**Stage 2 English**

Assessment Type 1: Responding to Texts

*In what ways does Khaled Hosseini explore the idea that the past is never over in The Kite Runner?*

Khaled Hosseini explores the idea that the past is never over in *The Kite Runner* through various techniques. He explores this idea through the impact that one singular past event can have in shaping the characters' lives and defining their futures. The reoccurring motif of the sacrificial lamb is also used by Hosseini to serve as a reminder to the audience and characters that their past is always with them. A defining theme portrayed by Hosseini in *The Kite Runner* is Amir's and Baba's search for atonement for their past lapses of integrity.

Hosseini demonstrates that the past is never over through the idea that singular events define the future. One important example of this is Baba fathering Hassan. Subsequent events in the novel are shaped by Baba's lack of closeness with Amir and his support of Hassan. Baba's reluctance to show affection for Amir, as he cannot do the same for Hassan, leads to Amir feeling shunned. This desire for Baba's affection and attention drives Amir to betray his friend. The rape of Hassan in the alley could have been prevented by Amir if he did not believe that bringing the kite home would earn him Baba's affection and admiration.

*"Maybe Hassan was the price I had to pay, the lamb I had to slay, to win Baba."*

*{Page73}*

This demonstrates that the past is ever present, as it affects the way in which Amir behaves. Amir's guilt haunts him, and in an attempt to get away from his memories, he drives Hassan and Ali out of the house. This, in turn, magnifies Amir's guilt for betraying Hassan, believing that if he hadn't caused Ali and Hassan to leave; their lives would have ended less tragically.

*"I had driven Hassan and Ali out of the house. Was it too far-fetched to imagine that things would have turned out differently if I hadn't?" (Page 209)*

The sins committed by Baba and Amir in their betrayal of Ali and Hassan, thereby led to subsequent events in *The Kite Runner*. Baba and Amir going to America without Ali and Hassan arguably resulted in the tragedy of Ali and Hassan's deaths in Afghanistan. This sequence of events demonstrates Hosseini exploring the idea that the past shapes the future as it begins with Baba fathering Hassan; thus, the past defines future events.

Hosseini uses the sacrificial lamb as an important religious motif in *The Kite Runner* as it serves as a reminder to Amir of his guilt; thus demonstrating that the past is never over as he cannot escape it. The sacrifice of a sheep is a religious tradition on the day of Eid ai-Adha or Festival of Sacrifice. The power a slaughterer has over the sacrificial animal is similar to the complete mental and physical domination a rapist has over the victim. This can be seen with Assef’s rapes of Hassan and Sohrab. Amir uses the metaphor of a sacrificial lamb about to be slaughtered to describe Hassan before he is raped by Assef.

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*"I caught a glimpse at his face. Saw the resignation in it. It was a look I had seen before. It was the look of the lamb."(Page 71)*

Amir sees the sacrifice of Hassan as the price he has to pay in order to earn Baba's affection. Sohrab is also compared to a sacrificial lamb by Amir, with the recollection of the mascara that was applied to the sheep's eyes before its throat was slit.

*"Sohrab's eyes flicked to me. They were slaughter sheep's eyes. They even had mascara." (Page 262)*

Unlike the metaphor of Hassan as a sacrificial lamb, Sohrab is not being sacrificed by Amir. Instead, Hosseini's metaphor of Sohrab as a sacrificial lamb represents the destruction of a young, innocent life. This demonstrates Hosseini exploring the idea that the past is never over, as Amir saving Sohrab from Assef is his redemption from the guilt he has carried since sacrificing Hassan.

Hosseini explores the idea of the past influencing the future through the theme of atonement. Amir's past haunts him until he finds peace in saving Sohrab and being beaten by Assef. Amir's guilt fuelled search for redemption from abandoning Hassan to be raped leads to him returning to Afghanistan.

