

## **Predilection and Treachery in Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner***

**Ms. E. Vinothana**

II MA English, Department of English  
Dr. NGP Arts & Science College (Autonomous)  
Coimbatore

**Mrs. M. Kavitha**

Assistant Professor, Department of English  
Dr. NGP Arts & Science College (Autonomous)  
Coimbatore

### **Abstract**

The Kite Runner is a debut novel by Afghan-American author Khaled Hosseini. The story evokes the vehemence of people through love and loyalty to Hassan and makes people angry about the betrayal of Amir. The author projects love and loyalty in friendship and betrayal for the truth, and guilt to redemption in the story. Love is shown in two different ways, love between two boys of the same age and love between Father and son. Baba's intimacy made him guilty that his love is not the same for both of his sons. Amir's desire to win the love of his father made him display betrayal to Hassan. Amir is longing for the love of his father which made him an egoist person. This paper makes evidence of fidelity and betrayal because of love. Love can make a person sightless, where it can give both the tastes of sweet and sour. A person with love and a kind heart can create a wave of peace throughout the world. Sometimes, when love is denied, hate and betrayal knock on the door. This paper attempts to describe what friendship, sacrifice and betrayal is.

**Keywords:** Betrayal, Guilt, Kite-running, Love, Loyalty.

The Kite Runner is a novel written by Afghan-American novelist Khaled Hosseini. Hosseini began writing this novel in 2001 after he came to know that the Taliban put an end to the kite tournament. The author made himself a protagonist in the name of Amir. Two boys Amir and Hassan are the souls of the story, and the themes are closely associated with them. The novel was published in the year 2003 by Riverhead Books in Great Britain. The first half of the novel deals with the invasion of Russia into Afghanistan and the second half of the novel with the Taliban's attack on Afghanistan where Amir is trying to free away from his guilt by finding the thing which a world cannot grant him.

The Kite Runner enjoys the bestseller list for two years in New York Times and seven million copies were sold in the United States. The novel completely received optimistic reviews from countries like India, South Africa, Sydney, and London. It was adapted into a film in 2007. The novel was awarded the Exclusive Books Boeke Prize in 2004. Tony Sims from Wired Magazine wrote that the book, "reveals the beauty and agony of a tormented nation as it tells the story of an improbable friendship between two boys from opposite ends of society, and of the troubled but enduring relationship between a father and son".

Through this novel, Hosseini depicts the relationship between father and son. People in their salad days should enjoy the warmth of both father and mother. But in this story, both Amir and Hassan don't feel the love of their mother during their childhood, the only parental love is their father's. Hosseini explores the theme of love and betrayal through different situations and surroundings. All the characters in the novel are interconnected with love and treachery but the two major characters Amir and Hassan dealt with friendship, love, and infidelity.

The complexity of various types of love is shown in *The Kite Runner*. Hassan's love towards Amir is selfless and unbound. Hassan is a year younger than Amir but his activities toward Amir look elder to him. The two boys are within the same walls but their life is completely different. Hassan is lower in the state but he is mightier than Amir. Hosseini depicts different lifestyles in the same circumstances through characters like Amir, Hassan, Baba, and Ali. Hassan is a character who never hurts anyone, "Hassan was true to his nature: He was incapable of hurting

anyone (10).” He is considered to be a flat character because he is very lovely and not complicated. Amir is the only closest friend of Hassan in his childhood days.

Hassan and Amir are closely associated with the characters like Huckleberry and Tom in Mark Twain’s *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. “I wish there was a moat to this cabin. If we get time, the night of the escape, we’ll dig one (272).” Tom and Huck’s adventure is analogous to Amir and Hassan’s excursion in the streets of Wazir Akbar Khan. Hassan was an illiterate who always used Amir to read him stories. Their favorite story was *Roshtam and Sohrab*, which Hassan asks for once again. Amir is loved by everyone in the family and the love of Hassan made him feel more impregnable.

Hassan was known to be an innocent character from the beginning till the end of the novel. When Amir hits Hassan with pomegranate continuously, he stood on a stand, and finally, Hassan asked “Are you satisfied? Do you feel better? (87)” This shows the innocence of Hassan and love towards Amir. Hassan always used to do the household chores and also help Amir to get ready for his school and he loved to do that in his lifetime. He always believed in the friendship of Amir, when Assef and his friends assaulted him about his religion but his strong nature induces him to tell that he and Amir Agha are friends.

Hassan does not have the ability to read or write but he has the capacity to read Amir like a mirror. This can be witnessed in the scenes of a kite tournament day. When Amir was confused about flying kite on the day of the tournament, Hassan was the one who said it was a beautiful day and he is going to win the tournament. A true friend will stand beside in all inflexible situations, likewise, Hassan would stand before Baba for Amir. Though he was insulted by Amir manytimes, he never hurt him rather he loved him to a greater extent. “The essence of friendship is entireness, a total magnanimity, and trust”. This line by Emerson in the essay *Friendship* tells about the true nature of friendship, Hassan is the one who endures the true nature of friendship.

