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Journal of English Language and Education

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**Journal of English Language and Education (JELE)**, to appear twice a year (in June and December) for lecturers, teachers and students, is published by the Unit of Scientific Publishing and Intellectual Property Rights, Mercu Buana University of Yogyakarta. This journal welcomes articles which have never been published elsewhere and are not under consideration for publication in other journals at the same time. Articles should be original and typed, 1.5 spaced, about 10-20 pages of quarto-sized (A4), and written in English. For the brief guidelines, it is attached in the end of this journal.

## **PREFACE**

We proudly present a *Journal of English Language and Education (JELE) Vol.2 No.2*, which is envisioned to represent the growing needs of linguistics, literature, and education in English. This journal is written by practitioners and researchers to share their knowledge and solution in the area, to identify new issues and to shape future directions for research.

This journal comprises seven articles dealing with linguistics, literature and English education. They are categorized into pragmatic analysis, English literature, technology development in teaching, and techniques as well as approaches that lead to English teaching development.

This journal would not have been possible without the great support of the Editorial Board members; hence, we would like to express our sincere thanks to all of them. We also would like to thank to all writers who have contributed to this journal content. It is our hope that this fine collection of articles will be a valuable resource for English language and education readers and will stimulate further research into the area.

Yogyakarta, December 2016

Editor

**DAFTAR ISI**

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## **SOCIAL CLASS CONFLICT PRESENTED IN “THE KITE RUNNER” NOVEL BASED ON MARXISM THEORY**

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### **Abstract**

The writer conducts the research related to class conflict which is presented in Khaled Hosseini's "The Kite Runner" novel. This qualitative research is written to analyze the conflicts that happen in Afghan society which is mainly caused by difference of social class. The research is conducted by using library research. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative method as the data are described in the form of sentences. The steps of collecting the data in this research are reading both the novel and the supporting theories related, analyzing, organizing and displaying the data to allow conclusions to be drawn.

The results show that the society in the twentieth is fundamentally separated by two large groups namely Pashtun and Hazara. They are inhabit Afghanistan as told in *The Kite Runner*. The Pashtuns act as the dominant upper class and the Hazaras fill the society of the lower class which fits the theory of Marxism.

**Keywords :** the kite runner, khaled hosseini, marxism, class conflict

### **INTRODUCTION**

Indonesia is a multicultural country as it consists of many tribes, cultures, ethnics, religions, and islands. The diversities that may result in different cases of point of view, social economic status, backgrounds, and even their class in society in this country are more likely lead to various conflicts. The conflicts may create imbalance of social interaction in the society which involves three components of society: activities, people and places.

Coser (as cited in Sills, 1968: 232) says that social conflict may be defined as a struggle over values or claim to status, power and scarce resource in which the aims of conflicting parties are not only to gain the desires values but also to neutralize, injure, or eliminate their rivals. Socially, there is always a conflict because conflict is common in social interactions and it is a way of understanding society. A social conflict that happens in

society is usually caused by many factors such as wealth, status, power and authority which may influence the social class which similar to what has been taking place in Myanmar. There are roughly 8000 Muslim Rohingya refugees who are seeking for help from any forms of genocide in Myanmar. Islamophobic has spread in Myanmar resulting descrimination towards Muslim in Rohingya.

Different backgrounds between two tribes or ethnics often trigger such an endless animosity. Both case mentioned above are reflecting the difficulties of integration between people with different backgrounds. Portrait of social life is commonly described in literary works. Theoretically, all literary works are sociological or contextual in nature because in process of creation, an author combines a number of situations, conditions and future aspirations with the past impression (image) that represents his world view,

experience, and norms which came from the society with its uniqueness (Subhan, 2003: 41).

The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini discusses conflicts about social life in Afghanistan, particularly about social class starting from when Afghanistan was back then a lovely homeland until The Soviet invasion in the end of 1979. The imbalance of social condition impacts the social conflict in the society. The social conflict in the society will influence the condition in the certain society. According to Hall (2001:73), "Marxist and materialist analysis is rooted in historical research and changing social context for understanding literary and other cultural texts". Marx as cited in Hall's, 2001: 73 states, "Society is stratified into three primary classes- the aristocracy, the bourgeois, and the proletariat-each with different worldview and set of interest".

