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BOOK REVIEW OF KHALED HOSSEINI'S

THE KITE RUNNER

A FINAL PROJECT

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For S-1 Degree in the English Department
Faculty of Humanity Diponegoro University

Submitted by:

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A2B009137

**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
DIPONEGORO UNIVERSITY
SEMARANG
2017**

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MOTTO AND DEDICATION

The world is my stage

(Lasmi Laila Fadhilla)

I took the one less traveled by, And that has made all the difference

(Robert Frost)

Keep love in your heart. A life without it is like a sunless garden when the flowers are dead

(Oscar Wilde)

*This final project is dedicated to
people who supported me in every single moment,
especially my beloved mother*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Praise be to God Almighty, who has given strength and true spirit to this project on “Book

Review of Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* came to a completion. On this occasion, I would like to thank all those people who have supported to the completion of this final project.

The deepest gratitude and appreciation is extended to Dr. Ratna Asmarani, M.Ed, M.Hum – my advisor who has given her continues guidance, helpful correction, moral support, advise and suggestion, without which it is doubtful that this project came into completion.

My deepest thank also goes to the following:

1. Dr. Redyanto Noor, M.Hum, as the Dean of Faculty of Humanities, Diponegoro University.
2. Dr. Agus Subiyanto M. A as the Head of the English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Diponegoro University.
3. Dwi Wulandari S.S., MA, as the Academic Advisor of the English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Diponegoro University.
4. All lecturers at English Department, Diponegoro University who have shared their precious knowledge and great experiences.
5. All administrative staffs of the Faculty of Humanities who have helped me in completing this study at Diponegoro University related to the administration necessities.
6. All alumni and friends of the English Department who have inspired me to complete this final project.
7. The writer's parents: her father and mother.
8. All people who have helped me during the process of conducting this research whose names are not mentioned here.

I realized that this final project is still far from perfect. I, therefore, will be glad to receive any constructive criticism and recommendation to make this final project better.

Finally, I expect that this final project will be useful to the reader who wishes to learn something about reviewing of a novel and to understand a little bit more about Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*.

Semarang, 24th May 2017

Lasmi Laila Fadhillah

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1

INTRODUCTION

America is a destination place for immigrants from many countries. Many immigrants stay in U.S for different reasons such as studying, working, or running away from economic or politic crisis, religious conflict and warfare in their homeland. In America, the immigrants come along with their original culture. However, they face many kinds of problems in the host country due to their physical differences.

Nevertheless, they have to adopt and develop in the host country which is much influences by their previous live. For example, some places like Jumpa Lahiri, Shauna Singh Baldwin and Amir Tan. They showed that their work is as good as the native writers of America. One of the writers who is succesful to become an established writer is Khaled Hosseini.

Khaled Hosseini was born in a family whose parents are dedicated in educational environment. He was born in Kabul. Despite his formal situation in his family, Hosseini grew up in comfortable existence and he be friended with Shi’a Muslim. While being an immigrant,

Hosseini spent his time writing stories. His difficulties at the moment influenced his writing style that contains his difficulties and experiences being immigrant.

In his writing, Hosseini would like to remind the people that the war in Afghanistan really affect the social condition into extreme situation. For example, a child darely extremely raped by another kid. Khaled Hosseini gets positive response from American public for his novel *The Kite Runner*. His novel became the best-seller in 2005 according to Nielsen BookScan.

In Afghan culture, there are social status which classify the people into several identities. There Psthun and Hazara which is included in *The Kite Runner*. This social status are portrayed into two characters in this story. Amir is example of Psthun, and Hassan is example of Hazara. Psthun is the highest status meanwhile Hazara is the lowest status. Religious differences are also included in this story. In Afghan there are two kinds of muslim. The first is sunny, and the second is Shia.

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SUMMARY OF KHALED HOSSEINI'S *THE KITE RUNNER*

Living in a single parent home, Amir was growing with one sibling. In his home, Amir was intensively spending his time playing with his servant and playmate named Hassan. Strangely, Amir's father gave more attention to Hassan so Amir felt that he was losing his father's attention.

