 5).

3. The relationship between Baba and Ali serve as representation materialism versus spirituality.

Materialism refers to desire for wealth and material possessions, while spiritualism refers to a philosophic doctrine, opposing materialism, that claims transcendency of the divine being (Empi, 2009). Hosseini opposites two characters between Baba and Ali. Baba is materialism as stated in the novel that Baba says that “ If there’s a God out there, then I would hope he has more important things to attend to than my drinking scotch or eating pork. Now, hop down. All this talk about sin has made me thirsty again” (ch. 3). Baba also just only interested to talk about business, politics and football as the central topics on conversation with his friends in his room one day as stated that “ Baba and his friends reclined on black leather chairs there after Ali had served dinner. They stuffed their pipes–except Baba always called it “ fattening the pipe”–and discussed their favorite three topics: politics, business, soccer” (ch. 2).

When Amir told Baba about religious teaching of Islam at school that they learnt about Qur’an, Baba said to Amir that “ I see you’ve confused what you’re learning in school with actual education,” he said in his thick voice (ch. 3). Baba also said to Amir that “ You’ll never learn anything of value from those bearded idiots” (ch. 3). In contrast, Ali is a religious man who had memorized the Koran.... (ch. 3). In addition, it is cited that “ Hassan’s father, Ali, used to catch us and get mad, or as mad as someone as gentle as Ali could ever get.

He would wag his finger and wave us down from the tree. He would take the mirror and tell us what his mother had told him, that the devil shone mirrors too, shone them to distract Muslims during prayer. “ And he laughs while he does it,” he always added, scowling at his son” (ch. 2). Furthermore, Ali and Hassan were religiously to Islamic Teaching, and he never left for praying. One day Amir got up late and found “ Hassan had already washed up, prayed the morning \_namaz\_with Ali”(ch. 4). Hassan never missed any of the five daily prayers. Even when we were out playing, he’d excuse himself, draw water from the well in the yard, wash up, and disappear into the hut (ch. 4)

4. Baba as the representation of economic power in his society in the period of time. In Marxist’ theory society is divided into two classes based economical point of view. They are the upper class/bourgeoisies and the lower class/labors/proletarians (Darma, 2013). Hosseini exposes the economic power characters in the novels in several points. ? Hoseini symbolizes Baba and Ali as the bourgeoisies and proletarians. Baba was a rich man. He has the most beautiful house in Kabul, while Ali’s house is small. It is stated in the novel that “ 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 thought it was the prettiest house in all of Kabul” (ch. 2).

On the contrary, Ali was a poor man which worked only for Baba as a servant. His house was small and lied behind Baba’s house. The novel states that “ On the south end of the garden, in the shadows of a loquat tree, was the servants’ home, a modest little mud hut where Hassan lived with his father. (ch. 2) ? Baba was a successful businessman. When people around



doubted him on his success, he run a business and he became a successful merchant in Kabul as stated that “ Baba proved them all wrong by not only running his own business but becoming one of the richest merchants in Kabul... Baba and Rahim Khan built a wildly successful carpet-exporting business, two pharmacies, and a restaurant” (ch. 3). Baba also built an orphanage by his own money to show his economic power.

The novel stated that “ In the late 1960s, when I was five or six, Baba decided to build an orphanage. I heard the story through Rahim Khan” (ch. 3) “ Baba paid for the construction of the two-story orphanage, just off the main strip of Jadeh Maywand south of the Kabul River, with his own money (ch. 3). Bourgeoisies way of life was identical to hedonism. It was stated in the novel that “ In 1933, the year Baba was born and the year Zahir Shah began his forty-year reign of Afghanistan, two brothers, young men from a wealthy and reputable family in Kabul, got behind the wheel of their father’s Ford roadster. High on hashish and \_mast\_ on French wine, they struck and killed a Hazara husband and wife on the road to Paghman (ch. 4).

5. Cultural and political hegemony as representation of situation in Afghanistan. According to Encarta English Dictionary (2009), hegemony is authority or control: control or dominating influence by one person or group, especially by one political group over society or one nation over others. Hosseini describes the hegemony in culture and politics was presented in several way of his work’s The Kite Runner. a. Cultural Hegemony. The Psthuns controlled Hazara by forbidding them to come to school. Hazara’s people were identical with iliteral and servant of Psthuns. This was represented in the novel that Hassan will do anything whatever Amir asked

him. Amir was very often asked Hassan to do something impossibly. It stated in the novel that “ Eat dirt if I told you to,” I said” (ch. 6).

In addition, most Hazara people were servants, Amir says that “ I remember one kid, Ahmad, who lived across the street from us. His father was some kind of doctor, I think. ...Every morning , I watched from my bedroom window as their Hazara servant shoveled snow from the driveway, cleared the way for the black Opel” (ch. 6). Afghans were independent people. Psthuns controlled Hazara in all aspects. b. Political hegemony. This was represented in Assef statement that ““ I’ll ask the president to do what the king didn’t have the quwat to do. To rid Afghanistan of all the dirty, kasseef Hazaras” (ch. 5). In addition, Assef also ever told Amir that “ For a lot of Hazaras, Iran represented a sanctuary of sorts-I guess because, like Hazaras, most Iranians were Shi’a Muslims. But I remembered something my teacher had said that summer about Iranians, that they were grinning smooth talkers who patted you on the back with one hand and picked your pocket with the other” (ch. 6).

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