

**SOCIAL AND MORAL RESPONSIBILITY
IN KHALED HOSSEINI'S *THE KITE RUNNER*:
SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH**



RESEARCH PAPER

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

The Kite Runner novel is a novel which depicted the Afghanistan condition from fall of the monarchy in Afghanistan through the Soviet invasion, the mass exodus of refugees to Pakistan and the United States, and the rise of the Taliban regime. It is a novel by the author Khaled Hosseini, who is the author of #2 Bestseller, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. It was published in 2003 by Bloomsbury Publishing PLC. *The Kite Runner* is Hosseini's first novel and was adapted into a film of the same name in 2007.

Khaled Hosseini was born on March 4, 1965 in Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan as the oldest of five children. His father worked for the Afghan Foreign Ministry as a diplomat, and his mother was a high school teacher of Farsi and history. When he was five years old, his family moved from Kabul to Tehran, Iran. They returned to Kabul in the historic year of 1973, when Afghanistan became a republic. In 1976, his family followed his father to Paris. After the PDPA (the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan) seized control of the government in 1978 and the Soviets occupied Afghanistan shortly thereafter, Hosseini family decided to seek political asylum in the United States instead of returning to Kabul. They moved to San Jose, California, where Hosseini graduated from high school. He attended Santa Clara University and earned a degree in biology. After college, he decided to

become physician and started write *The Kite Runner* (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khaled_Hosseini).

The Kite Runner tells the story of Amir, a young pasthun boy from Wazir Akbar Khan district of kabul and Hassan, a hazara and the son of Amir's father's servant. They spend their days in a peaceful Kabul. Amir's father (who is generally referred to as *Baba*, "daddy") loves both the boys, but he seems critical of Amir for not being manly enough. Amir also fears his father blames him for his mother's death during childbirth. However, he has a kind father figure in the form of Rahim Khan, Baba's friend, who understands Amir better, and is supportive of his interest in writing stories.

Hassan is a successful kite runner for Amir. One triumphant day, Amir wins the local tournament, and finally Baba's praise. Hassan goes to run the last cut kite. Unfortunately, Hassan runs into Assef who is a notoriously mean, violent older boy with sadistic tendencies and blames Amir for socializing with a Hazara. Hassan refuses to give up Amir's kite, so Assef exacts his revenge, assaulting and anally raping him. Wondering why Hassan is taking so long, Amir searches for Hassan and hides when he hears Assef's voice. He witnesses the rape but is too scared to help him. Afterwards, for some time Hassan and Amir keep a distance from each other. Amir reacts indifferently because he feels ashamed, and is frustrated by Hassan's saint-like behavior. Already jealous of Baba's love for Hassan, he worries if Baba knew how bravely Hassan defended Amir's kite, and how cowardly Amir acted, that

Baba's love for Hassan would grow even more. Finally he forces Hassan and his father to leave.

Five years later, the Russians invade Afghanistan; Amir and Baba escape to Peshawar, Pakistan and then to Fremont, California. Amir embarks on a successful career as a novelist. Fifteen years after wedding Amir receive a call from Rahim Khan. He ask Amir to come to Pakistan. From Rahim Khan, Amir learns the fates of Hassan and his father. Hassan's father was killed by a land mine. Hassan had a wife and a son, named Sohrab, and had returned to Baba's house as a caretaker at Rahim Khan's request. One day the Taliban ordered him to give it up and leave, but he refused, and was murdered, along with his wife. Rahim Khan reveals that Ali was not really Hassan's father. Hassan was actually the son of Baba, therefore Amir's half-brother. Finally, Rahim Khan tells Amir that the true reason he has called Amir to Pakistan is to go to Kabul to rescue Hassan's son, Sohrab, from an orphanage.

The Kite Runner novel has grown many comments from the people that have watched it and most of them give positive response about the novel. For example a response comes from Leslie Joseph, America.

“The Kite Runner is an intricate, touching, and universal story. As an American who considers my self fairly well informed, I was just astonished to see how deeply Hosseini's story affected me. Truly a treasure, and get the tissue out for the frequent tears of joy, horror, and redemption”. (<http://www.powells.com/biblio?isbn=1594480001>).

The positive response also comes from Rachael, England.

“This is a beautifully told story that a lot of people are sure to enjoy. I read it with my book club and there were mixed reactions. I enjoyed

the way the author writes. His words were so beautifully phrased and crafted. It's a very worth while read. This story will stay with you for a long time. Some people will love the narrator and some will hate him. Try this book. You won't regret it".
(<http://www.powells.com/biblio?isbn=1594480001>).