This study aims to present the conditions of society in the twentieth century based on the Khaled Hosseini's novel entitled The Kite Runner and to describe the social conflicts based on Marxism concept described in The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini. This study is expected to give benefits for several aspects such as: First, the finding of this research hopefully gives contribution for a material teaching to teachers in teaching literature. Second, this research will provide a reference to the other researchers who are studying literature, especially discussing multiculturalism and pluralism.

## **METHOD**

The type of this study is a library research. Through library research, the writer studies on the sociological values and Marxism theory as reflected by the social class in the best seller novel entitled The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini.

The primary data are taken from the main source: the novel of The Kite Runner which was written by Khaled Hosseini and was published in 2003. Another book for getting the primary data is Conflict Assesment in Afghanistan which was written by Corinna Vigier and was published in 2007.

The secondary data are taken from the theory of social class by Karl Marx, Max Weber and some other critics in different forms; journals, books, articles, essays and the internet.

Before analyzing the novel, the first step is studying, selecting and collecting the chapter of the novel. Actually, when the researcher reads each chapter of the novel, automatically the researcher knows the intrinsic social problem of the novel. It will ease the researcher to get the data.

Khaled Hosseini's The Kite Runner as the main data (primary data) is going to be analyzed and supported by some references as listed in bibliography (secondary data).

After collecting data, the writer analyzes the data using Marxism theory. Due to the data collected are not numeral, the data are categorized into qualitative data. The method used is descriptive qualitative method. Ratna (2008: 46) explains that it used the ways of

interpretation by providing it in a form of description. There are some steps which will be done in analyzing the novel. the writer draws a conclusion based on the analysis.

## DISCUSSION

### The Social Conditions in Afghanistan Based on the Novel and Reality

There are quite a few social conditions written in the novel telling the readers about

social conditions or certain moments following the timeline. Since the author is an original Afghan, he presumably inserted those moments based on the reality happening in Afghanistan during the change of the peaceful Kabul into saddening years. Below is the table summarizing the timeline of incidents that happened in Afghanistan based on the novel and reality.

Table. 1 summarizing the timeline of incidents that happened in Afghanistan based on the novel and reality

Year	Novel	Reality
1933	The beginning of forty year reign of Afghanistan by Zahir Shah. (p. 26 line 1)	Zahir Shah became the king of Afganistan.
1976	Afganistan's next to last summer of peace and anonimity.	No specific incident told to be happening this year.
1979	Russian tanks passing the streets of Amir and Hassan's neighborhood. (p. 39 line 11)	On Christmas Eve 1979, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan.
1988	Summer of 1988, six months before the Soviet's withdrew from Afghanistan. (p.197 line 14)	April 14, 1988 the Geneva Accords were signed, ratifying by treaty the formal terms for the Soviet withdrawal.
1996	The rise of Taliban who started banning kite fighting in Kabul. (p. 230 line 16)	The Taliban conquered Kabul in September 1996.
1998	The Taliban massacred the Hazaras in Mazar-i-Sharif. (p. 230 line 17)	The Taliban were said to be controlling more than 90% of Afghanistan in 1998, including the important city in the north which is called Mazar-i Sharif.

The Kite Runner spans the period from before the 1979 Soviet invasion until the reconstruction following the fall of the Taliban. The novel portrays the Afghans as an

independent and proud people who for decades have defended their country against one invader after another. The novel's storyline turns horrible when Hosseini describes the

suffering of his country under the tyranny of the Taliban, whom Amir encounters when he finally returns home in Kabul, hoping to help Hassan and his family.

The final parts of the book are full of haunting images: a man, desperate to feed his children, trying to sell his artificial leg in the market; an adulterous couple stoned to death in a stadium during the halftime of a football match; a rouged young boy forced into prostitution, dancing the sort of steps once performed by an organ grinder's monkey. But political events, even as dramatic as the ones that are presented in "The Kite Runner," are only a part of this story. A more personal plot, arising from Amir's close friendship with Hassan, the son of his father's servant, turns out to be the thread that ties the book together. The fragility of this relationship, symbolized by the kites the boys fly together, is tested as they watch their old way of life disappear. This image is perfectly described through the letter that Hassan wrote for Amir. He said in his letter, "Alas the Afghanistan of our youth is long dead." (Page 233)

The Kite Runner is also a story about the collapse of civil society and the violation of fundamental human rights that commonly takes place in such settings, ethnic and racial discrimination, religious intolerance, the oppression of women and children, war crimes, the plight of refugees. Afghan refugees escaping war and Taliban rule are victims of human rights violation in this novel, too. Again, this kind of horrific image is described by Hassan through his letter which was

addressed to Amir, "Kindness is gone from the land and you cannot escape the killings. Always the killings. In Kabul, fear is everywhere, in the streets, in the stadium, in the markets, it is a part of our lives here, Amir Agha." (Page 233)

### **The Social Conflict Described in The Kite Runner Novel**

Afghanistan is home not only to several religious sects but also a host of different ethnics, linguistics and tribal groups. Rivalry and even armed hostilities have traditionally been common between and within many of these groups. Historic and geographic factors have led to the creation and preservation of diversity. The relationship between tribes and religion is complex and all Afghans even all rural Afghans consider themselves tribal members.

