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Timed Essay: Prompt #3 (Rewrite)

With an underdeveloped mind and a naive thought process, the decisions we make throughout our youth aren't always the best ones for ourselves, as well as those surrounding us. Often, they're decisions that tug at our inner-self—conscience, even—into our young adulthood; this truth is extremely evident in Khaled Hosseini's Middle-Eastern novel, The Kite Runner. Hosseini's main character—Amir—witnesses not only his best friend, but his Hazara, Hassan, get raped by an infamous bully in their village. It was not only the witnessing of this crime that haunted him, it was the mere fact that he had the chance to do something, anything to put a stop to it, and something within himself prevented him from doing just that. This lack of integrity rips his mind to shreds leaving this young boy to deal with the guilt and longing for redemption this past event has left him to deal with for the remainder of the novel.

The decisions we make as children and into young adulthood are often not the smartest ones, Amir had one of these moments in which he made the worst decision—or lack thereof—of his life, and it haunted him for the remainder of Hosseini's novel. Amir's best friend, who was also his "Hazara" was running a kite for Amir, one of the many things he would do for Amir "one thousand times over" as he states numerous times throughout their childhood. Shortly after

finding the kite, Hassan is raped by another boy, a bully from their village named Assef. Amir, Hassan's so called "best friend" witnessed the whole thing.

Amir was constantly picked on for having such a strong friendship with a boy of the lower social class (Hassan) with himself (Amir) being an extremely wealthy Afghan. This held him back from doing so many things with his best friend. The friendship between Hassan and Amir is, in and of itself, one HUGE critique of social classes—or social "rank" if you prefer; it is this past event coming to light that brings this theme to the reader's attention. Not only was it this critique of social class that kept Amir from doing just friendly things with Hassan, it was what kept him from stepping in, what kept him from putting a stop to the raping of his best friend.

This past event was nothing of the past for Amir, flashbacks of his best friend being raped constantly flooded his mind, leaving him with nothing but a guilty conscience. After Hassan was raped, Amir couldn't even look Hassan in the eye, he'd lost his best friend, and it was no one's fault other than his own. Amir began treating Hassan like the lower class citizen all outsiders saw him as, he was no longer a friend, he was simply a Hazara to Amir now; but why? Because Amir's guilty conscience couldn't handle treating a boy who'd do anything for him "one thousand times over" with any respect, knowing what he'd done (or hadn't done) to that very same boy. This past event becomes such a problem for Amir that his inner-self can't handle seeing Hassan on a daily basis anymore, so Amir takes advantage of his higher social rank and frames Hassan for stealing a plethora of his personal items, leaving Baba—Amir's father—with no other choice but to kick them out, all because Amir couldn't handle the fact that he did absolutely NOTHING to help his best friend the one time *he* needed *him*. It was the critique of social classes that held Amir back from doing anything to help Hassan—it broke their friendship,

but it was his own guilty conscience that pushed him over the edge; he'd lost control of his own mind, and this loss of control caused him to take regretful action, one he attempted to make right for the remainder of Hosseini's novel.

Often when we make a bad decision in our past, we spend immense amounts of time trying to redeem ourselves for what we've done, or in Amir's case, what he didn't do. As Amir grows older, and his state of mind matures, he begins to realize that social classes are just a state of mind, and that his friendship with his Hazara (Hassan) is what should have mattered the most to him. In a sense, Amir is somewhat of a tragic hero in his adulthood, his hamartia being no attempt in stopping the rape of Hassan, and the death being that of a friendship, his best friendship, with redemption being the fuel to his heroic fire.

Amir decides to go on a quest to reconnect with Hassan, Rahim Khan tells Amir that he has decided to search for Hassan due to his own loneliness. To his disappointment however, Hassan had been murdered by the Taliban, but Hassan's son was still alive. Amir, taking the guilt of this past event head-on, with no thought of social divide in his mind, decides that he will not only find, but care for Hassan's son like his own, in hopes that it will relieve the guilt from the past even that continuously haunts. Even now we see that Amir is acting very selfishly; he is not doing this out of the good of his heart, but for his own pleasure. Selfishly, he is hoping that taking care of Hassan's son after his death will make what he did when they were both boys okay. Still, Amir's need for redemption continues to fuel his fire. Amir finds that Hassan's son has been kidnapped by the Taliban, but not just any member of the Taliban, the same boy from his childhood, the bully that raped his best friend, Assef. Their reconnection is—in a way—bittersweet. The boy that has haunted Amir's childhood memories his entire life is standing

directly in front of him. Assef tells Amir that the only way he'd get Hassan's son and escape the compound was a fight to the death, Amir accepts. A bit into the fight, Amir's fist meets Hassan's face, this punch wasn't just a punch, this punch was the symbolization of Amir's freedom from Assef, the freedom from being haunted by him anymore, the freedom from the guilt he'd been carrying around with him his entire life; he'd defeated Assef, and rescued Sohrab (Hassan's son), Amir could once again find happiness.

Khaled Hosseini's novel is a very complex one filled with copious life lessons. I believe that Hosseini uses the friendship between two young boys to display both a critique of the social divide within our society today as well as a delineation to the reader of a past event within our lives that can and will taunt our consciences. Hosseini writes to portray to the reader that there is and will be a way out, there will be an opportunity to free your conscience just as Amir had the opportunity to do. It's up to us to seize this opportunity.