
RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Kite Runner: A Psychological Analysis of Amir

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ABSTRACT

The novel *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini shows how the main character Amir reflects a sense of self through the views of the other characters. At some point in the story, Amir's self-conceptualization changes radically. Thus, the paper wants to make a psychological interpretation of how emotional traumas affect the self-perception, moral-development, and planned behavior of the main character by scrutinizing the plot, conflicts, and point of view of Amir. Additionally, this study applies the discourse analysis method of the qualitative approach. The gathered data is analyzed through Ajzen and Fishbein's Theory of Planned Behavior, Bem's Self-Perception Theory, and Kohlberg's Moral Development Theory as the main theories. Higgin's Theory of Discrepancy and Tajfel and Turner's Social Identity Theory also serve as sub-theories to Bem's Self-Perception Theory. The moral developments of Amir reveal that he has reached the final stage, called stage 6: Universal Principles of the third level, the Postconventional level. Also, Amir's self-perception throughout the story depicts a negative outlook toward oneself. Furthermore, the planned behaviors of the main character are driven by his morality and self-perception throughout the story.

KEYWORDS

Amir, behaviors, morality, perception, kite runner

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1. Introduction

Literature can create fictional worlds that are close to and associated with the reality within which human beings live (Johansen, 2010). For many years, reading literary pieces impacted human emotions, showing the true extent of what anguish does to a person, although some facts are embellished. In many cases, literature never tells what exactly is happening beneath the surface. Instead, it shows signs of recession through falling action and dramatizes it for effect. Nearly all Afghanistan authors focus primarily on cultural and historical literary texts to respond to such tragic situations (Ullah, 2020). However, one work captures the problem mentioned earlier at hand. Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* rings true to that problem by immediately showing its readers the conflict of interest rather than trying to explain the exact problem. The novel *The Kite Runner* shows how the main character reflects a sense of self through the views of the other characters. The story is about two boys, Amir and Hassan, living in the same household and having the same past. At some point in the story, the central character's self-conceptualization changes radically. A particular event in the novel changes the main character's self-perception, and the change confuses the main character's ideal self. Hence, this paper focuses on the effects of psychological stress on the main character and mainly on said topic.

It is common for psychological stress and trauma to go unnoticed, especially when it comes to filial relationships, romantic relationships, and types of friendships that have transpired in a person's life that caused an emotional crisis. Such traumatic events experienced by a child can cause an overwhelming emotion that may produce a physical response or inability to act on it and flight to avoid facing the consequences of choosing to fight (Schauer, Elbert 2015). The main character of Khaled Hosseini's novel portrays emotions, decisions, and behaviors that indicate psychological stress. Thus, this research wants to make a psychological interpretation of how emotional traumas affect the self-perception, moral-development, and planned behavior of the main character by scrutinizing the plot, conflicts, and point of view of Amir.

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This study assumes that Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* reveals psychological aspects, and the assumption is supported by Ajzen and Fishbein's Theory of Planned Behavior, Bem's Theory of Self-Perception, and Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development.

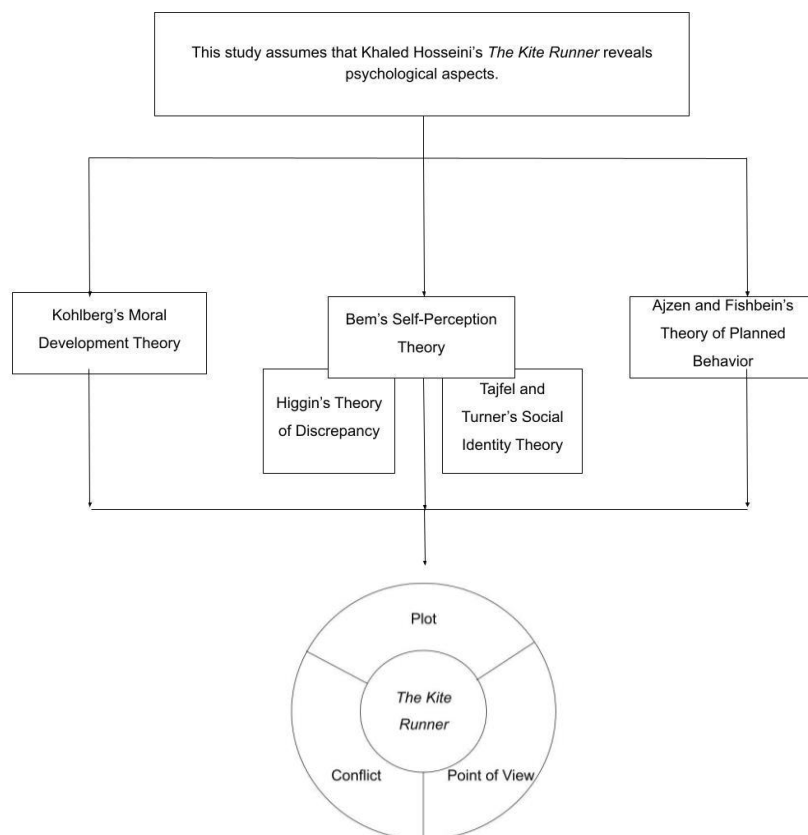


Figure 1. Schematic Presentation of the Theoretical and Conceptual Framework of the Study

The concept of self-perception theory assumes that people's actions define the entirety of a person, leading to a behavior. People often understand personal feelings and emotions by observing one's circumstances or conduct wherein the behavior occurs, as per the Self-Perception Theory of Daryl Bem. People frequently infer attitudes from behavioral actions and that an individual acquires the grasp of one's identity in the same manner as learning from others (Mohebi & Bailey, 2020). On the notion that individuals interpret one's behavior the same way, an individual understands another person's actions (behavior) to conclude one's desires (van den Brink, 2017). In terms of holding notions about one's actual self, people also frequently hold a view as to what an individual would like to be in the "ideal" selves, "presumed" selves and the "ought" selves. People prefer to close the gap, considering that any discrepancies may harm one's emotional and motivational development (Orellana-Damacela & Tindale & Suarez-Balcazar, 2000).

As stated in the Self-Discrepancy Theory by Higgins, there are three essential domains of the self: These are the 'actual self' that is the representation of one's character traits that one is believed to possess. The 'ideal self' is the depiction that other people believe one ideally possesses, and the 'ought self' is the characteristic that other people aspire one to possess (Higgins, 1987). Concerning how an individual perceives oneself based on other people's views, Tajfel and Turner's Social Identity Theory states that a social network's affiliation influences one's self-perception. People's attitudes, behaviors, and views around the 'in-group' to which one belongs and the 'out-group' to which one does not belong determines one's social identity. Self-judgments as a group likely relate to the outcome of the social comparisons between the in-group and the out-group. The individuals that belong to the in-group are likely to seek out adverse aspects of the out-group members to optimize the in-group's image (Islam, 2014). One's self-conceptualization is the totality of one's beliefs that are greatly influenced by an individual's attitudes that lead to behavior and creates a variation of one's perception of self through the social image. A person's self-concept establishes through how one distinguishes behavior and characteristics. Recognizing how one's social identity impacts one's self-conceptualization could help recognize and improve one's morality and self. (Higgins, 1987). In this study, the Self-Perception Theory is utilized to explain the

main character's self-conceptualization by scrutinizing the conflicts present in the story. This theory further explains how the self-concept of the protagonist is greatly influenced by the other characters. Thus, Higgins' Theory of Discrepancy, which explains the different versions of "selves", as well as Tajfel and Turner's Social Identity Theory, play an important role in the overall process of self-conceptualization of the character; both support Bem's self-conceptualization theory.

A large amount of literature finds the relationship between self-perception and moral development. Kohlberg's stage concepts, which represent a cognitive developmental approach to moral development, are employed to recognize self-development. It also highlights the development of cognitive structures as the fundamental determinants in the acquisition of moral beliefs. (Haffey, 1991). As per Kohlberg's Moral Development Theory, when individuals grow, the existing moral knowledge assimilates into a more extensive and advanced schema of the new stage, displacing the prior stage (Haffey, 1991). Also, it is stated in this theory that moral development occurs in successive stages (Isaksson, 1979). Stages classify into three levels. The first level (I) is named Preconventional and encompasses stages 1 and 2. Moral thinking in these stages is based on the dread of bodily punishment (Stage 1) and personal gain from a decent act of cooperation with others (Stage 2). The second level in Kohlberg's theory is the Conventional level (II) which incorporates stages 3 and 4. Moral reasoning at this level is primarily concerned with conforming to the social order's expectations (Stage 3) and exhibiting a responsibility to the upkeep of societal norms and institutions (Stage 4). In stages 5 and 6 of the Postconventional level (III), abstract moral concepts control moral reasoning in the final classification. Postconventional philosophers, who represent the pinnacle of moral philosophy, are concerned with the acceptable social contract, which may be from an extensive selection of alternatives (Stage 5). In Kohlberg's perspective, the highest level of moral development is attaining the universal objective principles of morality that are free of societal restriction (Stage 6) (Haffey, 1991). The stages appear to be in an unchanging developmental arrangement. Every stage is a hierarchical integration that represents a constructed system that incorporates a preceding stage or manner of thinking into a more comprehensive, diverse, and balanced structure. Individuals progress through all the stages in the same sequence, although development may stop at varying periods. With that stated, the majority can reach stage 3, and only a few complete up to stage 6. (Isaksson, 1979). The Moral Development Theory is employed in this study to explain how the protagonist's trauma influenced the entire moral development process, revealing the main character's highest moral development attainment. As such, the psychological interpretation of the main character's trauma is explored through the plot.

Ajzen and Fishbein's Planned Behavior Theory focuses mainly on how human behavior can be affected. In that regard, it says that a slew of reasons could alter one person's behavior. Psychologists believe some of these reasons can be environmental or biological. In comparison, others predict that other factors play into determining how human behavior gradually changes as well. Factors like role in society, emotional stability, and personal attributes are key elements in predicting behavioral alters (Ajzen 1991, Campbell 1963, Sherman & Fazio 1983). Personality plays a small part, however, for it proves as a poor predictor of human behavior. The reasoning behind it is that personal biases exist, so other factors must be taken into account. Factors such as respect for authority and institutions and interaction with different races play a part (Ajzen, Fishbein 1977). These factors lead theorists to believe that change in personality does not necessarily mean behavioral change, and thereby some would instead abandon the attitude concept altogether (Wicker, 1969). To remedy the poor predictability of behaviors and personality, theorists believe that different personalities aggregate with varied behaviors (Epstein, 1983) in different occasions, situations, and forms of action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1974). Thus, planned behavior may only apply to specific situations. Personal experiences may alter behavior when biases are in play and, therefore, become less in planning and more in directing. Certain situations may also call for aggregation of personality and behavior, leading to different approaches to solving a problem. Therefore, planned behavior is a call for action, but when handled with personal issues, action may become inaction or varying degrees of how a person acts towards different situations (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1974). The Theory of Planned Behavior is used in the study to explain the main character's attitude, emotions, and feeling of competence towards a situation, which resulted in the main character's intention. Thus, Amir's point of view is examined.