Various groups have their own social status. More or less, Pashtuns are the most prestigious groups in Afghanistan. Then come Tajiks and Uzbeks, although the subsequent rankings vary by region, but Hazaras are almost always ranked as one of the lowest groups. In the Afghanistan's history, Hazaras are one of the oppressed national minorities of the country. In the past they had been discriminated against on the basis of their faith, language and ethnics groups. By partitioning the Hazarajat by central religion intended to eliminate Hazara's political, legal, national and historical identity through the articulation of a cultural policy aimed at assimilating Hazara into dominant culture.

Hazaras have always lived on the edge of economic survival. As a result of Pashtun expansionism in the late 18th and early 19th centuries which was fueled by Sunni prejudices against the Shi'a (thus attracting the Tajiks and Uzbeks) the Hazaras were driven by the barren dry mountains of central Afghanistan (the Hazajarat) where they live today separated into nine regionally distinct enclaves.

The largest and the most powerful group is the Pashtun. Historically, the stronger groups have attempted to dominate weaker one. The weaker groups have had choice of moving to a harsher, more marginal environment or paying tribute to the more powerful groups. Each group is perceived to be ranked in terms of status, although members of the groups in question may not always agree with the members of the other groups about their own ranking.

Virtually, everywhere Pashtuns are the most prestigious groups, both in their own eye usually also the eyes of the others. The contrast between social classes is seen in Amir and his best friend Hassan. Amir is the son of Baba, a wealthy businessman and a Sunni Muslim particularly from the Pashtun tribe. They live a life of privilege and comfort in a fine home and enjoy every social advantage. The novel explores whether one's social class can define a person's action and character. However, Hassan, Amir's servant was unable to rise above his assigned in society. Basically, there are two differences of how Amir and Hassan live their lives. Those are economic

difference and ethnic difference. The evidence of their differences will be discussed below.

#### **a. Economic Difference**

(1) "He eyed me up and down. "What is the boy like you doing here at this time of they day looking for Hazara?" His glance lingered admiringly on my leather coat and my jeans—cowboy pants, we used to call them. In Afghanistan, owning anything American, especially if it wasn't secondhand, was a sign of wealth.

"I need to find him, Agha."

"What is he to you?" he said. I did not see the point of this question, but I reminded my self that impatientce wasn't going to make him tell me any faster.

"He is our servant's son". I said.

The old man raised a pepper gray eyebrow. "He is? Lucky Hazara, having such a concerned master. His father should get on his knees, sweep the dust at your feet with his eyelashes." (Page 76 & 77)

"The boy like you" in the second sentence refers to Amir, a wealthy Pashtun kid who is looking for Hassan, a Hazara and a servant to him. The conversation above shows that the old merchant consider Hazara as unimportant people, moreover, he is only a servant's son. They are considered unimportant because the merchant doesn't

even think that Hassan deserves to live with a wealthy Pashtuns. Thus, it's really disturbing to the old merchant when Pashtun master worried only for a Hazara.

Ali, Hassan's father is a servant to Baba. Hassan acts as Amir's personal servant. They live on Baba's property, but not in Baba's house. Their house is very small, crude dwelling. They live in poverty although Baba treats them well in other ways. This is showing an economic difference between the life of Amir and Hassan and the life of their fathers.

#### **b. Ethnic Difference**

- (1) "Hey Babalu, who did you eat, you flat nosed Babalu?" They called him "flat-nosed" because of Ali and Hassan's characteristic Hazara Mongoloid feature. For years, that was all I knew about the Hazara, that they were Mogul descendants, and that they looked at little Chinese people. School text books barely mentioned them and referred to their ancestry only in passing." (Page 9)

It also said some things I did know, like that people called Hazaras mice-eating, flat-nosed, load-crying donkeys. I had heard some of the kids in the neighbourhood yell those names to Hassan." (Page 10)

Ali's face and his walk frightened some of the younger children in the neighbourhood. But the real trouble was with the older kids. They chased him on the street, and mocked

him when he hobbled by. Some had taken to calling him Babalu, or Boogeyman.