The Kite Runner novel becomes the first best seller in 2005 in the United States, according to Nielsen Bookscan. It was also voted 2006's reading group book of the year. Hosseini's first novel headed a list of 60 titles submitted by entrants to the Penguin/ Orange Reading Group prize (UK). *The Kite Runner* translated into 42 languages. This novel also received a lot of praise from the publisher. One of the praise is come from The New York Times Book Review, they stated that *The Kite Runner* is powerful first novel that tell story of fierce cruelty and fierce yet redeeming love. Both transform the life of Amir, Khaled hosseini's privileged young narrator, who comes of age during the last peaceful days of the monarchy, just before his country's revolution and its invasion by Russian forces. But political events, even as dramatic as the ones that are presented in *The Kite Runner*, are only part of this story. In *The Kite Runner*, Khaled Hosseini gives us a vivid and engaging story that reminds us how long his people have been struggling to triumph over the forces of violence-forces that continue to threaten them even today (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Kite_Runner). San Antonio Express-news also said that *The Kite Runner* is not so much a story of Mideast politics...as it is a story of life in beautiful country torn asunder. Through his characters and the plot, which is captivating and at times quite disturbing, Hosseini offers a

lesson on his culture and the history of his beloved homeland (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Kite_Runner).

The Kite Runner novel contains many aspects which are interesting to be studied. Some of them are portrays the ethnical discrimination in Afghanistan, Taliban regime issues, and social and moral responsibility between the main characters. The first appeal is ethnical discrimination in Afghanistan between Psthun and Hazara. The Psthuns and the Hazaras has been divided throughout time and has resulted in several class conflicts through the afghan history. In Afghanistan Psthun has high position in society than Hazara. Hazaras have faced several wars and forced displacements. Since the beginnings of modern Afghanistan in the mid 18th century, Hazaras have faced persecution from the Pashtuns and have been forced to flee from many parts of today's Afghanistan to Hazarajat.

The second interesting point is about Taliban regime issues characterized by Assef. The Taliban initially enjoyed enormous good will from Afghans weary of the corruption, brutality, and incessant fighting of Mujahideen warlords but in *The Kite Runner* Hosseini made Assef as a Taliban member viewed in bad light.

The third is social and moral responsibility shown in the the relationship between Amir and Hassan. It shows how Amir was afraid to be Hassan's true friend because he was jealous of his father's affection for Hassan and because Hassan was a faithful, honest person. Hassan was a person Amir hoped to be one day. This social phenomena shown in *The Kite Runner*

makes the researcher interested to analyze the social and moral responsibility in Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* by using the sociological approach and proposes to conduct a research entitle **SOCIAL AND MORAL RESPONSIBILITY IN KHALED HOSSEINI'S *THE KITE RUNNER* : SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH.**

B. Literary Review

So far, a study about social and moral responsibility in Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* has not been studied yet by the students of UNS of Surakarta, UMS of Surakarta, and UGM of Jogjakarta, especially which is related to sociological perspective. Based on this statement the writer is interested in analyzing this novel by using sociological approach.

C. Problem Statement

The problem in this research is: How the social and moral responsibility is reflected in Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*.

D. Limitation of the Study

To make the research appropriate with the objectives of the Study, the writer will make a limitation to the research. The writer will only focus on

how social and moral responsibility reflected in Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* by using Sociological approach.

E. Objective of the Study

The objectives of the study are as follow:

1. To analyze the novel based on its structural elements.
2. To analyze social and moral responsibility reflected in Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* by using sociological approach.

F. Benefits of the Study

The benefits of the study are expected from this study are follow:

1. Theoretical Benefit

By doing this research, the writer wants to have contribution in criticizing a literary work and producing criticism as objective as the writer can.

2. Practical Benefit

This research is expected to give the writer's understanding about social and moral responsibility in Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* novel.

G. Research Method

The research method of this research paper is broken down into four aspects:

1. Type of the Research

The type of the study is Khaled Hosseini's novel in *The Kite Runner*.

2. Type of the Data and Data Source

In this study, there are two kinds of data. There are primary data and secondary data.

a. Primary data source

The primary data source is the novel *The Kite Runner* written by Khaled Hosseini, published in Afghanistan. The primary data taken from the ideas, way of thinking, attitudes, and the whole narration, in the novel and the dialogues between and among the character that are relevant to the subject matter this research.

b. Secondary data source

Secondary data source are taken from other sources such as the author's biography, essay, comment, historical information and other relevant information.

3. Technique of data collection

The data collection technique used in the study is the library research; the necessary steps are as follow:

a. Reading the novel.

b. Taking note of the important parts in both primary and secondary sources.

c. Classifying the data by rejecting the irrelevant information which doesn't support the topic of the study.

4. Technique of the Data Analysis

In analyzing the data, the writer employs descriptive analysis. It is begun with the author and his work, the structure analysis of the novel, and finally sociological analysis of the literary work.

H. Research Paper Organization

In order to make it easier to follow The research paper is organized into six chapters, as follows: Chapter One is introduction, covering background of the study, the problem of the study, the objective of the study, the benefit of the study, review of the literary study, research method and the thesis organization. Chapter Two covers the underlying theory consisting of the principle theory of sociology of literature and structural elements of the novel. Chapter Three includes the social background of America in the early twentieth and the late twenty first century. Chapter Four includes the structural analysis of the novel by describing character and characterization, setting, point of view, plot, and theme of the novel and a brief discussion. Chapter Five presents sociological analysis of the novel. Chapter Six consists of conclusion and suggestion.