

The kite runner: afghan-american heritage

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



The Kite Runner is an in-depth narrative novel written by Khaled Hosseini – an author representing Afghan-American heritage. The story revolves around the life of Amir, a Pashtun in Afghanistan, and is set throughout such events as the fall of the monarchy in Afghanistan, the military intervention of the Soviet Union, and the influence of the Taliban. This narrative is known for its family related settings and expresses between Baba and Amir's father-son relationships, as well as for raising the themes of guilt, and redemption.

The story itself enables the reader to get a thorough insight into the daily life of Afghani people and their culture.

Even though it is not the main theme of the novel, social class ranking is a reoccurring, and its influence on the lives of the characters is vivid. The author approached the topic of social class in Afghanistan by setting the two friends, Hassan and Amir, at two different sides of the social class. Both Hassan and Amir get into issues amongst themselves as well. The author does this to express the problems each can get for disregarding the social class division. To continue, the author shows different examples of discrimination between the Russian's with Afghans throughout the novel as well as the discrimination between the Pashtuns and Hazaras. Throughout the beginning of the novel characters Amir and Hassan, although portrayed as brothers, have contrasting behavioral traits that ultimately affect how Amir treats Hassan. The author, Hosseini, illustrates Amir as, at some points, evilly taking advantage of Hassan's lack of intelligence and finding humor in it. This is displayed when Amir lies to Hassan, stating, "' Imbecile'. It means smart, intelligent. I'll use it in a sentence for you. ' When it comes to words, Hassan is an imbecile.'" (Hosseini 29).

Here, Amir is purposely lying to Hassan for malicious fun and because of Hassan's illiterate status and gullible self he knows no better than to believe Amir. To go on, the author foreshadows that Amir's actions now will only continue to grow in the future to not only Hassan but also others. When Rahim Khan, Baba's friend, proposes that Amir's "pessimistic self" is only because he never inherited a violent characteristic, Amir responds with, "Rahim Khan had been wrong about the mean streak thing" (Hosseini 23). This, therefore, discloses that Amir does, indeed, have a bit of selfishness and cruelty deep inside him that will be unleashed later in the book. During these first few chapters, Housseini is simply laying the groundwork for the reasons to why Amir will commit certain actions which lead up to the future in the novel. Next, in the novel, the author displays the discrimination between the Pashtuns and Hazaras several different times. First, the character Assef is known to be the neighborhood bully. Hassan who is a Hazara, a trait that Hassan has no control over is then bullied by Assef. In the Afghan culture, Hazara's are seen as dirty and part of the lower class. Assef later goes on to boast about "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." (Hosseini 40).

Assef sees Hassan as an animal and treats him like one, which is an example of "mans inhumanity to man". Also, in the novel, Amir was seen talking to an old merchant in hopes of finding Hassan. Then the old merchant tells Amir "What is a boy like you doing here at this time of the day looking for a Hazara?" "Lucky Hazara, having such a concerned master. His father should

get on his knees, sweep the dust at your feet with his eyelashes.” (70). At the time people looked at Hazaras in the worst way possible and if you were seen being friends with one of them then people would begin to judge you.

Throughout the story, Amir treats Hassan as a servant because he is in continues fear of being judged by others since Hassan is a Hazara. On the other hand in The Kite Runner, the issues between the Russian’s and Afghans are very obvious and lead to many injustices. The Russians claimed that they will restore the government in Afghanistan, but instead, they end up causing a large amount of oppression for the Afghani people. But, there are many Russians that are doing what they claimed they would do. Still, a large chunk of the Russian people are exerting force against the Afghanis, to the point where they perhaps cause more turmoil than improvement. As the Russian officer says “ spoke to us in broken Farsi. He apologized for his comrade’s behavior. “ Russia sends them here to fight,” he said. “ But they are just boys, and when they come here, they find the pleasure of drug.” He gave the younger officer the rueful look of a father exasperated with his misbehaving son. “ This one is attached to drug now. I try to stop him...” He waved us off.” The Russian officer knows how bad the Afghans are being discriminated. The soldiers from the Soviet Union at the time were so addicted to drugs like heroin that they began to notice an increase in trends with women and children being abused in particular. These actions from the Russian soldiers led to changes amongst the culture in Afghanistan and it wasn’t good. Continually, the social class between Amir, Hassan and others were very different. They all had different lifestyles and struggled to get along with each other. The one thing that stood out is the fact that Hassan

didn't take all the discrimination that he was receiving to heart. In the book, he says " You know... I like where I live." (58).

This shows that Hassan was indeed happy with his life even with all the prejudices people have against him. Hassan dealt with so many issues just because of where he was from and the background of the Hazaras. The social class difference between Amir and Hassan is well noticed because Amir treats Hassan with respect sometimes, but then other times isn't a true friend to him. Amir who was born with the privilege of being one of the Pashtuns. The Pashtuns are the ruling class of Afghanistan which gives Amir an advantage and Hassan will never have the same opportunities as Amir does. On a different note, Assef's philosophy towards Hazaras reflects the tendency for those of the majority ethnicity within Afghanistan to view Hazaras in a negative light. Assef explains, " Afghanistan is like a beautiful mansion littered with garbage, and someone has to take out the garbage." (243). Essentially, Assef explains that, in his mind and the minds of many within Afghanistan, Harazas have no place in the country. By believing in this philosophy, Assef also makes it clear that he supports discrimination and mistreatment of Hazaras by Pashtuns. As we can see, in the novel there were a lot of examples of discrimination. Throughout the novel, we see all forms of discrimination from the Pashtuns treating the Hazaras with disrespect to the Russian soldiers behaving the way that they did towards the Afghans. The power of discrimination is well seen between Hassan and Amir because in the book Amir was seen scared to act a certain way towards Hassan since he feared of being judged by the Pashtuns. Overall, in The Kite Runner,

discrimination was a very common theme that was persistent throughout the entire novel.