One day, Amir heard that there would be a local kite flying contest. Exaggeratedly, he thought to join the contest in order to gain his father's attention. At the same time, his playmate Hassan was exited to join the contest as well. However, he could not join due to his position as Amir's servant.

Amir won the kite flying contest with Hassan who was looking after him. Hassan, in excitement was chasing the flying kite because he would like to give it to Amir as a congratulation. Unexpetedly, he ran to Assef, a neighborhood bully. Assef and his friends stopped Hassan and grabbed the kite off from him. Hasan tried to fight him and tried to take the kite back. Unfortunately, he failed and he got physical and sexual abuse from Assef and his friends. Assef beat and raped him. At the same time, Amir accidentally witness the assault. However, instead of defending Hassan, Amir hid infare.

Amir hid his witness in silence. Suddenly, a few years later there was a Russian invasion

that made Baba and Amir left Kabul and escaped to United States.

In United states, Amir and Baba ran a bussiness. They were living well and Amir found a spouse when he encountered a female client at his shop named Soraya. Coincidentally, Soraya was also an Afghan.

Right after Amir and Soraya got married, Baba was suffering from cancer. One month after their wedding, Baba passed away. Twenty years later, while being a famous writer in U.S, Amir and Soraya remained childless. One day, an old friend of his father, Rahim Khan, contacted him. He would like to encounter Amir and Hassan together in Pakistan. After Amir came, he found that Hassan already had a family. When they met each other in Pakistan, Rahim said to them that Amir and Hassan were biologicaly siblings. Hassan was born from different mother and different social status which made him a servant. In Amir's side, this revelation conflicted his feelings. He was both outraged and also guilt. He slightly remember his witness when Hassan was being rape but he was doing nothing. Suddenly, without Rahim's recognition, Thalibs, the Afghan army bragged into Hassan house. They shooting him and his wife until dead but their child, named Sohrab, was kidnapped.

The Thalibs at that moment was controling the situation of Afghanistan. Assef, the ex neighborhood bully joined the forces. In the other place, Amir tried to find Sohrab by meeting one of the Thalibs. He found that he met Assef and Assef chalenged him for a combat. If Amir win, Assef would release Sohrab. While they were doing the combat, Sohrab helped Amir by shooting Assef in the eye with his slingshot. Then they both escape.

Amir and Sohrab manage to fly to U.S so they could live together. However, Sohrab was not the legal son of Amir. Amir hired a lawyer helping him addopt Sohrab. In the other place there was a misunderstanding. Sohrab misheard that he would be place in an orphanage. Sohrab commited suicide for feeling betrayed. Amir found Sohrab's body covered in blood. In panic, Amir vowed to become a devout muslims if God would spare Sohrab's life. Sohrab survive, but he lived in depression.

Amir and his wife tried the best to make Sohrab happy. They tried every effort. For example like playing kites, and telling Sohrab what he used to play with Hassan. Then Sohrab slowly accepted Amir and his wife as his new family.

REVIEW OF KHALED HOSSEINI'S *THE KITE RUNNER*

Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* is interesting to read in every chapter and it is one of the best novel. After reading Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*, there are two elements that become the strength points of the story such as characters and setting. The weakness of the novel is also included in this review. In this occasion, the writer will be describing those points of strength and weakness of this novel.

3.1 The Strengths of Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*

3.1.1 The Characters

The first is character. Analyzing character is one of the analyses that is very popular and interesting in discussing novel. It is almost certain that a novel speaks about the characters, how the characters react towards events. Thereby the character's presence is vitally something in novel because every character has different personality and different perspective. Hence, how they connect to each other and how the conflict rises make this novel has an exceptional story line.

1. Amir

In this novel, Amir is positioned as both the main character and the narrator. The parents of Amir were also real people. Amir came from richest family in Kabul. They were highly educational family.

