The Kite Runner Essay

Set during the rough times of the Taliban’s reign of terror in Afghanistan and Afghanistan’s war with Russia, Khaled Hosseini’s novel *The Kite Runner* takes us through the agonizing journey the main character Amir makes as he struggles to gain redemption from his past sins, as well as gain the acceptance of his father, Baba. Hosseini shows us the death of a child’s innocence when Amir horrifically witnesses his best friend, Hassan, getting raped and does nothing to stop it because society’s social rankings hold him back. This death of Amir’s innocence propels the story forward by pushing Amir to come to extreme measures in order to rid himself of the guilt pressing down on him, and allows the theme of redemption to be displayed through his desperate journey. Hosseini employs the device of imagery throughout his novel, which allows the characters to come alive off the pages, and aids us in truly understanding the immense suffering and pain the novel’s characters endure.

When Amir saw Hassan’s assault, he was unwillingly flung into a risky situation, and took the route that killed his innocence, the one that later led to his strong need for redemption. He had the option to save his friend, or run, and in the end, he ran because Hassan possessed a lower social class title than he. “I always felt like Baba hated me a little…I ran because I was a coward…maybe Hassan was the price I had to pay, the lamb I had to slay to win Baba”(77), said Amir. Hosseini shows us the desperation Amir had for his father’s acceptance; we see Amir will do anything to gain that much needed respect from his father. Many years later, after Amir traveled to America, the “place to
bury (his) memories" (129), the memory of what he did to Hassan still haunted him every day. He desperately wanted to shake the guilt he felt for how he "betrayed Hassan, lied, (drove) him out" (165), and lacked the courage to confess his sin to anybody. The drive for redemption stayed ever-present in his life.

Later, as Amir learned of Hassan’s death, Hosseini portrays to us the overall reigning theme of redemption again as Amir struggled to do anything to atone for the sins of his Afghanistan life, and the wretched day he was stripped of innocence. “The past had come calling… from this, one last chance at redemption” (231) he stated, as the opportunity presented itself for him to save Hassan’s son and make up for the years of malicious internal commentaries and horrible actions he expressed towards Hassan. This time the chance knocked on his door, he decided to step up and accepted the challenge, possessing much longed-for courage. His “hands were stained with Hassan’s blood” (346), and he did not want to “let them get stained with the blood of his (Hassan’s) boy too” (346). Although Amir saved Hassan’s son, Sohrab, Sohrab would not do so much as to even speak with Amir. This aloofness saddened Amir; he felt alone, and sometimes did not even remember Sohrab’s presence in his life. But, Amir’s final attempt at receiving full redemption came in the form of kite running with Sohrab. It opened up both of their hearts and allowed them both to experience long-absent true happiness, shown through something as seemingly insignificant as “a smile,” and the innocence that had died within Amir so many years before that kite running day returned, as he “ran” one more time, chasing a free-flying kite, just like Hassan and he had done as little, innocent children. Amir’s journey for feeling redeemed from betraying Hassan had come to the end of the
road, as he shared with Sohrab his long dead, newly resurrected innocence that lay in the simple strings of a kite.

Hosseini employs the literary device of imagery throughout *The Kite Runner*, and gives us vivid images of the character and scenes contained within his novel. Right at the onset of his story, he dives us into the imagery that so often elegantly shows on his pages. "His body was tossed and hurled in the stampede...finally rolling to a stop...he twitched once and lay motionless, his legs bent at unnatural angles, a pool of blood soaking through the sand"(21), spoke Amir, relaying to us the horror of a young cowboy's situation. With this writing technique, Hosseini presents to us the opportunity to immerse ourselves in his text, and allows us to brilliantly see the varying characters and situations in his novel. Later, during an intense scene near the end of the novel, we become fully engrossed in the immense intensity present as Hosseini shows us the "blood (that) oozed between his (Assef's) fingers...and something white gel-like...vitreous fluid"(291). As Amir fights a severe battle, one step towards gaining redemption, we see, hear, and feel every action and detail. Hosseini's use of imagery depicts these scenes in our heads, and gives us the image, pristine in our minds.

Khaled Hosseini displays a wonderful story of Amir's long, winding quest he makes to atone for his sins from that day in Afghanistan he stood by, did nothing, and lost all innocence. This death and disappearance of innocence led Amir to cleave for forgiveness, for the lifting of the weights he felt so heavily from guilt, and created the theme of redemption throughout the novel. Through the use of imagery, the words come to life in our minds, and give us a fuller understanding of the book. Part of Amir died the day he did nothing to save Hassan, and the cause of that death led him to strive to do
anything to patch up those wounds. Amir finally achieved his goal, lived through a re-
birth of innocence and happiness, and in turn, gained the entity he so desperately wanted, 
the theme throughout the novel: redemption.

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