

Afghanistan's turbulent history in the kite runner

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



In the light of Afghanistan's turbulent history and its impact on its people, the historical details incorporated into the novel could be seen to represent Afghanistan's rape of culture and identity. As a result of the Soviet invasion, Kabul becomes a city of secrets and suspicions, You couldn't trust anyone in Kabul any more for a fee or under threat, people told on each other, neighbor on neighbor, child on parent, brother on brother, servant on master, friend on friend. The rafiqs, the comrades, were everywhere and they'd split Kabul into two groups: those who eavesdropped and those who didn't.

The tricky part was that no one knew who belonged to which.

A casual remark to the tailor while getting fitted for a suit might land you in the dungeons of Poleh-charkhi. Complain about the curfew to the butcher and next thing you knew, you were behind bars staring at the muzzle end of a Kalashnikov. Even at the dinner table, in the privacy of their home, people had to speak in a calculated manner the rafiqs were in the classrooms too; they'd taught children to spy on their parents, what to listen for, whom to tell (112). Of course, war changes everything. But it's still surprising, somehow, that the home itself could become a charged and dangerous environment. Isn't the home supposed to be a place where one can relax a little? Where one can count on the loyalty of your family?

Apparently, that's not the case in Shorawi-occupied (Soviet-occupied) Afghanistan. Hosseini is describing, here, the dangers of occupied Afghanistan, but he's also referencing other betrayals. Later in the book, we learn Hassan is Amir's half-brother, though no one tells Amir this until he's

38 and Amir's father, knew all along Hassan was Amir's half-brother. Count 'em up. Brother betrays brother. Father betrays son. The very face of the country is physically devastated by the toil of war. The once beautiful landscape is strewn with, Chains of the villages sprouting here and there, like discarded toys among the rocks, broken mud houses and huts consisting of little more than four wooden poles and tattered cloth as a roof (231).

There is nothing left in Kabul except the destruction of others. The Soviets and the Taliban had raped the very culture and well being Afghanistan, leaving it destitute. Afghanistan's people now seem to have no identity and belonging, Returning to Kabul was like running into an old, forgotten friend and seeing that life hadn't been good to him, that he'd become homeless and destitute (246). Kabul is personified as an old friend who has become 'homeless and destitute' as a direct result of the ongoing political conflict. Afghanistan's people have been raped of their identity and cultural belonging. Both Russia and the Taliban metaphorically raped Afghanistan by stealing its very being, its culture, and forcing the country into submission in the same way a rape occurs. When the country is raped, its gifts, its humanity, is taken away by force. Then, when the country and its people attempt to protest, they are forced into silence.