

The kite  
runnerpsychology  
argumentative essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

A journey from innocence and naivety to wholeness and enlightenment” accurately describes the development of almost anyone, to a great extent – effectively, it states the transition from young child to wise adult. However, the phrase is particularly relevant to *The Kite Runner* because Amir’s journey to enlightenment is the novel’s central theme. In fact, the phrase could almost serve as the novel’s summary. Amir’s naivety is perhaps best reflected in the chapter in which he is the youngest, the novel’s second chapter.

Indeed, the opening paragraph conjures the perfect picture of childlike innocence: Amir reminisces about sitting barefoot in poplar trees with Hassan, annoying his neighbours by reflecting light into their homes with a shard of mirror and eating mulberries. He then discusses talking (or perhaps bullying) Hassan into firing walnuts at the neighbour’s dog with a slingshot – “ Hassan never wanted to, but if I asked, really asked, he wouldn’t deny me. Hassan never denied me anything” (pg. ) – and so it becomes evident that Amir has a childish tendency to dominate, his best friend in particular. Amir’s boastful disposition and spoiled upbringing are then made apparent with: “ Everyone agreed that my father, my Baba, had built the most beautiful house in the Wazir Akbar Khan district, a new and affluent neighbourhood in the northern part of Kabul” (pg. 4). This bold statement is laden with information – we now know the main character’s father’s name, that he built his own house and that it is situated in a wealthy neighbourhood in Afghanistan’s capital.

It is also followed by an elaborate description of the house’s extravagant decor, giving the impression that the young Amir revels in his wealth, and

positioning the reader to dislike him. Shortly afterwards, Baba refuses to let Amir sit and talk with him - " Go on, now, this is grown-ups' time. Why don't you go read one of those books of yours? " (pg. 5) - and the reader is now positioned to pity Amir, seeing him as the overly-pampered child bombarded with material possessions by his father to compensate for lack of attention. Thus, a more vulnerable side of Amir is revealed, one which yearns for his father's affection but rarely receives it.

As the tale progresses, we see that the child Amir both reveres and fears Baba, even resents him: " With me as the glaring exception, my father moulded the world around him to his liking. The problem, of course, was that Baba saw the world in black and white. And he got to decide what was black and what was white. You can't love a person who lives that way without fearing him too. Maybe even hating him a little. " (pg. 15). In his childishness, Amir's perception of his father is ' selective'; he sees only Baba's faults and is oblivious to his bravery and altruism.

Amir's naivety is best exemplified by his cowardice - his most prevalent (and potentially devastating) flaw. Naturally, this flaw is epitomised with his lack of intervention during Hassan's sodomy - " In the end, I ran. I ran because I was a coward. " (pg. 72) - and the childish deeds which follow in an attempt to bury his guilt: feigning ignorance about the rape, resenting Hassan for his " goddamn unwavering loyalty" (pg. 83), allowing their friendship to wither, and ultimately driving both Hassan and his father Ali from his household.

Five years later, when the eighteen-year-old Amir flees Kabul with Baba, it is evident in his narration that he has matured slightly (he is more articulate,

and his vocabulary is broader). However, he is still guilt-ridden - " I wondered where Hassan was. Then the inevitable. I vomited on a tangle of weeds, my retching and groaning drowned in the deafening roar of the MiG. " (pg. 105) - and without courage. His cowardice contrasts appropriately with Baba's bravery when Baba defends a woman completely unknown to him, refusing to allow a Russian soldier to rape her, and Amir thinks, " Do you always have to be the hero?

Can't you just let it go for once? " (pg. 107). Despite now being an adult, it's clear that Amir is still far from whole or enlightened. Amir's cowardice is never truly ' resolved' until the novel's climax, when he redeems himself by strolling unarmed and poorly disguised into Talib headquarters to rescue Sohrab, Hassan's son (who does the rescuing himself, with his slingshot). This act is foolish and somewhat implausible, but rings true with bravery, and in terms of his wholeness and enlightenment could perhaps be described as the ' icing on the cake'. As for the cake itself, it was largely made by Rahim Khan, Amir's older friend.

Rahim Khan is the perfect mentor, benevolent and completely understanding of Amir (despite Amir's selfishness), continually offering him guidance and gently steering him toward the right path. He recognises Amir's writing ability and encourages it by giving him an uplifting note - " I shall hear any story you have to tell. Bravo. " (pg. 31) - and later a leather-bound notebook for his birthday - " For your stories. " (pg. 93). It is implied that this is what induces Amir to pursue a career as a full-time writer. Rahim Khan also somehow knows that Amir witnessed Hassan's sodomy, and understands that he has buried his guilt.

He cheers Amir up at his birthday party, confiding in him about his past fiancée and offering himself as Amir's confidant (You know you can tell me anything you want, Amir jan. Anytime. - pg. 92); he implores Amir to leave America, to visit him on his deathbed in Pakistan (" Come. There is a way to be good again. " - pg. 177); he tells him of Hassan's adult life and his death, and how Hassan remained ever-faithful to Amir until he died; he advises Amir to retrieve Sohrab from Kabul, knowing that he must be the one to do it (" And why you? I think we both know why it has to be you, don't we? " - pg. 204).

He also divulges a very enlightening piece of information to Amir: that Hassan is his half-brother. Rahim Khan is the catalyst for much of Amir's development, and plays a huge role in Amir's journey to wholeness and enlightenment. At the novel's conclusion, Amir is largely content: he enjoys his successful career as a writer; he is married to and still in love with Soraya; he is without biological children (due to Soraya's infertility) but is fathering Sohrab in Hassan's stead; and (most importantly, of course) he has atoned for what he did to Hassan. In this sense, he has achieved wholeness and (at least, emotional) enlightenment.