*"I knew it wasn't just Rahim Kahn on the line. It was my past of unatoned sins."   
(Page 1)*

It is evident that Amir defines himself by his past as he carries it with him even after he moves to America. Amir also realises how alike he and his father are in the sense they both betrayed the people who would have done anything for them. Baba also tries to redeem himself from his past. His guilt for fathering Hassan and shunning Amir is exhibited by him building the orphanage and attempting to atone for his sins through helping other people. Therefore, Hosseini explores the idea that the past is always there through the theme of redemption from guilt which Amir and Baba strive for throughout *The Kite Runner*.

In conclusion, the idea that a singular past event can impact the future is one way in which Hosseini explores the persistence of the past. This can be seen with Baba fathering Hassan affecting subsequent events in *The Kite Runner*. The idea that the past is never over is successfully explored by Hosseini through the reoccurring motif of a sacrificial lamb as a metaphor for both Hassan and Sohrab. The roles of a slaughterer and a rapist are similar in the dominance they exert over their victim. Furthermore, the theme of redemption is used to demonstrate that the past is never over by Hosseini as it is evident that Amir and Baba define themselves by their past actions which fuel their need for atonement.

**Performance Standards for Stage 2 English – Grade: B+**

| - | **Knowledge and Understanding** | **Analysis** | **Application** |
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| **A** | Comprehensive knowledge and understanding of ideas and perspectives in a range of texts.  Thorough knowledge and understanding of ways in which creators of texts use a range of language features, stylistic features, and conventions to make meaning.  Extensive knowledge and understanding of a wide range of ways in which texts are created for different purposes, audiences, and contexts. | Complex analysis of ideas, perspectives, and/or aspects of culture represented in texts.  Perceptive analysis of language features, stylistic features, and conventions used in texts, and thoughtful evaluation of how these influence audiences.  Critical analysis of similarities and differences when comparing texts. | Versatile and precise use of language and stylistic features to create a wide range of coherent texts that address the purpose, audience, and context.  Fluently integrated use of evidence from texts to develop and support a response.  Sophisticated use of accurate, clear, and fluent expression. |
| **B** | Knowledge and understanding of ideas and perspectives in a range of texts.  Knowledge and understanding of ways in which creators of texts use a range of language features, stylistic features, and conventions to make meaning.  Knowledge and understanding of a range of ways in which texts are created for different purposes, contexts, and audiences. | Detailed analysis of ideas, perspectives, and/or aspects of culture represented in texts.  Detailed analysis of language features, stylistic features, and conventions, and evaluation of how these influence audiences.  Clear analysis of similarities and differences when comparing texts. | Accurate use of language and stylistic features to create a range of coherent texts that address the purpose, context, and audience.  Appropriate use of evidence from texts to develop and support a response.  Consistent use of accurate, clear, and fluent expression. |
| **C** | Knowledge and understanding of some ideas and perspectives in texts.  Knowledge and understanding of ways in which creators of texts use some language features, stylistic features, and conventions to make meaning.  Knowledge and understanding of ways in which everyday texts are created for different purposes, contexts, and audiences. | Analysis of some ideas and perspectives represented in texts.  Description and some analysis of different language features, stylistic features, and conventions, and/or some evaluation of how these influence audiences.  Analysis of some similarities and differences when comparing texts. | Generally accurate use of language and stylistic features to create texts that address the purpose, context, and audience.  Selection of some evidence from texts to develop and support a response.  Appropriate use of accurate, clear, and fluent expression. |
| **D** | Knowledge and understanding of some ideas in a narrow range texts.  Some knowledge and understanding of ways in which creators of texts use language features and conventions to make meaning.  Knowledge and understanding of ways in which some everyday texts are created for different purposes and audiences. | Description of some ideas in texts.  Description of some language features, stylistic features, and/or conventions.  Description of some similarities and differences in texts. | Use of some language and stylistic features to create a narrow range of texts.  Partial use of basic evidence from texts to develop a response.  Inconsistent use of expression. |
| **E** | Identification of an idea in a text.  Identification of a limited range of ways in which creators of texts use language techniques.  Recognition of one or more ways in which a familiar text is created. | Reference to an idea in a text.  Recognition of language or stylistic features.  Recognition of a simple connection between texts. | Restricted use of language or stylistic features to create a text.  Limited use of evidence from a text in a response.  Limited use of clear expression. |