Students, lecturers, and scholars who study literature benefit from the findings of this study. Also, literary students and lecturers can develop and extend interest in broken characters and appreciate the significance of imparting the human aspect of a fictional character. This study can also provide valuable insight into the psychology of a character-driven plot. This study seeks to communicate the story more technically rather than narratively because it limits the story to metaphors and the psychology behind it. This study aids individuals in the analysis and discussions as it provides a comprehensive assessment of the main character's psychological component. It may also assist researchers soon in obtaining the data required for future studies. Finally, this research serves as a foundation for future literary studies of Khaled Hosseini's Kite Runner.

The scope of the study focuses on the psychological aspect of the main character of the novel *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini and is supported by Ajzen and Fishbein's Theory of Planned Behavior, Bem's Self-Perception Theory, and Kohlberg's Moral Development Theory as the main theories, as well as Higgins' Theory of Discrepancy and Tajfel's Social Identity Theory as sub-theories to Bem's Theory of Self-Perception.

This study is limited only to discovering the self-perception, moral development and planned behaviors of the main character by scrutinizing the plot, conflicts, and point of view present in Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*.

2. Literature Review

The portrayal of the human aspect and relationships in literature is indeed fascinating. Fictional characters, although creatures without flesh and blood, realistically parallel the behavior of real people. The characters in a novel deeply affect and become greatly affected by the sequence of events. The plot and the characters make the story happen. According to Beemgee, an online website, if the characters do not exist, the actions and decisions necessary to form a scene cannot occur. Events cannot exist, provided that the presence of the characters is missing, as a character needs to experience or perform the sequence to give life to the story. Character portrayal makes the events more exciting, as conflicts cannot arise without one. Also, the impact of two elements in the narrative, character and plot, conditions the mind of the readers. The two enable readers to put or search for meaning in the story. Furthermore, a plot is impossible to avoid as characters propel the story and events move the narrative. Additionally, composing a narrative out of an idea produces a story, and it includes creating scenes and developing characters to form a plot. More importantly, a distinct method of using language is utilized for the readers to experience the story conveyed. The sequence of events or the plot is vitally crucial in intuiting the psychological aspect of Amir as it is composed of scenes and lines that help readers discover the intricate details in the story.

In an online article entitled, *How to Write Story Plot: Tips, Tricks, and Margaret Atwood's Writing Prompt*, a plot mainly raises a "dramatic question," which is to be answered by every scene and line existing. It is described in the article that a plot is what transpires in the story, characters bring life to scenes, and lines give detail to the series of events in the narrative. The article also discusses that a narrative is not a story if no interference exists in the pattern. Besides, composing a good plot means creating unique situations and distinguished personalities that help the audience avoid getting confused about the flow of the story. Also, acknowledging that it is not just a series of events, writing good storylines must consider a guide like Aristotle's plot structure as it is crucial to generate one. The plot contains the important events that transpire in the storyline. Through the use of Freytag's Pyramid, the exposition that speaks the entirety of the tone of the novel, inciting action that sets everything in motion, rising action that leads to the peak of events, the climax, which is the highest action, and finally, the falling action which offers a solution to the conflict that occurs. The scenes and lines in the novel help discuss the main character's personalities in the novel studied.

Conflict in Literary Fiction by William H. Coles, an online article, claims flat dialogues stagnate a piece and that conflict in a dialogue is what makes a story moving. Conflict helps establish the dramatic presentation of emotions, primarily when the story relies on a narrative description of past events. The heart of the drama is conflict, and every fictional piece demands a conflict to give the reader an entire existence. It is the spark for the reader's engagement because if a presentation and recounting of thoughts and occurrences do not pique the reader's interest, the conflict impedes it. The narrative steered into a sequence of interconnected scenarios by enveloping the readers in the story's flesh. To drive the reader from line to line, concept to concept, dramatic elements must be present, and that tension is provided by drama. Conflict is produced, and readers become anxious about the happenings, especially if there is a connectedness between the reader and the character. Readers are now invested in the fate of a character one cares about and find the tension in a succession of rationally constructed and logically linked scenes rich with conflict in the language, syntax, characters, and storyline. Conflict is significant in both the narrative and the writing used to tell the story in literary fiction. The tension exhibited in the novel's scenes and dialogue elicits the reader's emotions; therefore, it proves the movement happening in the story.

Writer's Digest online article titled *Why Point of View Is So Important for Novel Writers* written by Joseph Bates goes into detail about just how the points of view in a novel affect the overall story and its relationship to the reader. The article states that the reader's relationship with the characters and the novel generally depends on the author's point of view. For the novel to do this, it must have a believable and consistent point of view so that the readers might sympathize with the narrator and/or the character. The article then went on to list the pros and cons of all points of view. Stating that all POVs used methodically may affect the overall way we perceive the story. First Person Singular makes us empathize with the character more while being an expectant audience, always anticipating whatever the author has in store for that particular character (even the protagonist). Third Person Limited allows for a more fleshed-out narrative of one character at hand. Knowing that character's thoughts all too well and why one conflicts with the protagonist and/or the plot and other characters. This POV, however, limits the audience to that view, similar to First Person Singular POV. Third Person Omniscient lets the reader see everything from the perspective of the protagonist and even everyone else. The only disadvantage to it is that it is overbearing and exhausting, jumping from point A to point B in a matter of chapters. All these POVs make the story part of the characters and vice versa. It allows the reader to reach a particular conclusion and point in the character's arc and the overall plot. Understanding the psychological responses of the main character in the novel to specific events is accomplished by analyzing the protagonist's point of view.

The driving force of a novel or a story is the plot that creates scenes. Each scene formulates lines that help make the story move. It is through dissecting the plot's parts, particularly the scenes and lines, that it helps determine the psychological determinants that affect the main character's response in times of traumatic incidents caused by the plot's dramatic scenes. Focusing on the usage of the plot in the study helps understand the main character's psychological response. It aids in closely examining the character's interior life and emphasizes the conflict found in specific scenes that elicit an emotion. It aids in the formulation of lines in the dialogue, which also assists in depicting the character's subjective thoughts. Integrating these conflicts into the study helps the reader understand the character's real motive, which is rooted in the psychological experiences that the character has had. Point of view influences how a narrative is depicted. It is only by comprehending the character's point of view that emotional judgments can be comprehended. Exploring the protagonist's point of view in the study reveals the reality that shapes the character's emotions during an occurrence.

Chen Kai-Fu of Leshan Normal University in China published a study entitled *A Study of Amir's Psychological Change in The Kite Runner*, an overview of Amir's behavioral change throughout the story. Amir's growth in the story is a process in action throughout the main character's entire life. The view of the people around Amir is that of inspiration, mistrust, and jealousy. Growing up, Amir began to see just how worthless one's own self is due to the circumstances of the main character's upbringing. The study, therefore, explores Amir's growth from childhood to adulthood. By examining Amir's psychological process in the story, it is best to pinpoint the very beginning of what made Amir lose confidence in the first place. To do that, it is best to go back to psychosocial development in general. Throughout this study, Chen Kai-Fu heavily uses Erikson's Theory of Psychosocial Development and carefully analyzes Amir's psychological changes with it (Kai Fu, 2019). Therefore, Chen Kai-Fu credits Amir's behavior towards the surroundings as a product of one's upbringing. Because Amir grew up without a mother, having an indifferent father, Amir became mistrustful of the environment. Chen Kai-Fu also states Amir's jealousy towards Hassan by pointing out how Amir's father prioritizes Hassan more. However, Amir's view towards Hassan would change because of that incident in the alleyway with Assef. Because of Amir's trauma, the main character begins to recuse oneself as a coward. However, that would also change as Amir became increasingly aware of his surroundings and origins (Kai Fu, 2019). As Amir grew more mature and finally found one's role, Amir began to love and devote oneself to something right. The events unfolding during the main character's encounter with Assef and Hassan's son, Sohrab, would ultimately lead to Amir's psychological growth in the story (Kai Fu, 2019). As this study aims to elevate Ajzen and Fishbein's Theory of Planned Behavior to Amir's growth in the story, it explores the development of Amir as a character. It establishes a base timeline that traces Amir's psychological cycles throughout the story. By scrutinizing the story's plot, the study can trace how the main character (Amir) progresses towards the inevitable redemption through a behavior change.

Elizabeth Nita Kurniasih of Sanata Dharma University in Yogyakarta published a study entitled *The Influence of Amir's Guilty Feelings Upon His Self-Concept in Khaleed Hosseini's The Kite Runner*, which looks into Amir's perception of oneself. The study states that Amir's growth in the story is that of eventual approval but is hampered by other circumstances that have to do with the plot and the conflict. Amir could not see life positively in a way that the main character could approve of because of the feeling of worthlessness and cowardness due to guilt. Therefore Amir grows substantially throughout the story and progresses slowly well into adulthood. A prevalent theme in the story is Amir's perception of oneself and how guilt affects it. As is suggested by its title, Elizabeth Nita Kurniasih attributes Amir's poor self-perception of oneself as another product of guilt (Kurniati, 2009). The study credited Amir's trauma as hampering their confidence and thus making Amir more susceptible to feelings of guilt throughout life. It also states that if Amir had been able to share that experience or express more, the main character would have become a better version of oneself and finally let go of that guilt (Kurniati, 2009). However, Amir failed to do so, thus damaging his self-concept and, in turn, making Amir more destructive by hiding feelings as a defense mechanism (Kurniati, 2009). It continues to expound upon Amir's guilt due to the mistakes and thus, it made Amir carry that guilt for decades (Kurniati, 2009). As this study expounds upon the theoretical background of Bem's Self-Perception Theory and by analyzing Amir's internal conflict, the study overviews psychological processes throughout the story.

3. Methodology

This study utilizes a qualitative method, particularly a discourse analysis approach. Qualitative research is used to comprehend the various experiences and viewpoints of the different personalities existing in a society. Discourse analysis is one of the methods applicable for scrutinizing inscribed or conversed language concerning socio-cultural situations. Many approaches exist to support qualitative studies. However, some are versatile only in preserving meaningful contexts when explicating data. The method used for this study provides critical observation or examination and a detailed discussion of the studied work. It also includes a non-statistical display of data interpretation. Through the utilization of this method, Khaleed Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* receives a thorough investigation to achieve the purpose of this study, which is to disseminate the data gathered that upholds the main problem and sub-problems. Moreover, to provide credible and reliable reasoning for literary arguments.

To thoroughly fulfill the objectives of the study, the data-gathering procedure follows three phases: Phase 1. Plot, Phase 2. Conflict, and Phase 3. Point of View.

3.1 Phase 1. Plot

Phase 1 focuses on the evaluation of the plot. The plot is analyzed through Kohlberg's Moral Development Theory and with the use of Freytag's modification of Aristotle's plot structure called Freytag's Pyramid. Also, this phase makes use of scenes and lines extracted from the exposition, inciting incident, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution, and denouement of the novel studied. A table is utilized in Phase 1.

Table 1. Plot Analysis

Elements of the Plot	Scenes	Lines	Psychological Aspect
Exposition			
Inciting Incident			
Rising Action			
Climax			
Falling Action			
Resolution			
Denouement			

3.2 Phase 2. Conflict

Phase 2 centers on the examination of the conflict. The conflict is scrutinized through Bem's Self-perception Theory as the main theory and is supported by Higgin's Theory of Discrepancy and Tajfel and Turner's Social Identity Theory as sub-theories. The literary types of conflict are applied as well, such as Man vs. Man and Man vs. Self. Also, this phase makes use of scenes and lines from the novel studied. Moreover, a table is used in Phase 2.

Table 2. Conflict Analysis

Conflict	Scenes	Lines	Psychological Aspect
Man Vs. Man			
Man Vs. Self			

3.3 Phase 3. Point of View

Phase 3 concentrates on the analysis of the Point of View. The point of view is assessed through Ajzen and Fishbein's Theory of Planned Behavior. The first-person point of view is applied as well. Also, this phase makes use of scenes and lines from the novel studied. Moreover, a table is used in Phase 3.

Table 3. Point of View Analysis

Point of View	Scenes	Lines	Psychological Aspect
Amir			

This study applies the discourse analysis method of the qualitative approach. The method includes a non-numerical presentation of the data analysis of the evaluated literary work. The gathered data in Phase 1 is employed as a reference to explain the Moral-Development of Amir. In Phase 2, the gathered data is employed as a reference to explain Amir's Self-Perception. Also, the data gathered in phase 3 is used to decipher Amir's planned behavior in the story. As this study is qualitative and uses discourse analysis, the study complies with the ethical principles that entail avoiding fraud and overstating the study's objectives. This study is also not involved in any affiliations in schemes of sources funding and evades potential misleading information in presenting primary data findings in a biased approach. As the study employs discourse analysis, which focuses solely on literary works, this study does not involve and violate the rights of human beings and animals. Moreover, this study recognizes and acknowledges the studies' authors applied in the related literature by adequately citing the works used to give proper credit. Furthermore, the primary source of data used in this study is taken from a public domain wherein users can freely access a copy of the novel utilized in this study; thus, it does not violate any laws concerning intellectual properties, such as trademark and copyright infringement.

4. Results/Findings

4.1 Plot

The tables below contain data used to determine Amir's psychological aspect and level of moral development.

Table 1. Exposition Analysis

Element of the Plot	Scenes	Lines	Psychological Aspect
Exposition	Amir received a call from Rahim (A way to be good again)	"I became what I am today at the age of 12."(ch.1)	Recollecting Misconduct
		"I knew it wasn't just Rahim."(ch.1)	Awakening Past Trauma
		"...it was my past of unatoned sins."(ch. 1)	Guilt
		"There is a way to be good again."(ch. 1)	Optimism

At the age of 36, the novel begins with Amir receiving a call from Rahim Khan. Amir's approach to the call gives the readers a hint of what transpires in the story. The line,

I became what I am today at the age of 12

Chapter 1 entails that Amir recollects the misconduct one has committed in the past. Rahim's call triggered the memory of Amir's childhood. It is evident in the lines,

I knew it wasn't just Rahim,

...it was my past of unatoned sins.

Signifying that Amir indeed experienced something traumatic at the age of 12, which led to guilt. Although the following lines in the first chapter clearly show remorse, Amir also exhibits optimism, which is visible in the line,

There is a way to be good again.

Assuming and hoping that Amir could break free from the haunting trauma endured ever since. The psychological aspect present in the exposition represents Amir's perspective of the soon-to-be revealed conflict. A flashback of Amir's childhood then follows in the following chapters to narrate the essential details of the story prior to the presentation of the central conflict. In line with Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development, the study also seeks to determine the moral growth of Amir along with the psychological aspect. Unfortunately, the data gathered on Amir's psychological aspects from the exposition is lacking. Thus, it does not meet the necessary evidence required to conclude logically. So, as the story presented in the exposition continues accordingly in the climax, the analysis of the psychological aspect of both elements of the plot is incorporated to come up with an analysis. Hence, the scene and lines extracted from the exposition help determine the level of moral development of the main character at the age of 36. Also, the incorporated textual analysis of both elements is done below the tabular presentation of data of the climax.

Table 2. Inciting Incident Analysis

Element of the Plot	Scenes	Lines	Psychological Aspect
Inciting Incident	Amir is trying to win Baba's affection, inciting the flight of the situation. (A Kite for your Affection)	"For kite runners, the most coveted prize was the last fallen kite of a winter tournament...(ch. 6)	Goal-driven
		"Then I'd bring it home and show it to Baba. Show him once and for all that his son is worthy...(ch. 7)	Determined
	Hassan is raped by Assef (A Price for a Prize)	"I just watched. Paralyzed."(ch. 7)	Fear
		"...I stopped watching, turned away from the alley... I was weeping"(ch. 7)	Disgust
		"I had one last chance to make a decision..."(ch. 7)	Contemplating
		"In the end, I ran... I ran because I was a coward. I was afraid of what Assef would do to me..."(ch. 7)	Cowardice

In this part of the story, Amir begins the journey to the three levels of Kohlberg’s Theory. The flashback begins about 24 years into the past, back in Kabul, Afghanistan, where the main character is just 12 years old. Amir has always wanted Baba’s affection and yearns to make Baba proud as a child. In the inciting incident, Amir mentioned the line,

*For kite runners, the most coveted prize was the
last fallen kite of a winter tournament.*

The line shows that Amir is goal-driven in the competition because Amir knows that alongside the victory lies the key to Baba’s heart, as shown in one of Amir’s monologues in chapter 6,

*Then I’d bring it home and show it to Baba.
Show him once and for all that his son is worthy.*

Baba’s casual little comment about winning the Kite Running tournament roused Amir’s determination to win it. In order to do this, Amir must employ the help of Hassan, which Hassan readily accepts. The story then escalates, and an incident happens that Amir forever regrets. Assef, a bully and a sociopath, rapes Hassan. Witnessing the incident from afar while hiding, Amir felt fear as apparent in the line,

I just watched. Paralyzed.

Fear made Amir incapable of assisting Hassan, and he just watched the incident from afar, as evident in the monologue,

*Assef knelt behind Hassan, put his hands on Hassan’s hips
and lifted his bare buttocks. I stopped watching,
and turned away from the alley. I was weeping*

In this scenario, Amir is already biting one’s own fist minutes before the raping happened. Amir felt so much fear and disgust that the bite on the fist was hard enough to draw blood. Amir then contemplates if there is a chance of helping Hassan get out of the situation, as visible in the line,

I had one last chance to make a decision...

However, Amir could not do anything about it due to fear and because of another reason, the kite. Amir doubts helping Hassan because Amir is also scared that it would lead to losing the only chance of winning Baba’s affection. So, Amir fled the situation while admitting that the decision was a form of cowardice, as shown in the line,

*In the end, I ran...I ran because I was a coward.
I was afraid of what Assef would do to me.*

Kohlberg’s Moral Development Theory suggests that Amir’s flight of the situation is a personal gain through a decent act of cooperation. Because not only did Amir avoid beating, but Amir also fulfilled Baba’s desire of Amir to conquer the said tournament, which also meant winning Baba’s affection through the kite. All of these happen to be Amir’s self-interest. Thus, the information above concludes that Amir, 12 years old in the inciting incident, identifies with the second stage: the Self-interest of the first level (The Preconventional Level) in Kohlberg’s Moral Development Theory.

Table 3: Rising Action Analysis

Element of the Plot	Scenes	Lines	Psychological Aspect
Rising Action	Amir and Baba were forced out of Afghanistan because of the Soviet Union (Danger after Danger)	“I only knew the memory lived in me, a perfectly encapsulated morsel of a good past...” (ch. 10)	Regret
	Amir and Baba lived in America	“For me, America was a place to bury my memories.” (ch. 11)	Secluding the Past

	(A Place to Bury the Past)	"A pair of steel hands closed around my windpipe at the sound of Hassan's name" (ch. 11)	Guilt
		"Kabul has become a city of ghosts for me. A city of harelipped ghosts" (ch. 11)	Indifferent
		"...I could wade into this river, let my sins drown to the bottom, let the waters carry me someplace far. Someplace with no ghosts, no memories and no sins" (ch. 11)	Forcing To Forget
		"I envied her. Her secret was out. Spoken. Dealt with.(ch. 11)	Envy

The rising action begins with the Soviet Union's invasion of Kabul, a conflict that worsens the state of affairs in Afghanistan. Baba and Amir had to leave to escape the crisis brewing within the country. Throughout the journey, Baba remains vigilant, but Amir is nevertheless afraid. Baba then urges Amir to think of something happy. Amir obliges and reminisces of the past when Amir is flying Kites with Hassan in ankle-deep untamed grass. Amir engrossed oneself in the beautiful memory before becoming fully aware of reality. In chapter 10, Amir said after reminiscing good old memories,

*I only knew the memory lived in me,
a perfectly encapsulated morsel of a good past,
a brushstroke of color on the grey,
barren canvas that our lives had become.*

This line serves as an indication of Amir regretting the decision made back when Hassan was getting raped. Amir ended up feeling guilt from recalling old memories long gone. The chapters that followed are all about Amir and Baba's lives in America, where Amir secludes oneself from the memories of the past, as distinct in the line in chapter 11,

For me, America was a place to bury my memories.

Nevertheless, Amir's guilt still prevails, especially when Baba mentions Hassan, where Amir has this monologue,

*A pair of steel hands closed around my windpipe
at the sound of Hassan's name.*

When Amir said,

*Kabul has become a city of ghosts for me.
A city of harelipped ghosts*

it is evident that Amir is becoming indifferent towards one's hometown because of the terror. Amir feels the burden of accountability for the consequences of the actions made. Amir then defines life in America, saying,

*America was different.
America was a river, roaring along, unmindful of the past.
I could wade into this river, let my sins drown to the bottom,
let the waters carry me someplace far.
Someplace with no ghosts, no memories, and no sins*

The line suggests that Amir is forcing oneself to forget the action done. It is also clear that Amir believes that starting over again in America would open an opportunity to bury away the guilt, freeing oneself from the burden of the past. The guilt persists, however, even after proposing to Soraya. The line:

*I envied her. Her secret was out. Spoken.
Dealt with. I opened my mouth and almost
told her how I'd betray Hassan, lied, driven him out*

and destroyed a forty-year relationship between Baba and Ali. But I didn't...

Chapter 12 states Amir's envy to the point where he almost tells Soraya of one's guilt. Regardless, Amir failed to do so, still clinging to guilt as a means to bury the past. The lines above indicate that Amir remains in the preconventional Level Stage 2. Amir still only thinks of one's well-being and advantage, signifying a lack of progress in Amir's characterization and morality.

Table 4. Climax Analysis

Element of the Plot	Scenes	Lines	Psychological Aspect
Climax	Amir received a call from Rahim (The Past of Unatoned Sins)	"My suspicions had been right all those years..." (ch. 14)	Realization
		"A way to be good again" (ch. 14)	Consideration
		"All of you, you bunch of lying goddamn bastards!" (ch. 17)	Madness
		"I remembered Baba saying that my problem was that someone had always done my fighting for me,". (ch.18)	Triggered the scarred emotions
	Amir fights Assef and rescues Sohrab (Paying the Price)	"I tried to take a breath and couldn't. I tried to blink and couldn't..." (ch. 22)	Stunned
		"... but I felt healed. Healed at last." (ch. 22)	Sense of Relief

The climax continues after the exposition's opening line, wherein Amir starts the story with,

I became what I am today at the age of 12.

The line entails that Amir recollects the misconduct one has committed in the past. Rahim's call triggered the memory of Amir's childhood, which is evident in the lines,

I knew it wasn't just Rahim, ...it was my past of unatoned sins.

When Rahim Khan ends the call by saying there is a way to be good again, Amir realizes that Rahim knows about the hidden past. In chapter 14, Amir says,

My suspicions had been right all those years. He knew about Assef, the kite, the money, and the watch with the lightning bolt hands. He had always known.

Amir repeated Rahim's last words before hanging up,

A way to be good again.

Trying to consider the possibility of ending the lies and deceptions. Amir eventually flew to Peshawar to meet Rahim. There Amir is told of all that happened in Kabul. Rahim told Amir too about Hassan's family. It is also Rahim who revealed that Hassan is Amir's half-brother. After revealing the truth, Rahim told Amir about Sohrab, Hassan's son orphaned in Kabul. Rahim wants Amir to bring Sohrab to Pakistan as a way to pay for Amir's unatoned sins. Amir went mad, of course, to the point of letting loose the words

All of you, you bunch of lying goddamn bastards!

From chapter 17, eventually, Amir exhibited optimism, assuming and hoping that Amir could break free from the trauma of the

past one day. After much contemplation, Amir decided to accept Rahim's request because Amir remembered what Baba's said before. Amir happened to overhear Baba and Rahim Khan talking about Amir when one was still young. Those words damaged Amir's emotions for life, and Rahim Khan triggered Amir's scarred emotions. As shown in the line from chapter 18,

*I remembered Baba saying that my problem
was that someone had always done my fighting for me.*

It is conspicuous that Amir is still trying to live up to Baba's expectations even when Baba's dead. Amir then considers the act of saving Sohrab from the orphanage as a way to end the cycle of lies, betrayals, and secrets. Not long after, Amir traveled to Kabul to find Sohrab. When Amir finally found Sohrab, the most unexpected thing happened. It is Assef who held Sohrab captive. Amir is stunned, as evident in the lines in chapter 22,

*I tried to take a breath and couldn't. I tried to blink and couldn't.
The moment felt surreal– no, not surreal, absurd–
it had knocked the breath out of me, and brought the world around
me to standstill. My face was burning. What was the old
saying about the bad penny? My past was like that, always
turning up. His name rose from the deep, and I didn't want to say
it, as if uttering it might conjure him. But he was already here, in
the flesh, sitting less than ten feet from me after all these years.*

Realizing the situation, Amir feels hopeless about saving Sohrab but still tries to negotiate. Amir ends up getting beaten by Assef to the point of near death. However, Amir rejoiced and laughed instead of crying in pain. In chapter 22, Amir said,

*My body was broken– just how badly I wouldn't find out later–
but I felt healed. Healed at last.*

At this point, Amir feels a sense of relief receiving what one believes as a punishment for the sins committed in the past. Amir thinks one can now finally free oneself of the burden and guilt one has been carrying all those years. The chapter ends with Sohrab slinging a brass ball at Assef hitting the captor in one eye, completely blinding it. After this, Sohrab, together with Amir and Farid, escaped. The incorporated elements of the plot, which are the exposition and the climax, reveal that Amir is now in stage 3: Interpersonal Accord and Conformity of the second level (The Conventional Level) of Kohlberg's Moral Development Theory. The data reveals that Amir tries to live up to and conform to Rahim Khan and Baba's expectations. Also, Amir's decision to bring Sohrab to Pakistan is not only because it's the moral thing to do but also to free oneself from the guilt that torments them. Thus, Amir conforms to social expectations and tries to do good for the sake of being good and to fix the wrongdoings Amir has done in the past.

Table 5. Falling Action Analysis

Element of the Plot	Scenes	Lines	Psychological Aspect
Falling Action	Rahim Lied (A White Lie)	"I guess he goes to Islamabad for now" (ch. 23)	Uncertainty
		"I didn't want his blood in my hands. Not his too" (ch. 24)	Apprehensive

The climax ends with Sohrab escaping a life of physical and sexual abuse at the hands of terrorists. In the falling action, Amir finds out that Rahim lied about John and Betty Caldwell. Thus, the situation forced Amir to take Sohrab to Islamabad. The morning after, Amir wakes up to find that Sohrab's bed is empty. In the line in chapter 24, Amir says with uncertainty about the decision made,

I guess he goes to Islamabad for now.

This shows that it was never Amir's intention to be involved with Sohrab. Still, Amir searches for Sohrab once again to maintain a semblance of social order as Sohrab's uncle. Amir wants nothing more than to rescue Sohrab since Amir is bonded with the unatoned sins still unpaid, not to mention Baba's influence over Amir and Rahim's dying wishes. Amir's guilt shows even clearer thinking of the people Amir had already disappointed before. Amir felt apprehensive about Sohrab's disappearance, as evident in the line,

I didn't want his blood in my hands. Not his too...

As per Kohlberg's Moral Development Theory, the data presented exhibits that Amir is now at Stage 4: Authority and Maintaining Social Order of the second level (The Conventional Level) as Amir's behavior depicts doing one's duty as an uncle maintaining social order but only for one's own sake.

Table 6. Resolution Analysis

Element of the Plot	Scenes	Lines	Psychological Aspect
Resolution	Amir decides to take Sohrab to the United States (A Kinship Exists)	...I saw a kinship had taken root between us too..." (ch. 24)	Sense of Affinity
		"I decided the moment was now, right here, right now, with the bright lights of the house of God shining on us" (ch. 24)	Deciding the perfect moment
		"His parents were executed in the street. The neighbors saw it" (ch. 24)	Giving significant reasons for Sohrab
		"Death certificates? This is Afghanistan we're talking about. Most people there don't have birth certificates" (ch. 24)	Justifying the circumstance
		"What are you saying, that I should throw him back on the streets?" (ch. 24)	Sarcasm
		"He was sexually abused" (ch. 24)	Trying to give light on the situation

The plot then moves to the Resolution with Amir finding Sohrab at the mosque. Amir tries to learn how Sohrab and oneself can recover from the traumas each has endured. Amir also reveals to Sohrab a portion of the hidden guilt of the wrongdoing Amir has done to Hassan years ago. When Sohrab cries in Amir's chest, it is also when the main character's realization kicks in and discovers that a kinship exists. It makes Amir feel affiliated with Sohrab. Considering the moment, for Amir, it is the perfect time to ask Sohrab to come with Amir to the US. As stated in chapter 24 in the lines;

Now, as the boy's pain soaked through my shirt, I saw a kinship had taken root between us two. What had happened in that room with Assef had irrevocably bound us.

As well as in the lines:

I decided the moment was now, right here, right now, with the bright lights of the house of God shining on us.

Taking the boy is a form of redemption for Amir and a fresh beginning as the cycle of lies, betrayals, and secrets end. After that moment, Amir tells Soraya, Amir's wife, everything. As a final act of atonement, Amir tells the story to Soraya. Something Amir dreaded for the past 15 years of marriage and, more than that, Amir's entire life. Amir's pain, regrets, and guilt finally lay bare. Amir had surpassed the final level and the final stage of Postconventional Morality. No more is Amir constrained by society's expectations, for Amir has someone to trust now, and Amir has done what should have been done all those years ago. From a child afraid of the consequences of guilt to a man fully admitting that one is but a victim of circumstances, fully understanding the effects of guilt on one's personhood. With this, Amir completes the character arc and becomes a changed man. Amir asked Soraya's permission to adopt Sohrab in the same plot point. Soraya did not hesitate and agreed with Amir's proposal. Then the story moves

forward with Amir arguing with someone from the American Embassy as the law is not fair for Sohrab's case. Amir gives a significant reason to defend Sohrab shown in the lines

His parents were executed in the street. The neighbors saw it.

The lawyer then asked for Sohrab's birth records. Provoked, Amir snapped back to the lawyer to justify the circumstance saying,

Death certificates? This is Afghanistan we're talking about.

Most people there don't have birth certificates

The lawyer is not helping the situation. Amir, feeling hopeless, responds with sarcasm and says,

What are you saying that I should throw him back on the streets?

The state of affairs vexed Amir; then he strongly responded to the lawyer to throw light on the situation,

He was sexually abused.

These lines are in chapter 24, where Amir tries to fight for Sohrab's rights. In Kohlberg's Moral Development Theory, Amir is now at stage 5: The Social Contract of the final level, the third level (The Postconventional Level), as Amir is now making decisions based on what is morally right.

Table 7. Denouement Analysis

Element of the Plot	Scenes	Lines	Psychological Aspect
Denouement	Amir adopts Sohrab (For You, A Thousand Times Over)	"You see, General Sahib, my father, slept with his servant's wife. She bore him a son and named him Hassan. Hassan is dead now. That boy sleeping on the couch is Hassan's son. He's my nephew. That's what you tell people when they ask" (ch. 25)	Revealing the truth
		"And one more thing, General Sahib, you will never again refer to him as 'Hazara boy' in my presence. He has a name, and it's Sohrab" (ch. 25)	Showing Authority

Amir's character arc then coincides at the very tip of the plot, the Denouement. Amir encounters challenges, especially when Sohrab finally goes home with Amir seven months after the rescue. Sohrab receives a warm welcome from Soraya (Amir's Wife) and Khala Jamila (Soraya's mother), except General Sahib (Soraya's Father). The General mentioned that while Khala Jamila is busy knitting sweaters, General Sahib is busy dealing with the community's perception of one's own family because of Sohrab. Amir snapped back at the General, saying with complete honesty to reveal the truth in the lines,

You see, General Sahib, my father, slept with his servant's wife.

She bore him a son and named him Hassan. Hassan is

dead now. That boy sleeping on the couch is Hassan's son.

He's my nephew. That's what you tell people when they ask

Amir then showed authority over the situation and told the General, as indicated in chapter 25.

And one more thing, General Sahib, you will never again

refer to him as 'Hazara boy' in my presence.

He has a name, and it's Sohrab.

Further developing the moral compass, Amir decides to adopt Sohrab in one’s own household despite Sohrab being a Hazara and Amir’s in-laws being of Pashtun descent. General Sahib sees this as something detestable, yet Amir, unbound by such constraints, thinks otherwise. Further proof of Amir’s development is when Amir tells the General and Khala Jamila about late Baba’s controversial story in place of Amir’s dignity, unabashedly and explicitly laying the facts bare for all to hear. Indeed Amir has become unbothered by the constraints of society and has proven that one has indeed reached the final point of morality. The situation brings Amir’s character arc to an absolute end and proves that an individual can indeed change. The data clearly shows that Amir has reached the last stage, stage 6: The Universal Ethical Principle of the final level, the third level (The Postconventional Level) of Kohlberg’s Moral Development Theory, as Amir protects Sohrab from the unjust society. Data shows that Amir now values morality and conscience more than society’s rules and expectations of Amir’s very being.

The moral developments of Amir in the plot are stage 2: self-interest; stage 3: interpersonal accord and conformity; stage 4: authority and maintaining social order; stage 5: social contract; and stage 6: the universal ethical principle.

Understanding a main character’s moral development is key to recognizing the moral principles at work in the literary piece as well as the factors in play that influences the entire personality of a character. It helps and provides writers with details on how to shape a character that will be able to move the readers, such as moral imagination and character empathy. Most importantly, the discussion above promotes an insight into Amir’s character development, enabling readers to see the main character in the story from a moral perspective.

4.2 Conflict

The tables below contain data used to determine Amir’s psychological aspect and self-perception.

Table 8. Man Vs. Self Analysis

Conflict	Scene	Lines	Psychological Aspect
Man vs. Self	Being torn between being Baba’s son and being himself	“The least I could have done was to have had the decency to have turned out a little more like him. But I hadn’t turned out like him. Not at all” (Ch.3)	Metamorphosing one’s identity
		“Of course, marrying a poet was one thing, but fathering a son who preferred burying his face in poetry books to hunting...” (Ch.3)	A sense of deprecating one’s identity
		“Real men didn’t read poetry” (Ch. 3)	Perceiving self through a specific gender role
	When Hassan asked Amir about his first story	“...I said. I smiled, though suddenly the insecure writer in me wasn’t so sure he wanted to hear it.” (ch. 04)	Lack of self-esteem and uncertainty of self-awareness
		“I was stunned. That particular point, so obvious it was utterly stupid, hadn’t even occurred to me. I moved my lips soundlessly...” (ch. 04)	Unendurable creasing of self-exaltation.
		“ ...What does he know, that illiterate Hazara? He’ll never be anything but a cook. How dare he criticize you?” (ch. 04)	offended by someone lower in status
	When Amir almost blurted out that Hassan is a servant and not a friend	“But he’s not my friend! I almost blurted. He’s my servant! Had I really thought that? Of course, I hadn’t...”(ch. 05)	The sense of denial in the presence of self-justification.
		“...didn’t I ever include Hassan in our games? Why did I play with Hassan only when no one else was around?” (ch. 05)	Acquiring a sense of confusion based on one’s behavior.
	Amir watched Hassan get raped by Assef	“I had one last chance to make a decision. One final opportunity to decide who I was going to be...” (ch. 07)	Making a critical decision
		“Or I could run. In the end, I ran.” (ch.07)	Flight of the situation
		“Assef was right: Nothing was free in this world. Maybe Hassan was the price I had to pay, the lamb I had to slay, to win Baba ...He was just a Hazara, wasn’t he?” (ch. 07)	Self-justification of one’s choice.

Amir felt strange being in his hometown	"I feel like a tourist in my own country" (ch. 19)	Estrangement of one's identity based on nationality.
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In Chapter 3, the conflict of Man vs. Self is observed. After having the conversation with Baba, Amir is conflicted about who to be. The line

*The least I could have done was to have had the decency to have
turned out a little more like him. But I had not turned out like him.
Not at all*

reflects the ought self of Amir as per Higgins' Self Discrepancy Theory. Amir's ought self are the traits that Baba believes that Amir should possess. This line signifies how much Amir desires to metamorphosize one's identity based on another person's expectations, making one perceive it as an obligation to fulfill. The line

*Of course, marrying a poet was one thing, but fathering a son
who preferred burying his face in poetry books to hunting...*

reflects Amir's sense of self disapproval or deprecating of one's identity due to unmet external expectations. While the actual self of Amir plays along with these lines in which Amir is believed to possess the attributes of a poet, unlike how Baba perceives what a son should possess.

*Real men didn't read poetry—and God Forbid they should ever write it!
Real men—real boys—played soccer just as Baba had
when he had been young*

This line reflects the ideal self of Amir, playing soccer and not writing poetry. This then depicts the ideal version of Amir based on Baba's perspective, which is what a father generally wants from a son. Thus, in the belief that the attributes of what one's father possesses must be handed down to a son, Amir then tries to acquire such personalities just to fit into what Baba expects a son should be. According to Tajfel and Turner's Social Identity Theory, individuals have a repertory of different identities dependent on an individual's belonging to a given group. In this case, Amir perceives one's self as somewhat unworthy of Baba's affection since Amir is not capable of living up to the expectations of Baba. This plays a vital role in Amir's social identification, where an individual's perception of self is heavily influenced by how other people perceive one's identity. This line also represents Amir's self-perception in terms of gender roles, which is based on societal standards that men are only expected to participate in manly pursuits and not in activities exclusively done by women. The concept of self-perception theory assumes that people's actions define the entirety of a person, leading to a behavior. People often understand personal feelings and emotions by observing one's circumstances or conduct wherein the behavior occurs, as per the self-perception theory of Daryl Bem. Bem's Self-Perception Theory then suggests that Amir's behavior shows doubt of one's self-identity, which depicts a negative outlook towards oneself.

In Chapter 4, Hassan pointed out a loophole in Amir's first story which Amir did not take lightly. This made Amir's character experience an internal conflict known as Man vs. Self. The notion that Hassan could pinpoint what Amir lacks has dramatically offended the actual self that Amir believed to possess. Amir showed a lack of self-esteem and uncertainty of self-awareness when Hassan asked about the written piece, which is seen in these lines.

But will you permit me to ask a question about the story?

Here, Hassan is clearly showing respect for the ability of Amir to write, but the way Amir responds and thinks about Hassan's question is that that is something offensive, as shown through the line,

*"Tell me, Hassan," I said. I smiled, though suddenly the insecure writer
in me wasn't so sure he wanted to hear it.*

This reflects the inability of Amir to take criticisms from the likes of Hassan, which shows in the following lines.

*I was stunned. That particular point, so obvious it was utterly stupid,
hadn't even occurred to me. I moved my lips soundlessly.
It appeared that on the same night I had learned about
one of writing's objectives, irony, I would
also be introduced to one of its pitfalls: the Plot Hole.
Taught by Hassan, of all people. Hassan who couldn't read
and had never written a single word in his entire life.*

This particular thought signifies the crumbling pride of Amir. The realization has broken down Amir's conceit and sense of superiority towards Hassan, whom a typical Pashtun foresees as someone incapable of doing anything except being a Hazara, a slave of Pashtun. Amir perceived Hassan through a specific category as per Tajfel's Social Identity Theory. The identity which Amir believed to be true is that a Hazara is what Hassan is. As a Pashtun, one has to believe in the superiority of the category that Amir belongs to. Moreover, when slapped with a minor criticism, the likes of Amir, who has a superiority complex towards Hassan, inevitably feel the presence of unendurable damage to one's self-exaltation heavily. In the following lines,

*A voice, cold and dark, suddenly whispered in my ear,
What does he know, that illiterate Hazara?
He'll never be anything but a cook. How dare he criticize you?*

This shows the presence of resentment upon being offended by someone lower in status. The way Amir questioned Hassan's ability to think due to Hassan's illiteracy is deeply rooted in the concept of Hassan being nothing but a cook, which Amir has grown to believe. Amir putting value into Hassan's existence reflects how Amir determines one's social value depending on one's social status. Using Bem's Self-Perception Theory, Amir's behavior of being offended by a bit of comment leads to Amir's uncompromising attitude towards the criticism made by Hassan. While behavior determines attitudes, it is also said that people change one's attitudes to justify behavior. In this situation, Amir is aware that Hassan loves the story and, from the very beginning, considers Hassan as a brother. Amir is also not a stranger to Baba's filial affection towards Hassan. Although aware of all of this, as someone offended, Amir started persuading oneself to believe that Hassan is lower than one's being because Hassan is but a Hazara, an enslaved person who holds no right to criticize a Pashtun. This is to justify Amir's behavior towards the situation.

In Chapter 5, another change of attitude to justify one's behavior occurs after Amir almost blurted out the truth about how Hassan is perceived in some aspects of one's mind. The conflict of Man vs. Self arises within Amir as the need to deny one's perception is heavily needed to justify one's behavior and belief. In the lines

*But he's not my friend! I almost blurted. He's my servant!
Had I really thought that? Of course, I hadn't. I hadn't. I treated
Hassan, well, just like a friend, better even, more like a brother,*

signifies Amir's self-justification in a manner that one uses denial as a way to escape one's prejudice. As per Higgin's representation of self, Amir perceives oneself as someone who does not treat Hassan as just an enslaved person but also as a brother. That is what Amir believes to be the actual self that one possesses. The line

*But if so, then why, when Baba's friends came to visit with their kids,
didn't I ever include Hassan in our games?
Why did I play with Hassan only when no one else was around?*

Implies the realization that Amir acquired upon that incident. Thus, confusion about one's behavior and beliefs is fostered. As the confusion grows, awareness of one's behavior leads to a question that creates an inner conflict within the character. The confusion is because Amir experienced both situations wherein Hassan is being treated like family in one's household. At the same time, the society Amir belongs to treats Hassan as an enslaved person. In Tajfel and Turner's Social Identity Theory, it is evident that Amir psychologically identifies Hassan as belonging to one's in-group and out-group. Bem's Self-Perception Theory signifies that Amir's

chaotic behavior makes one's attitude deceive one's morality. This is also evident in the situation that Amir sees Hassan as a brother and thinks of Hassan as someone of lower status than oneself, making Amir's brotherly treatment of Hassan somewhat pretentious and insincere.

In chapter 7, two conflicts are found. One of the conflicts found is a Man vs. Self wherein a conflicted Amir is watching silently what is happening to Hassan. Amir is in discordance as the situation has left Amir in a moral dilemma that gives him two options: to fight Assef, as shown in this line

*I had one last chance to make a decision.
One final opportunity to decide who I was going to be.
I could step into that alley, stand up for Hassan—
the way he'd stood up for me all those times in the past—
and accept whatever would happen to me*

or to flight, as shown in this line,

Or I could run. In the end, I ran.

As Amir concluded about what is to be chosen amid the conflict, a self-justification is chosen. As per the lines,

*Assef was right: Nothing was free in this world.
Maybe Hassan was the price I had to pay, the lamb I had to slay,
to win Baba. Was it a fair price? The answer floated to my conscious
mind before I could thwart it: "He was just a Hazara, wasn't he?"*

Amir's ought self, which is to suit Baba's perception of a son, plays an important role in Amir's decision-making in this scenario. Also, the line conveys the judgment that Amir ascertained. Using Tajfel's Social Identity Theory, the line

He was just a Hazara, wasn't he?

This shows Amir's perception of Hassan's identity and how Amir perceives selfhood. It clearly shows that in the eyes of Amir, one's self should be prioritized over Hassan, who is considered lowly based on the social categorization in which the value of a person is determined by the category that one belongs to. As behavior is said to determine one's attitude, and Amir's behavior in this situation is goal-directed, Bem's Self-Perception Theory then infers that the attitude Amir is showing is still a deception of one's morality as one still tries to justify one's decision and behavior made in one's moral dilemma.

In Chapter 19, a conflict of Man vs. Self is found as Amir felt strange being in Afghanistan, which one considers home. As shown in these lines,

*I feel like a tourist in my own country, I said, taking in a goatherd
leading a half-dozen emaciated goats along the side of the road.
Farid snickered. Tossed his cigarette. You still think of this place
as your country? I think a part of me always will,
I said more defensively than I had intended.*

Being questioned alone about how one considers what or where a home is, is enough to feel the estrangement of one's identity based on nationality. As Amir spent years in America, it is only natural for people who stayed in Afghanistan to doubt whether an Afghan-born is still an Afghan boy despite being Americanized. As shown in these lines,

*"After twenty years of living in America," he said, swerving the truck
to avoid a pothole the size of a beach ball. I nodded.*

"I grew up in Afghanistan." Farid snickered again.

"Why do you do that?" "Never mind," he murmured.

As shown in those lines, Amir is unsure whether the right to call Afghanistan a home is still possible as the place itself felt more strange than familiar. Using Bem's Self-Perception Theory, data shows that the scenario wherein Amir is put into a situation of feeling strange and being estranged steers the behavior of being defensive, which leads to an attitude of feeling unsure of one's claim. It then influenced the perception of Amir towards selfhood of whether the actual self still belongs to what is considered home or the ought self which is influenced by Farid being the foreigner of one's homeland.

The psychological aspect found in the man vs. self conflicts of Amir is Metamorphosing one's identity, perceiving one's self through a specific gender role based on societal standards, a sense of deprecating one's identity, lack of self-esteem and uncertainty of self-awareness, unendurable creating of one's self-exaltation, sense of denial in the presence of self-justification, a sense of confusion based on one's behavior, critical decision-making, flighting of the situation, self-justification of one's choice, the estrangement of one's identity based on nationality.

Table 9. Man Vs. Man Analysis

Conflict	Scene	Lines	Psychological Aspect
Man vs. Man	When Hassan was cornered by Assef.	"Because today, it's only going to cost you that blue kite. A fair deal, boys, isn't it?" (ch. 07)	A sense of bargaining to gain control.
		Hassan didn't struggle. Didn't even whimper... Saw the resignation in it. It was a look I had seen before. It was the look of the lamb. (ch. 07)	The presence of submission.
	When Amir doesn't want to be near Hassan.	"Lately, every time Hassan was around, I was getting a headache" (ch. 08)	The avoidance of one's mistake/ Guilt
		"...I wished he would give it right back to me, break the door open and tell me off--it would have made things easier, better. ch. 08)	The desperation of chastising one's self.
	Amir asked Hassan to go up the hill with him	"...I wished he would. I wished he'd give me the punishment I craved so maybe I'd finally sleep at night...ch. 08)	Castigating one's self/ putting the blame
		"What am I going to do with you, Hassan? What am I going to do with you?" But by the time the tears dried up, and I trudged down the hill, I knew the answer to that question." ch. 08)	Crying in desperation to be reprimanded.
	Framing Hassan as a thief	"... I wanted that, to move on, to forget, to start with a clean slate. I wanted to be able to breathe again." (ch.09)	Wanting to escape the internal conflict.
	Baba confronted the Russian Soldier	"Baba, sit down, please," I said, tugging at his sleeve. "I think he really means to shoot you." (ch. 10)	Valuing Baba's safety
		"Baba slapped my hand away. "Haven't I taught you anything?" he snapped. (ch. 10)	The sense of disappointment in the incapability to live up to expectations.
	Amir refuses to agree with Rahim Khan's request	"Rahim Khan, you can't be serious." (ch. 17)	The act of defiance.
"...Maybe Baba was right.." (ch. 17)		The astonishment of self-realization.	

Rahi Khan confessed that Hassan was Baba's child.	I'm thirty-eight years old, and I've Just found out my whole life is one big fucking lie!..." (ch. 17)	The sense of losing the self-grip of the truth.
Amir and Assef fighting over Sohrab	"We have some unfinished business, you and I," Assef said. "You remember, don't you?" (ch. 22)	Straightening out a past fragment
Sohrab's attempted suicide	I didn't know what to say, where to look, so I gazed down at my hands. Your old life, I thought. My old life too.." (ch. 25)	Seeing one's reflection in another person's eye
Dinner with the General and Khala Jamila	"You will never again refer to him as 'Hazara boy' in my presence. He has a name, and it's Sohrab." (ch. 25)	Taking a stand for and of one's self

The second conflict of chapter 7 is Man vs. Man, where Hassan is cornered by Assef as a way to get even from the time when Hassan is able to intimidate Assef in order to protect Amir, which happened in chapter 5. In the lines,

You're a lucky Hazara, Assef said, taking a step toward Hassan.

"Because today, it's only going to cost you that blue kite.

A fair deal, boys, isn't it?

There is a sense of bargaining to gain control happening here. The phrase

"You're lucky."

shows the manipulation of depicting an unfortunate incident as something one should be grateful for, and

it's only going to cost you that blue kite. A fair deal, isn't it?

This line signifies that one is trying to gain power over something by manipulating the other person. The line,

Hassan didn't struggle. Didn't even whimper.

He moved his head slightly, and I caught a glimpse of his face.

Saw the resignation in it. It was a look I had seen before.

It was the look of the lamb.

The presence of submission clearly shows here. Hassan's choice to submit to physical domination also emphasizes the absolute submission happening here, complying with Amir's power over Hassan. As you can see in how Hassan is described, it is a way of determining how much Hassan values the importance of the kite to Amir. The presence of submission is not on the physical gaining of control of Assef but the power that Amir always had over Hassan. As per Bem's Self Perception Theory, Amir is put into a situation wherein Amir has to witness a traumatic incident to both Amir and Hassan, which leads Amir to behave behind fear and produces an attitude of both losing control of the situation and gaining the power to what could have been done. Here, Amir is torn between sacrificing the chance to win the ought self of Amir through Baba's perception as per Higgins' Self Discrepancy theory or sacrificing Hassan as per Social Categorization by Tajfel and Turners, which Amir perceives Hassan as someone who should be sacrificed for Hassan's value is based on where Hassan belongs.

In Chapter 8, Amir tries not to be near Hassan as much as possible, which shows the conflict of Man vs. Man. The line,

Lately, every time Hassan was around, I was getting a headache

conveys a need to avoid recalling a particular mistake.

I was getting a headache

It is a line triggering a pang of guilt toward the person that is being around, which in this case is Hassan. Here, the ideal self of Amir is in question as Hassan's perception of the attributes that Amir ideally possesses is a blur. In the lines,

*"I want you to stop harassing me. I want you to go away", I snapped.
I wished he would give it right back to me, break the door open
and tell me off--it would have made things easier, better.*

Analyzing the line through Bem's Self-Perception Theory, Amir's behavior depicts one's desperation to chastise oneself. Amir is placed in a situation that results in one behaving in a way that one sees fit. That behavior led to a significant reaction or attitude that profoundly affected Amir's sense of selfhood. Amir's attitude then led to feeling an intense sense of castigating oneself, and as a solution, a diversion of such emotion into blame is stimulated. As shown in these lines,

*Hit me back!" I spat. "Hit me back, goddamn you!"
I wished he would. I wished he'd give me the punishment I craved,
so maybe I'd finally sleep at night. Maybe then things could
return to how they used to be between us.
But Hassan did nothing as I pelted him again and again.
"You're a coward!" I said. "Nothing but a goddamn coward!"*

It is as if Amir isn't talking to Hassan but to the inner dilemma that is bothering Amir.

*What am I going to do with you, Hassan?
What am I going to do with you?"
But by the time the tears dried up and I trudged down the hill,
I knew the answer to that question.*

Amir is in desperate need of a reprimand from Hassan. It shows unsettled emotions of Amir. Amir's self-perception, therefore, relies on how Hassan perceives Amir's inner nature, thus influenced. Regardless, Amir's social identity still believes that being of Pashtun descent differs and believes that Hassan is nothing but a Hazara and is, therefore, lower on the social stratification.

In Chapter 9, Amir sets up a scenario that frames Hassan as stealing, which indicates a conflict of Man vs. Man. Due to the unresolved inner dilemma of Amir, the act of solving internal conflict through deserting from external conflict is a way for Amir to rectify things. It is clearly shown in the lines,

*He knew I had betrayed him, and yet he was rescuing
me once again, maybe for the last time. I loved him in that moment,
loved him more than I'd ever loved anyone,
and I wanted to tell them all that I was the snake in the grass,
the monster in the lake. I wasn't worthy of this sacrifice;
I was a liar, a cheat, and a thief. And I would have told, except that
a part of me was glad. Glad that this would all be over soon.
Baba would dismiss them, and there would be some pain, but life
would move on. I wanted that to move on, to forget, to start with
a clean slate. I wanted to be able to breathe again.*

Amir is able to resolve the external conflict he created to bury the internal conflict originally there. Along with Bem's Self-Perception Theory, it is apparent that Amir created a situation in which behavior is formed and resulted in an attitude that impacts Amir's self-perception. The attitude that resulted in Hassan showing unwavering loyalty once again made Amir perceive selfhood as someone who is not worthy. However, at the same time, it also created a sense of relief because the moment Hassan did what he did would free Amir from the imprisonment of self with guilt. However, the situation also affected the ideal self of Amir based on Hassan's perception and the actual self of Amir.

In Chapter 10, a conflict of Man vs. Man is found during the scene of the Russian Soldier and Baba's confrontation. As Baba values life principles, Amir, on the other hand, values safety. Amir, along with these lines,

Baba, sit down, please," I said, tugging at his sleeve.

"I think he really means to shoot you.

Renders concern; However, Baba displays a sense of disappointment as Amir demonstrates the inability to live up to the expectations that a man of Baba's status would have for Amir as a son. The disappointment is evident along with, *"Baba slapped my hand away.*

Haven't I taught you anything?" he snapped.

However, the sense of disappointment is not entirely just on Baba's perception but also on Amir, whose ought self and ideal self are undermined. The perception of Baba of Amir's identity significantly affects how Amir perceives selfhood, as Baba is one of the most significant factors in Amir's influence on self-perception. Therefore Amir's ought self comes from Baba's expectations of Amir having the courage and the ideal self-being brave as Baba's perception of a son. Through Bem's Self-Perception Theory, this scenario entails that Amir is still someone who cannot stand up on one's own as one's attitude shows cowardice because Amir displayed the behavior of being scared of the situation and feeling upset with Baba's words.

In Chapter 17, as Rahim Khan's request and confession unfold, a conflict of Man vs. Man is fostered. There is an act of defiance with Amir in the initial stage as Rahim Khan requests something that is not a minor thing for Amir, as shown in the line,

Rahim Khan, you can't be serious."

When Rahim reminisces, one of the conversations happened with Baba, as shown in these lines,

You know," Rahim Khan said, "one time, when you weren't around, your father and I were talking. And you know how he always worried about you in those days. I remember he said to me, 'Rahim, a boy who won't stand up for himself becomes a man who can't stand up to anything.' I wonder, is that what you've become?

The speaker intended to awaken something from within the listener, but Amir's lack of esteem immediately shut it down. As shown along with the lines,

I dropped my eyes. Maybe Baba was right.

"I'm sorry you think that, Amir." I couldn't look at him.

"And you don't?" "If I did, I would not have asked you to come here." I toyed with my wedding ring.

"You've always thought too highly of me, Rahim Khan."

"And you've always been far too hard on yourself."

Here, Amir clearly shows insecurity and realization of how Amir perceives oneself and how Rahim perceives Amir's identity. It shows the ideal self of Amir in the eyes of Rahim, in which Amir is irresolute about how to perceive one's self and dependence of Amir

on other people's opinions on how one's own self perceives selfhood. When the confession of Rahim about the truth regarding Baba and Hassan caused Amir a sense of losing grip on the truth as the reality unfolded, all the lies concealed the truth. The lines,

*I felt like a man sliding down a steep cliff, clutching at shrubs
and tangles of brambles and coming up empty-handed.
The room was swooping up and down, swaying side to side.*

It depicts how one's lie can easily undermine one's conviction.

*"Did Hassan know?" I said through lips that didn't feel like my own.
Rahim Khan closed his eyes. Shook his head."
"You bastards," I muttered. Stood up. "You goddamn bastards!"
I screamed. "All of you, you bunch of lying goddamn bastards!"
"Please sit down," Rahim Khan said. "How could you hide this from me?"
"Amir jan, please don't leave."*

Signifies the loss of control over the things one thought to have under control. Amir is left with confusion about how selfhood should be perceived as the greatest factor of Amir's self-perception; Rahim and Baba's opinions are heavily questioned. As the truth unfolds regarding the lies of the people whom Amir looked up to, so as the identity that Amir holds. Since Amir is heavily influenced by how Rahim and Baba perceive Amir, the representation of self that Amir once believed in is also questioned, as shown in these lines, *"I opened the door and turned to him.*

*Why? What can you possibly say to me? I'm thirty-eight years old
and I've Just found out my whole life is one big fucking lie!
What can you possibly say to make things better?
Nothing. Not a goddamn thing!*

When the truth unfolded, it was also the same moment wherein Amir lost the grasp of one's self identity. The situation in which Amir is put produces behavior that results in an attitude. In this case, it is shown in the line

I opened the door and turned to him."

In contrast, the attitude is physically demonstrated is the reaction from within that affected Amir's perception of self, as seen in the line,

*I'm thirty-eight years old, and I've Just found out my whole
life is one big fucking lie!"*

Using Bem's Self-Perception Theory, Amir appears to be overwhelmed by having the truth laid bare and pities oneself for being fooled by the people Amir looked up to most. Therefore manifests the attitude of not having to care about Rahim's request, as Amir does not feel obligated to the child's existence.

In Chapter 22, a moment of settling the past and straightening its past fragment occurs as Assef and Amir finally meet after years of not remembering each other but never forgetting the scar that one caused to the other. As the line,

*We have some unfinished business, you and I," Assef said.
"You remember, don't you?" "All right," I said, not knowing
what else there was to say. I wasn't about to beg;
that would have only sweetened the moment for him.*

The actual self of Amir is shown as per Higgins Self Discrepancy Theory, wherein Amir is believed to possess the attribute of being fearless regardless of how big the danger is in facing Assef. The ideal self of Amir, on the other hand, is perceived by Assef in the lines

Assef called the guards back into the room.
I want you to listen to me," he said to them. "In a moment,
I'm going to close the door. Then he and I are going to finish
an old bit of business. No matter what you hear, don't come in!
Do you hear me? Don't come in. The guards nodded. Looked
from Assef to me. "Yes, Agha sahib." "When it's all done,
only one of us will walk out of this room alive," Assef said.

As if Amir is someone who can't successfully escape from the challenge being raised. As shown in the line, a huge amount of confidence is emphasized in Assef's character, given the fact that the guards are commanded not to stop Amir assuming that Amir won't even have the chance to. In the line

"If it's him, then he's earned his freedom, and you let him pass, do you understand?" The older guard shifted on his feet.
"But Agha sahib--" "If it's him, you let him pass!" Assef screamed.
The two men flinched but nodded again. They turned to go.
One of them reached for Sohrab. "Let him stay," Assef said. He grinned.
"Let him watch. Lessons are good things for boys."

Shows the Ought self of Amir as per Assef's perception of Amir's selfhood. To Assef, Amir should earn the freedom that Amir and Sohrab are asking for. As per Bem's Self Perception theory, Amir is put into a situation wherein one should fight or flight for a way out, which produces a behavior of not giving into the easier path of fighting just like what the old Amir used to choose when put into a dilemma and that behavior created a courageous attitude that opposes to the Social Identification of Amir that Assef believes to possess. Here, the identity that Assef perceives Amir as someone who is inferior to the real Afghans that Assef conceptualized as per Tajfel and Turner's Social Identity Theory. The comparison between the two is that one seeks to become a better Pashtun based on self-concept, and the other is to become a better person based on being an Afghan.

In Chapter 25, two scenes involve Man vs. Man conflict. In Sohrab's suicide attempt, the lines

What can I do, Sohrab? Please tell me." "I want--" he began.
He winced again and brought his hand to his throat
as if to clear whatever was blocking his voice.
My eyes were drawn again to his wrist, wrapped tightly
with white gauze bandages. "I want my old life back," he breathed.
I didn't know what to say, where to look, so I gazed down at
my hands. Your old life, I thought. My old life too.

This shows that Amir sees selfhood in Sohrab's situation. There is now a shift of Amir's ought self from what Baba used to think that Amir should possess to what Sohrab thinks Amir should possess, which is to bring Sohrab's old life. In the lines,

I can't give you that," I said. "I wish you hadn't--" "Please don't say that.
--wish you hadn't... I wish you had left me in the water."

“Don’t ever say that, Sohrab,” I said, leaning forward. “I can’t bear to hear you talk like that.” I touched his shoulder, and he flinched.”

There is a sense of regret in both Amir and Sohrab. Here, Amir is put into a situation as per Bem’s Self Perception theory which pushes Amir to behave in a regretful manner which creates an attitude in which a sense of desperation to persuade Sohrab is shown. This incident signifies the perception of Amir of selfhood as someone who is still unworthy of Sohrab’s forgiveness but is willing to become worthy of it, as shown in the next line,

*You know, I’ve done a lot of things I regret in my life,” I said,
“and maybe none more than going back on the promise I made you.
But that will never happen again, and I am so very profoundly sorry.
I ask for your bakhshesh, your forgiveness. Can you do that?”*

the way Sohrab perceives oneself is also sees it as a reflection of self for Amir. Another Man vs. Man conflict occurs during the dinner with the General and Khala Jamila. In the lines,

It’s all right.” I turned to the general. “You see, General Sahib, my father, slept with his servant’s wife. She bore him a son named Hassan. Hassan is dead now. That boy sleeping on the couch is Hassan’s son. He’s my nephew. That’s what you tell people when they ask.” They were all staring at me. “And one more thing, General Sahib,” I said. “You will never again refer to him as ‘Hazara boy’ in my presence. He has a name, and it’s Sohrab.”

This signifies alignment of the Ideal self that Hassan and Rahim Khan’s perception of Amir, which is someone who can forgive one’s self, as well as Baba’s perception of what Amir ought self to possess, which is a man who can stand for one’s self to the Actual self of Amir in the present as per Higgins Self Perception Theory. The identification that Amir now believes to belong to is a Pashtun who has a Hazara half-brother and nephew, as per Tajfel and Turner’s Social Identity Theory. Amir is placed in a situation which creates a behavior of manning up and taking accountability for one’s actions which produce an attitude that makes Amir take a stand for and of one’s self as per Bem’s Self Perception Theory. The psychological aspect found in the Man vs. Man conflicts of Amir is a sense of bargaining to gain control, the presence of submission, the avoidance of guilt, the desperation of chastising one’s self, castigating one’s self, crying in desperation to be reprimanded, wanting to escape the internal conflict, sense of disappointment in incapability to live up to expectations, the act of defiance, astonishment of self-realization, sense of losing self-grip of the truth, straightening out the past fragment, seeing one’s reflection in another person’s eye, and taking a stand for and of one’s self.

The self-perception found in both of the conflicts of Amir is doubt of one’s self-identity, superiority, pretentiousness and insincerity, self-prioritization, desperation to chastise oneself, unworthy, cowardice, loss of grasp of one’s self-identity, willingness to become worthy, and holding accountability to one’s action.

Understanding a character’s self-perception promotes an understanding of how a character’s self-concept affects its judgment and actions. Learning how a character perceives oneself helps the reader understand how that character sees the world. This will help writers how to create scenarios that help develop both the character and the story. This will also enable readers to put themselves in the shoes of the character in a much more clear and detailed perspective.

4.3 Point of View

The table below contains data used to analyze Amir’s psychological aspect and planned behavior.

Table 10. Beginning of Amir’s Trauma Analysis

Point of View	Scene	Lines	Psychological Aspect
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Amir	Hassan is raped by Assef	"...three boys, the same three boys from that day on the hill" (ch. 7)	Remembering the encounter with the three boys
		"I opened my mouth, and almost said something. Almost..." (ch. 7)	Feeling petrified
		"One final opportunity to decide who I was going to be..." (ch. 7)	Analyzing what should be done
		"I ran because I was a coward. I was afraid of Assef and what he would do to me" (ch. 7)	Cowardice
		"...the real reason I was running was that Assef was right: Nothing was free in this world" (ch. 7)	Justifying behavior by deceiving one's morality
		"Maybe Hassan was the price I had to pay, the lamb I had to slay, to win Baba. Was it a fair price?" (ch. 7)	Convincing oneself with reasons
		"He was just a Hazara, wasn't he?" (ch. 7)	Invalidating Hassan's ethnicity
	Amir feels suffocated around Hassan	"...saw each other in a way that we never had before." (ch. 8)	Content of the results
		"...gasping in my own little airless bubble of atmosphere..." (ch. 8)	Tormenting guilt
		"Forgive? But theft was the one unforgivable sin, the common denominator of all sins?"(ch. 9)	Angry and Jealous
		"...Either way, this much had become so clear: one of us had to go." (ch. 9)	Determined to execute the plan
		"...I lifted Hassan's mattress and planted my new watch and a handful of Afghani bills under it"(ch. 9)	Framing Hassan as a thief

In chapter 7, Amir goes out searching for Hassan, assuming that Hassan took possession of the blue kite, which is Amir's key to Baba's affection. Amir then locates Hassan in the bazaar, but only to witness Hassan being raped by Assef. The dilemma puts Amir in a tough spot as Amir, at that time, is also trying to win Baba's affection through the Kite Running Tournament. In the line,

*One final opportunity to decide who I was going to be.
I could step into that alley, stand up for Hassan—
the way he'd stood up for me all those times in the past—
and accept whatever would happen to me.
Or I could run*

Amir is trying to analyze what matters most during that time and what Amir should be doing in the introduced moral conflict. In Amir's behavioral belief, Amir appears to believe that if oneself stands up for Hassan, the consequence would be getting hurt too. This belief is evident in the line,

*I ran because I was a coward.
I was afraid of Assef and what he would do to me,*

From chapter 7, in which Amir admitted that, it is indeed an act of cowardice. Amir's normative belief also tells that Amir thinks that it's okay to desert the situation because Amir justified the behavior by deceiving one's morality, making Amir's self believe that Assef is right in saying that nothing is free in the world. Thus, Amir ends up believing that Hassan is the price to pay in mending Amir's relationship with Baba. Amir then says,

*I actually aspired cowardice,
because the alternative, the real reason I was running,
was that Assef was right: Nothing was free in this world",
Maybe Hassan was the price I had to pay,
the lamb I had to slay, to win Baba. Was it a fair price?*

and answers himself with a line invalidating Hassan's emotion and rights as a human being, as seen in chapter 7,

He was just a Hazara, wasn't he?

In this scenario, Amir can also be seen trying to do something for Hassan, but the situation is hard for 12-year-old Amir to act, especially when Amir is caught between choosing to abandon the desire of having a father's affection or abandon Hassan instead, who needs saving. Although struggling to make a moral decision, Amir's concern over Hassan still shows as apparent in the line,

*I opened my mouth, almost said something. Almost.
The rest of my life might have turned out differently if I had.
But I didn't. I just watched. Paralyzed.*

However, the factors mentioned above also hold an impact on Amir's control belief towards saving Hassan, also considering that Amir is aware of the difference in numbers as there are only two to fight three. The boys are also the same boys with whom both Amir and Hassan had a bad encounter on a hill. This is evident in the line,

*Blocking Hassan's way out of the alley were three boys,
the same three boys from that day on the hill.*

Since the data gives a clear perspective of Amir's hesitation and doubt over the situation, thinking that saving Hassan would cost Amir's relationship with Baba, Amir then decides that oneself is incapable of rescuing Hassan. Being so, Amir's behavior then ended up fleeing the situation to save oneself from danger and, at the same time, getting what one has always desired, Baba's affection.

In chapter 8, Amir said the line,

*For at least a few months after the kite tournament, Baba and I immersed
ourselves in a sweet illusion saw each other in a way that
we never had before,*

which signified Amir's success in showing the blue kite to Baba after sacrificing Hassan. However, Amir cannot escape guilt as it started haunting one's conscience ever since witnessing Hassan's rape. Amir then started feeling suffocated by the thought of Hassan, tormenting one's sanity with or without Hassan's presence in sight, as shown in the line,

*My chest tightened, and I couldn't draw enough air;
I'd stand there, gasping in my own little airless bubble of atmosphere.
But even when he wasn't around, he was.*

Because of this, Amir tries to find a way to kick Hassan out of one's life. While planting tulips in the garden, Amir asked Baba if it was possible to get new servants. Unfortunately, Baba didn't take Amir's question lightly and got disappointed. Baba told Amir that Hassan and Ali are families and then ended the conversation by saying that Amir brings shame to Baba. As the first attempt to get rid of Hassan failed, Amir resorted to framing Hassan as a thief instead. The line,

*Maybe it was for the best. Lessen his suffering. And mine too.
Either way, this much had become so clear: one of us had to go,*

portrays Amir's determination to remove Hassan from one's life to escape one's agony of being tormented by guilt. Amir then executed one's plan, as evident in the line,

*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.*

Amir's plan is effective because when Baba finds out about it, Baba calls out Hassan and Ali's presence to talk about the situation. Amir expected Baba to evict both Ali and Hassan. However, Baba only said that Hassan was forgiven. Amir then says to oneself,

*Forgive? But theft was the one unforgivable sin,
the common denominator of all sins?*

This line from chapter 9 entails that Amir intended to frame Hassan as a thief knowing what Baba said before about stealing. And that is, for Baba, stealing is the most unforgivable sin. This makes Amir feel mad and jealous as one wonders how come Baba could

easily forgive Hassan for stealing when Baba hasn't forgiven Amir for not being the son a father had always wanted. Regardless of being forgiven, Ali asked to respectfully remove one's self and Hassan from both Amir and Baba's lives to avoid any more conflicts. Although Baba vehemently disagrees with the idea, pleading Ali to stay. Nevertheless, Ali had already made the decision, making Amir's plan of kicking out Hassan successful.

Table 11. Resurfacing of Amir's Trauma Analysis

Point of View	Scene	Lines	Psychological Aspect
Amir	Rahim Khan wants Amir to rescue Sohrab from the orphanage	"...Kabul is a dangerous place, you know that, and you'd have me risk everything for..." (ch. 17)	Hesitates to risk for a lowly hazara.
		"...a boy who won't stand up for himself becomes a man who can't stand up for anything.' I wonder, is that what you've become?" (ch. 17)	Remembering Baba's expectations
		"...Rahim Khan had summoned me here to atone not just for my sins but for Baba's too." (ch. 18)	Becoming fully aware of reality
		"...had been a cycle of lies, betrayals, and secrets." (ch. 18)	Feeling betrayed
		"There is a way to be good again, he said. A way to end the cycle with a little boy. An orphan. Hassan's son. Somewhere in Kabul" (ch. 18)	Determined
		"I remember Baba saying that my problem was that someone had always done my fighting for me." (ch. 18)	Recalling the criticism received
	"...Hassan had loved me once, loved me in a way that no one ever had or ever would again. He was gone now, but a little part of him lived on. It was in Kabul." (ch. 18)	Reminiscing Hassan's love	
	Amir decides to bring Sohrab to the U.S.	"You have to bring him home. I want you to." "Amir, he's your qaum, your family, so he's my qaum too." (ch. 24)	Thinking of Sohrab as Family
		"I think we'll be good for your nephew, but maybe that little boy would be good for us too." (ch. 24)	Ecstatic
		"...That makes things extremely complicated. Just about impossible.." (ch. 24)	Vexed
"I mean to pursue this." (ch. 24)		Unwavering of the problems	
"...the key to getting Sohrab into the country..." "... plenty of time to apply for an adoption petition." (ch. 24)		Planning for Sohrab's adoption	

In chapter 15, Amir then decides to fly all the way to Peshawar, where Rahim Khan is, only to receive a confrontation of one's guilt and a revelation of the truth. Rahim Khan says that there is a way to be good again, and this is through rescuing Sohrab, who is Hassan's son, from an orphanage in Kabul. At first, Amir hesitated, thinking that risking everything for a mere hazara is not worth it, as evident in the line in chapter 17,

*I have a wife in America, a home, a career, and a family.
Kabul is a dangerous place; you know that,
and you'd have me risk everything for...*

Despite this excuse, Rahim Khan makes sure to make Amir remember Baba's expectations of a son, as shown in the line,

*Rahim Khan said, one time, when you weren't around,
your father and I were talking. And you know how he
always worried about you in those days.
I remember he said to me, 'Rahim, a boy who won't stand up
for himself becomes a man who can't stand up for anything.'
I wonder, is that what you've become?*

This is because Amir's weakness has always been one's, own father. That is why as a son, Amir tries to live up to Baba's expectations in spite of Baba having passed away already. Rahim Khan's efforts to persuade Amir to do such an act are a success when Amir finally starts becoming fully aware of reality and feeling betrayed by one's own father, as evident in the lines,

*And with that came this realization: that Rahim Khan
had summoned me here to atone not just for my sins
but for Baba's too.*

and

*I wished Rahim Khan hadn't called me.
I wished he had let me live on in my oblivion.
But he had called me. And what Rahim Khan revealed to me
changed things. Made me see how my entire life,
long before the winter of 1975, dating back
to when that singing hazara woman was still nursing me,
had been a cycle of lies, betrayals, and secrets.*

In Amir's behavioral belief, one thinks that saving Sohrab would put an end to the cycle of lies, betrayals and secrets shown in the line in chapter 18,

*There is a way to be good again, he said.
A way to end the cycle with a little boy. An orphan.
Hassan's son. Somewhere in Kabul.*

The line also shows Amir's determination to end the cycle through Hassan's son. Amir's normative belief then lies in Baba's expectations of what a son should be, making Amir insistent on bringing Sohrab to Peshawar as what Rahim Khan wants. This is also because Amir remembers one of Baba's criticisms, as shown in the line,

*I remember Baba saying that my problem was that someone
had always done my fighting for me.*

In the control belief of Amir, although not knowing Sohrab's whereabouts and having no actual control of the situation because of the fact that Kabul has become a dangerous place, the line,

*My brother's face. Hassan had loved me once,
loved me in a way that no one ever had or ever would again.
He was gone now, but a little part of him lived on. It was in Kabul.*

Shows clarity of Amir's determination to rescue Sohrab as one reminisces the brotherly affection Amir had received from Hassan. All of the data above lead to Amir's behavior of traveling to Kabul to save Sohrab.

In chapter 23, Amir finds out that Rahim Khan lied about John and Betty Caldwell. This forced Amir to bring Sohrab to Islamabad while thinking of a solution to the situation Rahim Khan left Amir with. Amir ends up considering adopting Sohrab, as one thinks this is what Rahim Khan wants one to do, knowing that Rahim Khan lied about the Caldwells. In this situation, Amir's behavioral belief shows that adopting Sohrab would be good for Soraya. It is evident in the lines where a conversation between Amir and Soraya states,

*And you? Are you happy?
I think we'll be good for your nephew,
but maybe that little boy would be good for us too.*

and

I was thinking the same thing.

This time, Amir's normative belief lies in Soraya because after Amir revealed everything to one's wife, Soraya said the lines,

You have to bring him home. I want you to.

and

Amir, he's your qaum, your family, so he's my qaum too.

Soraya's words make Amir fixated on making things right. Thus Amir's intention of adopting Sohrab is one of determination to do so as it is the right thing to do. Amir's control belief is then shaken when the embassy shows no hope of accepting Sohrab, and it is shown in the line from chapter 24,

*Your problem is that you need the cooperation of the
child's country of origin. Now, that's difficult under the
best circumstances, and, to quote you,
This is Afghanistan we're talking about.
We don't have an American embassy in Kabul.
That makes things extremely complicated. Just about impossible.*

Amir's actual control over the situation is that one is capable of rescuing Sohrab through the help of other people enabling Amir to plan out and prepare for Sohrab's adoption process, as evident in Amir and Soraya's conversation,

*"I heard back from Kaka Sharif. He said the key to getting
Sohrab into the country. Once he's in, there are many ways of keeping him here. So he made a few calls to his INS
friends.
He called me back tonight and said he was almost certain he could get Sohrab a humanitarian visa.",
No kidding? Oh, thank God! Good ol' Sharifjan!,
Anyway, we'll serve as the sponsors. It should
all happen pretty quickly. He said the visa would be good for a year, plenty of time to apply for an adoption petition.
It's really going to happen, Soraya, huh?*

and

It looks like it, she said, sounding happy.

All of the data above leads to Amir adopting Sohrab. The planned behaviors found in Amir's point of view are to escape from the situation, plant a scheme to frame Hassan, travel to Kabul to find Sohrab, and introduce Sohrab to his wife and in-laws.

Understanding a character's behavior which deals with decision-making and actions, will help writers identify what a character needs in order for the story to develop. This also aids them in discerning how the character's background was established and how it becomes the foundation of the optimal scenario. To the readers, this study will help them understand the character more deeply, enabling them to critically analyze the character.

5. Conclusion

The findings of the study inferred that Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* reveals psychological aspects. The findings of this study are as follows:

1. The moral developments of Amir in the plot are self-interest, interpersonal accord and conformity, authority and maintaining social order, social contract, and the universal ethical principle.
2. The self-perception found in the conflicts of Amir is doubt of one's self-identity, superiority, pretentiousness and insincerity, self-prioritization, desperation to chastise oneself, unworthy, cowardice, loss of grasp of one's self-identity, willing to become worthy, and holding accountability to one's action.
3. The planned behaviors found in Amir's point of view are to escape from the situation, planting a scheme to frame Hassan, traveling to Kabul to find Sohrab, and introducing Sohrab to his wife and in-laws.

Amir, the narrative's central protagonist, is subjected to occurrences and psychosocial processes that are parallel towards what living beings encounter in actual situations. The analysis of how Amir's traumas and emotional factors affected his entire personality aid the recipients of this study in better understanding the following:

1. How it influences attitudes, personal opinions, and self-conceptualization;
2. How it affects behavioral approaches, mindsets, and decision-making; And lastly,
3. How it impacts moral beliefs and affects moral development as one grows.

Literary students and lecturers can develop and extend interest in broken characters and appreciate the significance of imparting the human aspect of a fictional character. This study can also provide valuable insight into the psychology of a character-driven plot. The scope of the study focuses on the psychological aspect of the main character of the novel. Moreover, this study is limited only to discovering the self-perception, moral development and planned behaviors of the main character through scrutinizing the plot, conflicts, and point of view present in Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*.

The following recommendations are hereby offered for future research:

1. Plot is analyzed through Aristotelian Plot Structure to extract additional information in Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*.
2. Conflict is examined using Man vs. Nature and Man vs. Society to acquire more details from the conflict that reveal more of the psychological aspects.
3. Point of View is scrutinized using monologue to obtain more traits of the main character for further findings other than what is found.

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