Everyone agreed that my father, my Baba, had built the most beautiful house in the Wazir Akbar Khan district, a new and a fluent neighborhood in the northern part of Kabul. Some thought it was the prettiest house in Kabul (Hosseini, 2003: 4).

Amir seem to have a sensitive soul. It is seen from his taste which is relatively sentimental such as poetry and literature. However, in another side he is a competitive person. Amir always compares himself with Hassan. He envies Hassan for being more specialized and doted by his father. It makes their relationship inharmonious.

Amir's jealousy for Hassan encourage Amir to do masculine activities such as soccer, hunting, and playing kites to gain his father attention even though personally, Amir never hates Hassan. It is shown by Amir's guilt for being unable to save Hassan from being abused.

2. Hassan

In the story, Amir has a servant and also a loyal friend, his name is Hassan. Hassan is one of the important characters in the novel. Hassan's presence also presents a Hazara character in the novel. A Hazara is a social status that contained people working as servant or other educationed proffession. Amir has conflict with Hassan in the novel that has important role in developing story.

Even though Hassan grows up with educational environment, still he is illiterate like his father, Ali. Despite his illiteracy, Hassan can understand the metaphorical words whenever Amir reads poems and stories to him.

Hassan is a kind person and very loyal toward his masters. Although Hassan and Amir grow up together, Hassan still considers Amir as the one he must always serve. It is seen from how hard Hassan tries to catch a flying kite for Amir. His loyalty is seen from how Hassan tries to fight against Assef who forcefully grabs the kite off from Hassan.

It is concluded that Hassan is a hero for Amir. His strong loyalty is also shown when Hassan protects Amir's house from the Taliban that it makes Hassan and his family get shot to death. Besides, this character is a flat character; Hassan undergoes no change or development in his attitude and tends to stay the same throughout a story.

3. Baba

Baba is the father of Amir who never seems to close to each other. His wealth and his profession as a respectable businessman encourage him to always put a high pride. It is shown in his shame of having a child with a woman from a Hazara. His pride makes him decided to hide a fact that Hassan is his child from Hazara woman.

4. Rahim Khan

Rahim Khan is the right hand man of Baba. He also the best friend who always take care of Baba's family, especially Hassan. He is the one who knows everything about Baba's story of life, and he also shares Baba's secret about Hassan to Amir.

5. Assef

Assef is the antagonist character of this novel. He is a member of Taliban who idolizes Adolf Hitler. He is the character who enjoys the violence to people who are weak and powerless, for example Hassan.

6. Soraya

Soraya is Amir's wife who is always support Amir in every single part. Because of unable to have a child, she is kind to adopt Sohrab, Son of Hassan and Farjana Jan.

7. Sohrab

Sohrab is the son of Hassan who is also a Hazara. Sohrab's basic personality is silent, just like his father. However, a dramatic incident that happens to his family leaves him a great loss and fear. It is shown when he gets more silent after the death of his parents. His fearful and fragile soul is also seen when he easily decides to commit suicide when he thinks that Amir would leave him in an orphanage.

3.1.2 Setting

The second strengths of the novel is the setting. *The kite Runner* is set in the year of 1975 and it takes place in Afghanistan. On the other hand I consider that the book contains about the situation in Afghanistan. The novel describes and shows when the people lived in the atmosphere of war.

We stayed huddled that way until the early hours of the morning. The shootings and explosions had lasted less than an hour, but they had frightened us badly, because none of us had ever heard gunshot in the streets. They were foreign sound to us then. The generation of Afghan children whose ears would know nothing but the sounds of bombs and gunfire was not yet born. Huddled together in the diningroom and waiting for the sun to rise, none of us

had any notion that a way of live had ended (Hosseini, 2003: 28).

With these events, the readers could imagine how the children lived in the city that was full with sound of gun and bombing. The war situation that is set in this novel also depicts the extreme psychological effect that occurs onto the children.

The situation of this story is in the middle of the war which is forcefully dominated by the Thalib, Afghan's local army. In this setting, the readers are able to imagine the pressure that happens to the Afghan society and how the Thalib's domination suppresses them. It shown in the event when the Thalibs massacred the Hazara in Mazara-i-Sharif (Hossein, 2003: 187). Hassan and his family live alone. The Thalibs come to claim the house. Hassan always protests, but, the Talibs take him to the street and shot them. Hassan tries to fight against the Thalibs to maintain that house. The Thalibs do not believe that they live in the big house, because they think that Hassan as Hazara is a liar, a thief. So, the Thalibs shoot them.

"A pair of Talib oficals came to investigate and interrogated Hassan. They accused him of lying when Hassan told them he was living with me even though many of the neighbors, including the one who called me, supported Hassanís story. The Talibs said he was a liar and a thief like all Hazaras and ordered him to get his family out of the house by sundown. Hassan protested. But my neighbor said the Talibs were looking at the big house like-how did he say it?-yes, like wolves looking at a flock of sheep.They told Hassan they would be moving in to supposedly keep it safe until I return. Hassan protested again. So they took him to the street" (Hosseini, 2003: 192).

As most people know that the middle-east countries are so closed with their battles, it encourages the readers to imagine about the war and the pressure that happens in its society. If *The Kite Runner* took place in the modern days or in another country, the readers would not automatically imagine the war situation. How the different place can affect the plot's situation is also shown in this novel when Amir moves to U.S and gets his life into much better condition.

3.2 The Weakness of Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*

Despite the dramatic story line that becomes the strength of *The Kite Runner*, the writer also figures out the weakness of this novel. The extreme battle situation which is included relatively many times in this novel makes *The Kite Runner* involves some frontal scenes. These scenes includes homosexuality and sexual abuse that is done by Assef to Hassan..

Assef knelt behind Hassan, put his hands on Hassan's hips and lifted his bare buttocks. He kept one hand on Hassan's back undid his own belt buckle with his free hand. He unzipped his jeans. Dropped his underwear. He positioned himself behind Hassan. Hassan didn't struggle. Didn't even whimper (Hosseini, 2003 : 64).

Frontal words are also shown when Assef mocks Hassan with terrible names to bully and abuse him.

Assef gritted his teeth. "Put it down,you motherless Hazara." (Hosseini, 2003 : 34).

" A loyal Hazara. Loyal as a dog , " Assef said. Kamal's laugh was a shrill, nervous sound (Hosseini, 2003: 61).

He moved his head slightly and I caught a glympse of his face. Saw the resignation in it. It was look I had seen before. It was the look of the lamb (Hosseini, 2003 : 64).

The writer finds that homosexuality and sexual abuse scene as the weakness of the novel because this scene is done by Assef who is still under-age. Meanwhile, most people would consider that children are still innocent and far from sinful action. That is why this scene could give the reader notorious image onto the children in the middle-east.

4

CONCLUSION

Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* tells about a loyalty of a friendship in the middle of the war. The conflict happens a lot between Amir and Hassan that makes them become the main characters in this story. Moreover, it also slightly talks about son's dedications towards his father. It does talk about fear and guilt, but at the same time it talks about a sacrifice. The novel provides moral values as the strength and also weakness of the novel. It is a bit difficult to find the lack of this novel because it has supporting characters with names that rarely heard from *The Kite Runner* story that make this story exceptional.

As we know that the characters and the setting are part of the strength of this novel,

abusive scene is included as one of the conflicts that happens in *The Kite Runner*. Abusive situation that is included makes *The Kite Runner* more realistic and interesting to read although it is also the weakness of this novel because of frontal words which are included in the scene. Hence, this frontal scene makes this novel is not suitable for all the readers.

The Kite Runner is also an informative novel. From its story, the readers notice the social condition in the middle-east and how the army of Afghanistan suppresses the country into an endless war. The different social status that classify the people in Afghanistan is also included as one of the conflicts that happen to Afgan society.

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