"If they had let Hitler finish what he had started, the world would be a better place now" (Asseff)

*The novel shows the horrors of religious extremism through the attitudes and behaviour of the Taliban.
*Central to the novel is the division between the two factions of Afghan society: the politically and financially superior Sunni Pashtuns and the oppressed Shi'a Hazaras.
*The protagonists, Amir and Hassan, represent the two different ethnic groups and the different lives lived by those with and those without political power.
*After the rise of the Taliban the divisions are intensified because the Taliban are largely Pashtuns.
*The Soviet invasion is represented on a domestic level through the attempted rape of a young Afghan woman by a Russian soldier.
*Towards the novel's close the time frame moves to post 9/11. Hosseini shows how Afghanistan's misery increases with the American bombing.

Some Twentieth Century KEY CONCEPTS…

**OPPRESSION : FREEDOM**

**CONFORMITY : REBELLION**

**MEGALOMANIA : VICTIMHOOD**

**BETRAYAL : REDEMPTION**

**HIERARCHY/ POWER, STATUS**

“My body was broken—just how badly I wouldn’t find out until later—but I felt healed. Healed at last. I laughed.”

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**KHALED HOSSEINI**

An American novelist and physician.
* After graduating from college, he worked as a doctor in California, a predicament that he likened to "an arranged marriage."
* Although both his parents are Muslim, his father didn't impose Islamic beliefs on his children; calling the religious teachers at his son's school 'stupid mullahs'. Consequently, Hosseini says that he is not a devout Muslim.
* He was born in Kabul, Afghanistan, in 1965.
* His father was a diplomat in the Afghan Foreign Ministry
* In 1976, the Foreign Ministry relocated the Hosseini family to Paris.
* They were ready to return to Kabul in 1980, but by then their homeland had witnessed a bloody communist coup and the invasion of the Soviet Army.
* The Hosseinis sought and were granted political asylum in the United States.
* Hosseini is also a U.S. Goodwill Envoy to the UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, and the founder of The Khaled Hosseini Foundation, a non-profit that provides humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan.