

# The Persistence of the Past

## - Theme meaning

The persistence of the past means that the past keeps coming back to haunt you. You can't get rid of it until you redeem yourself.

## - How does it relate to The Kite Runner

We can see the persistence of the past in the Kite Runner as Amir's past decisions + experiences haunt him every day. We can also see it as Sohrab is mentally and physically tormented from the events of his past such as his parents being murdered and being raped by the Taliban.

Hassan had a cleft palate when he was younger. He had surgery but was left with a scar that was always there to remind him of the past traumas he had experienced. Later in the novel, Assef beats up Amir + gives him the same scar that Hassan had, this is also a constant reminder to Amir of the mistakes he made as a child (towards Hassan.)

## - Key events

A key event in the Kite Runner that relates to this theme is when Sohrab tries to commit suicide as he doesn't want to go back to his past. He is haunted by it and thinks the only way to escape it, is to kill himself. We can see this when Sohrab says, "I'm so dirty and full of sin."

Another key event is when Hassan is raped and Amir just stands there and watches. For the next 30 years, Amir is haunted by the fact that he was too cowardly to step in and help his friend. This is shown when Amir says, "because the past claws its way out, looking back now, I realise I have been peering into that deserted alley for the last 20 yrs."

The last key event is when Amir frames Hassan by placing the money and watch under Hassan's mattress. Amir does this because he believes that this is the only way he can get rid of the guilt from his past mistakes. Hassan is a constant reminder to Amir of the wrong he did so he made Hassan leave to try free himself of the past. "What am I going to do with you, Hassan? What am I going to do with you?"

## - character aspects

This theme relates to Amir and how he can't let go of his past. This is shown through the short stories that he writes as he has done something so bad that it haunts him every day and he can't escape it. For example one of his stories is about a poor man whose tears turn to pearls when he cries, he then got greedy and to make himself sad, he killed his wife. This relates to Amir as they have both done something so horrific that they can't come back from.

This theme also relates to Hassan. 20 years after Hassan + Ali left Baba + Amir, Hassan returned to their house to look after it + ensure the Taliban didn't take over and trash it.

We can also relate this to Sohrab's feelings about his life and his past.



# The persistence of the past

**Summary** → Living with the guilt of your past actions affects your everyday life. It affects how you interact with others and the decisions you make. It relates to the theory of 'cause and effect'.

"It's wrong what they say about the past, I've learned, about how you can bury it. Because the past always claws its way out."

**Theme applied in novel** → Most characters in the book are affected by their past. However, Sohrab and Amir are more sensitive to their pasts. Amir's self-centered ways lead to many mistakes, which inflicted upon others. For example, he did not help Hassan after seeing him get raped. Sohrab's traumatic sexual abuse and desertion has led him to be mentally and physically scared.

## 3 Key events

- 1- Amir watching Hassan get raped - This was the starting event in the 'cause and effect' (domino effect) that triggered Hassan and Amir falling out.
- 2 - Hassan's death - Hassan's death led to Sohrab getting taken to an orphanage and taken by Assef. This was partly the fault of Amir and relates to Assef sexually abusing Hassan in the past. Amir abandoned Hassan and it's his responsibility because he's Amir's nephew.
- 3 - Amir adopting Sohrab - This is a way of Amir trying to find redemption in his 'guilt ridden' past by taking Sohrab into care and adopting him. In some ways this is Amir's punishment. It is a 'life sentence' of Amir trying to make Sohrab happy and care for him. It is going to change his life dynamic.

### 3 Overall Quotes from EXTERNAL SOURCE

- 1- "Do not dwell in the past, do not dream of the future, concentrate the mind on the present future" - The Buddha. This means to concentrate on bettering yourself in the present moment and getting over the past 'WHAT'S DONE IS DONE'
- 2 - Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future" - Amir changed his ways in an attempt to redeem the past and move into a stronger future.
- 3 - Time passed unhindered. When we make mistakes, we cannot turn the clock back and try again. All we can do is use the present well. - Dalai Lama. You can not go back and change the things you have done. Amir can not take back what he has done. He needs to look forward.

### 3 Aspects of Amir that show the theme

- 1 - Self centered in the start of the book. Can't do things without reward. Everything revolves around him.
- 2 - He is cowardly. He finds it easier to let things pass rather than to help other people.
- 3 - His relationship with Baba represents the theme because ~~the~~ Amir would do anything to win over his father's love. This leads to Amir not helping Hassan when he was raped because he was scared of what Baba would think of him.

## The love and tension between fathers and sons.

- This theme can relate to real life as men in a family have often got tension because they want to be the better man. This tension is usually outweighed by love as family comes first.
- The theme of father-son love and tension is very obvious in the Kite runner, shown in Amir and Baba's relationship. Amir feels a lot of pressure to make his father proud, his actions clearly reflecting this. There is an underlying love between them as the book continues and Baba becomes sick.

— A key event which demonstrates this theme is the kite running tournament. Amir treats the tournament as his chance to break through his father's tension and reveal love by winning.

— The second event which shows this theme was when Hassan gets singled out, beaten and sexually assaulted as Amir watches from the shadows. Amir chooses not to intervene as he's a coward but uses this chance to gain Baba's love.

"Nothing is free in this world. Maybe Hassan was the price I had to pay, the lamb I had to slay, to win Baba."

— "This was Hassan's final sacrifice for me. If he'd said no, Baba would have believed him because we all knew Hassan never lied. And if Baba believed him, then I'd be the accused; I would have to explain and I would be revealed for what I really was. Baba would never, ever forgive me."

"A boy who won't stand up for himself becomes a man who can't stand up to anything."

With this quote, it explains how Baba is reluctant to praise Amir, mainly as he feels that Amir lacks courage to stand up for himself, leaving Amir craving Baba's attention and approval.

"Hassan and I fed from the same breasts. We took our first steps on the same yard. And, under the same roof, we spoke our first words. Mine was Baba, his was Amir. My name."

This quote shows us that first words normally reflect the thing that has the biggest impact on you, and right from the start Amir's most influential character was Baba, his father.



This quote shows us how Amir values his father's view of him and love towards him, over his loyalty to his closest friend Hassan's well being.

"The problem, of course, was that he saw the world in black and white. And he got to decide what was black and what was white. You can't love a person who lives that way without fearing him to. Maybe even hating him a little."

Amir is confused over his view of Baba. He's after his love, trying so hard to make him proud, but on the other hand he fears him also, "Maybe even hating him a little." These emotions are very contradicting, leaving Amir lost and confused about their relationship.



1. "There must always be a struggle between a father and a son, while one aims at power and the other at independence."  
- Samuel Johnson

2. "By the time a man realizes that maybe his father was right, he usually has a son who thinks he's wrong."  
- Charles Wadsworth

3. "A man's desire for a son is usually nothing but the wish to duplicate himself in order that such a remarkable pattern may not be lost to the world."  
- Helen Rowland



A summary of <sup>what</sup> the theme means and what it means in real life.

The relationship between a father and their son. The relationship between them isn't always good, there can be jealousy and tension formed when either father or son show more affection. Sometimes love can lead to tension and tension can lead to love.

A summary on how the theme applies to our novel.

This relates to Kite Runner as Baba shows more affection towards Hassan than Amir. This leads to tension in the relationship because Amir became jealous. Amir does everything he thinks possible to gain Baba's love and attention but he never seems to be able to.

## Love and Tension between fathers and sons.

3 key events and an explanation of how this event shows your theme.

① Hassan getting raped and Amir not doing anything to help him. This shows the theme as Amir didn't tell anyone and hid the fact of him not helping Hassan so Baba wouldn't be disappointed in him. "I actually aspired to cowardice, because the alternative, the real reason I was running, was the Assef was right: Nothing was free in this world, maybe Hassan was the price I had to pay..." to win Baba.

② When Baba ~~are on the~~ and Amir are on their journey to America, Baba stands up for numerous people where as Amir sits back in fear. This makes Baba ashamed of his son. "A boy who won't stand up for himself becomes a man that who stand up to anything."

③ Amir plants money and a brand new watch under Hassan's mattress to make it look like Hassan had stolen them. This causes Hassan and Ali to leave. Amir did this to try get Hassan to leave so that he could have Baba to himself and hope that now he will get a better relationship with Baba once Hassan is out of the way.

3 aspects of a character that shows your theme.

① Baba is always disappointed in ~~Hassan~~ Amir as he never stands up for himself or anyone else. Baba always has a slight hatred towards Amir as he blames him for killing Baba's wife and Amir's mother at birth. However at the same time he always loves him because he is his son. Baba and Amir always has a hate love relationship with Amir.

②: The problem, of course, was that [he] saw the world in B & W. And he got to decide what was black and what was white. You can't love a person who lives that way without fearing him too. Maybe even hating him a little." This quote shows Amir's views on Baba and how he decided what always happened and that there was only 2 ways. Even though Amir has always been trying to get Baba's attention and love, he fears him and hates him a bit for the way Baba views things.

③ Once Baba and Amir arrive in America their relationship becomes better. They become one. Once Baba becomes sick Amir starts to be more caring for him. Baba becomes proud of Amir when he decides to marry Soraya.

## Quotes

- ① A father is a man who expects his son to be as good a man as he is meant to be.
- ② "It is not flesh and blood but the heart, which makes us father and son."
- ③ "I cannot think of any need in childhood as strong as the need for a father's protection."

# 3 Quotes that represent the theme

- "Think of something good, something happy." This shows that Baba is trying to calm Amir and lift his spirits as they are in a bad place caused by a major political event. These private lives have been majorly affected and they are now being smuggled out of Afghanistan in the back of a truck.

- "It was the cry of a wild animal trying to pry its mangled leg free from the bear trap" This was how Amir described the cry from the woman who was being stoned to death in the stadium. This relates to how the political state in Afghanistan are so appalling that the life of an individual person can be killed for something more.

- "Ah, a storyteller, well people need stories to divert them at difficult times like this." This infers that perhaps because of the political events and war at the time was so bad and had such a severe impact on society that many people needed fictional stories to divert their minds from the truth.

## 3 Quotes that represent the theme



- Summary of Theme and what it is in real life

Oscar  
&  
Wifred

- When political events and private lives cross over and intersect

In real life this can be seen in America as Donald Trump came into power, he has influenced the life of many individuals such as Islam and Afghan people who were blotted from the country, unable to see their family.

Summary of how ~~the~~ <sup>our</sup> Theme applies to our novel.

- This theme relates to the novel as the political events in Afghanistan caused by the Taliban and the Soviets has a direct impact and affect on the people of Kabul's private lives. The political events in the novel have severe implications on the private lives of everyone living in Afghanistan at the time.

### 3 Key Events that Shows our

#### Theme

- Hassan is Raped by Assef, Then The country

is over run by the Soviets.

We see the Calm state of Kabul during the monarchy as we see Hassan on a happy state, and then as Hassan is Raped and becomes miserable, Afghanistan is over run and turned into a miserable country.

- Baba and Amir are forced to leave Kabul for America as Afghanistan has become unsafe for them. The political events of war in Afghanistan have affected peoples private lives as seen when Baba and Amir are forced to flee in search of the 'American Dream'.

- The women in the Stadium are stoned to death.

- The political state of the country is so screwed up that the people in power can stone a woman to death for merely having a relationship with a ~~stranger~~ woman



I like

# Political Events and Private Lives

- The political siege of the Taliban affects all residents of Afghanistan as their personal freedom is lost. This means that the rules imposed by the Taliban such as the rules surrounding females, i.e. have to cover up, no access to medical treatment, not allowed to work or be educated.
- This idea applies to our novel when Amir and Baba are forced to flee Afghanistan because of the Taliban's invasion of their home town Kabul. The political event that founds a republic in Afghanistan affects our characters private lives. Assef ~~harasses~~ believes he is right to rape Hassan because his dad has connections that are highly placed in the government.
- In the ~~novel~~ during the early 1970s the Soviet occupation of Kabul reflects this theme in the book, by "the shootings and explosions had frightened us badly, huddled together in the dining room and waiting for the sun to rise, none of us had any notion that a way of life is the stoning at the stadium," for just for
- Another political event that takes place in the book is the stoning at the stadium, "for just for having a relationship with a man." this intersects with people's personal lives because it instills fear into people and they do not enjoy relationships.
- Assef raping Hassan has political grounding in that ~~Assef~~ Assef believes he is immune because his dad is friends with the prime minister and the ethnic divide between Pashtun and Hazara engrained in their ~~own~~ social beliefs. This affects their private lives in that Amir decides ~~to~~ to ~~cut off~~ Hassan because he is only a Hazara so he does not have to do anything. "Afghanistan is the land of Pashtans. we are the true Afghans, the pure Afghans," Assef.
- A political event that shapes Amir's character is the war, this forces them to ~~move away~~ flee to America, temporarily providing refuge until the war was over. America westernises Amir and it ~~is~~ becomes his permanent home. "America was a place for me to remove my past, for Baba, a place to mourn his."
- Quote from Author, "describing his country as war stricken and having no familiarity with modern civilisation."