It is already explained in the quotation above that the term "flat-nosed" refers to Hazaras' mongoloid feature. Societies treat Hassan and his father badly by mockery and names calling such as flat-nosed, mice-eating, and donkeys. They live life of object poverty and discrimination.

#### **Further Explanation on the Social Class Differences**

The two main characters in the novel, Amir and Hassan work as literary foils each in a separate social class but responding differently to each one. Amir was a wealthy twelve years old Pashtun boy, who has well-awareness of the two distinct social class in Afghanistan. As a young boy he took pleasure in knowing he was superior to Hassan and born into the privileged class of Afghan society. His best friend, Hassan was born a Hazara; a member of the group considered and treated as a lower social class in Afghanistan. Amir liked living with Hassan but never let Hassan forget their difference is society. Amir still thought to be superior than Hassan as a human being.

Specifically, the author describes the social conflicts based on Marxism concept described in *The Kite Runner* is that in Marxist theory, in a capitalist society, the ruling class owns the means of production, such as machines or tools that can be used to produce valuable objects. This describes Baba's role in the novel who has everything such as big

house, fancy clothes, and hold big parties. It obviously tells the readers that Baba and his son, Amir, has their prosperous life. On the other hand, the working class, or the proletariat in Marxism theory, is told that they only possess their own labor power, which they sell to the ruling class in the form of wage labor to survive. Due to the reputation of the Hazara caste, Hassan, and the other Hazaras born into it are perceived as an inferior species. Pashtuns, such as Baba and General Taheri, belong to what is recognized as a superior ethnic group, thus they must maintain their reputation despite the fact that it may affect their well-being.

In *The Kite Runner*, shown that it is common knowledge amongst Afghan people that Hazaras are considered to be a lesser ethnic group in comparison to the dominant, pure-blooded Pashtuns. Thus, violence against them is often excused. The characters that belong to dominant ethnic groups, such as Amir and Assef, are the cause of the novel's micro issues amongst characters. Amir is a Sunni Muslim and a Pashtun, while Hassan is a Shi'a Muslim and a Hazara which belongs to an inferior ethnic group and is treated as a lower life form.

#### **Cultural Aspects in "The Kite Runner"**

There are many examples of Afghan culture and tradition in this story. Apart from the the disruptions of war and politics, parts of the story also tell the transition of Afghan culture into the world of United States regarding to the migration of Baba and Amir because of the Soviet invasion. One example

of this is the kite racing that figures so prominently in the book. Amir tells in page 55 that "The kite-fighting tournament was an old winter tradition in Afghanistan." Although the Taliban do away with kite racing, at the end of *The Kite Runner*, it is seen that this tradition has been preserved within the Afghan community in America, and that it is this tradition, in fact, that begins a process of healing for Sohrab. The quotation in the novel says, "She (Soraya) was pointing to the sky. A half dozen kites were flying high, speckles of bright yellow, red, and green against the gray sky." (Page 395)

Being an immigrant or a person who lives in someone's land doesn't make Amir and the family of Soraya abandon their culture originality. They still practice the tradition of Afghan on their daily basis. There are speeches and ceremonies at this gathering that are clearly traditionally Afghan. Other traditions are set aside because Baba is dying, and the couple wants to be wed before he does so. But the wedding itself is a traditional Afghan wedding held in an Afghan banquet hall. The strength they hold onto the Afghan traditions is shown by how Amir tells about Afghan tradition over and over. "In keeping with tradition, Soraya was not present." (Page 182). It tells about the wedding detail of Amir and Soraya.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Reading a novel and understanding the dialogues within can actually enrich the reader's vocabularies, imagination, and

knowledge. The readers will engage atmosphere of the story as like as he or she experience it. Many occasions, situations, characters and the solution of related issues can be learned by reading and understanding a novel. This study can be used as a reference for the other students. The writer suggests the other writer who will conduct the similar study to use different objects. Latest or the phenomenal object with greater influence is preferable for further studies.

Teachers may also use literary works as a teaching media in order to enrich the students with new vocabularies and cultural terms and differences. As the teacher has the obligation to giving education. Teacher can give the student the education about multiculturalism, tolerance and living in harmony by using literary works.

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