Honesty and loyalty are the main keys to all kinds of relationships. Hassan is a well-known character for honesty and loyalty. His loyalty is beheld on the day of the tournament. Hassan was

the greatest kite runner in the town. He had the ability to find the direction of the kite without visioning it. His love and loyalty break all the struggles only for Amir. He was sexually assaulted by Assef and his friends but he did not free his hands without the kite and Amir to win the tournament completely. His words like, "For you a thousand times over!" (63) were the evidence to bring the blue kite to Amir and he did it by facing non-degradable pain.

Amir's love in the novel is unspeakable. His love for Baba is always denied but he never stopped to show his love to his father. His love for Hassan is shown in the last pages of the novel. Ultimately, when he came to know that Hassan is his blood brother, he loved him more and showed his intimacy to Hassan's son Sohrab after the death of Hassan and his wife. Hassan's love for his friend is evident even in his adulthood. He named his son Sohrab after his favorite story *Roshtam and Sohrab* in his childhood. He wrote a letter to Amir on his own and proved his love and sacrifice are worth it. All the lives in the world are interconnected with love.

Betrayal never comes from outside. Similarly, in the novel, *The Kite Runner* treachery is from a loyal friend. Sometimes, betrayal comes out when their love is not recognized. Amir was the one whose love was not recognized by his father which made him betray his friend's love and loyalty. Hassan was betrayed from his birth till the death of his life. His innocence was questioned from the beginning of the novel. His mother Sanaubar fled away when he was born. The one who has more love and truth will be betrayed. The life of Hassan was challenged when he was in Kabul.

Amir though has betrayed his father by killing his mother and wife of Baba. He tries to redeem his sin by doing what Baba desires. There is a saying that Hazaras will have a cleft lip. When Baba tries to cure his cleft lip by arranging a famous doctor from India. Amir became jealous of Hassan which made him hate and betray Amir, there starts intramural combat in the heart of Amir. When Baba tries to treat Hassan equally to Amir, Amir became desperate. Amir is considered to be a round character who tries to fool everyone in the family. He tries to grab the attention of Baba and used the innocence of Hassan for that.

On the day of the tournament, Hosseini introduces the title through an event kite running. Hassan was the best kite runner in the town. To show love and loyalty, he was sexually assaulted by

Assef and his friends. Amir had the capacity and chance to save Hassan from the assault but he was hesitant and stopped himself from saving Hassan from the harassment. Because he doesn't want him to interfere with the consequences. According to Erikson's theory, at the fourth stage, children will feel industrious when they won and they will develop inferiority feelings. This stage is completely related to Amir's life, when he won the tournament he was fulfilled and felt industrious.

Amir was shown in both the positive and negative character, where he tries to prove his love through innocence but he chooses the wrong path to deserve the love of his father. At the beginning of the novel, Hosseini explains Hassan as a Chinese doll through Amir, this shows Amir is not innocent but he has hate towards Hassan. Even after the great betrayal, he threw pomegranate at Hassan but he proved love is eternal. When Amir turned thirteen, his father turned a large party, where Ali and Hassan were working hard for his birthday party. Though he was glad to enjoy the party, he felt inferior that everything his father did was a halfhearted one.

When a person did not get love from their loved one, they may change into a monster. In that case, Amir is the young boy who longed for the love of his father turned into a monster by betraying Hassan. Amir tried to make Hassan a thief in front of Baba. "I went downstairs, crossed the yard, and entered Ali and Hassan's living quarters by the loquat tree. I lifted Hassan's mattress and planted my new watch and a handful of Afghani bills under it (97)." In these lines, Hosseini tells about the vengeance and mastermind of Amir.

Amir made a shameful lie that Hassan was the one who steal the watch but Baba was not sure that Hassan would take that. Everyone believed that Hassan never said a lie but this time it was a sacrifice to Amir and said yes to the theft. "Hassan's reply was a single word, delivered in a thin, raspy voice: Yes (97)". Though Amir's heart sank he felt that if Baba did not accept Hassan's reply, he would be in a problem. His evilness is encountered when he was glad that Hassan would go away and he will be happy with his father.

He was on the way to starting a new chapter in his life but when Baba said "I forgive you (98)". Amir was completely shattered by the words of Baba and thinking about the past that Baba said

that theft was an unforgettable sin. But Amir was unaware that Hassan is his father's son when Ali said they are leaving the house in his broken voice, Amir was partially happy and he knows he was doing the greatest betrayal to his loyal friend. Betrayal by Amir starts with Baba when he betrayed Ali and showed some hatred toward Amir. Ultimately, Baba was a lovable character with an obscure soul.

Hosseini estimates both love and drawback of showing immense love towards someone. Amir in his adulthood tries to redeem his guilt but the betrayal he did in his childhood was completely unsatisfied and unforgettable. Hosseini explained two different characters with two different behaviors. Hassan was an innocent character and Amir longed for love and did betrayal to Hassan. Amir's life is closely connected to Erikson's theories of life. Though *The Kite Runner* was a fictionalized one it was a heart-touching story by Hosseini which evokes people's emotions. Though Amir did betray Hassan he felt apologized for what he did and he searched to redeem his soul.

### **Works Cited**

Hosseini, Khaled. "The Kite Runner." Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013.

Twain, Mark. "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer." The American Publishing Company, 1876. Erikson, Erik. "Childhood and Society." W. W. Norton & Co, 1950.

Khadawardi, Hesham. "Superego guilt, Redemption and Atonement in Khaled Hosseini's The Kite Runner." International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education, Vol. 4, February 2017.