



THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NATURE AND HUMAN PSYCHE IN *THE KITE RUNNER*

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Abstract:

In Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*, we as readers witness many stages of the Afghan history. Many socio-political events such as the fall of Afghan monarchy, the Soviet invasion, the Taliban's regime in Afghan history are given through the life story of Amir and Hassan, two Afghan boys. In the novel, the struggle for power (in politics and in daily life) and avarice of human beings (in every field of life) begin to destroy Amir and Hassan's lives as well as the environment. Eventually, everything begins to fall apart in Afghanistan. What is significant in the novel is that at the hands of the Afghan writer Khaled Hosseini, every single natural element (such as a tree, a flower or a drop of rain) may become a tool to reflect the psychology of the characters in *The Kite Runner*. Thus, the destruction of the nature with bombs or wars destroys not only the environment, but also the human nature/human psyche, which results in the loss of moral values as well. On the other hand, an awakening in the nature may also lead to a psychological awakening or to a realisation in the human beings. Therefore, in this paper, the relationship between nature and human psyche will be studied and will be illustrated with examples from Khaled Hosseini's novel, *The Kite Runner*.

Keywords: Khaled Hosseini, *The Kite Runner*, Afghanistan, Nature, Human Psyche, Environmentalism.

Introduction

Emerson suggests that "[p]articular natural facts are symbols of particular spiritual facts" and as in line with this idea "[n]ature is the symbol of spirit" (Holman, 1972: 521). Accordingly, "symbolism becomes a distinctive feature" (Holman, 1972: 521) of Khaled Hosseini's novel, *The Kite Runner*. The protagonist Amir, who is from a wealthy Pashtun family and Hassan, who is from a Hazara family and whose father, Ali works as a servant in Amir's house grow up together in Kabul and playing many games such as running kites in the sky in the old good days of Afghanistan. Even from the beginning of the novel, it can be observed that the title of the novel has natural connotations and running kites in the sky can easily be associated with the concepts of freedom and eternity. Sometimes, kites are even defined as paper birds (Hosseini, 2004: 321), which are symbols of freedom since they can fly all over the world. What is striking in the novel is that there is a kind of idyllic atmosphere and the playgrounds of Amir and Hassan are mostly green places¹ having willow trees, pomegranate trees and so on. To exemplify, they often visit a pomegranate tree, under whose shadow they read stories and play games. "One summer day, I used one of Ali's kitchen knives to carve our names on it: 'Amir and Hassan, the sultans of Kabul.' Those words made it formal: the tree was ours" says Amir in the novel and as their carved names on the tree grow, their friendship grow, as well. However, later on, through a letter written to Amir by Hassan, the reader is informed that "the tree hasn't borne fruit in years", which can be taken as the symbol of Amir's infertility problem in his adult years. Notice that the "pomegranate" tree symbolises "fertility" (Erol, 2002: Mythology Course Notes) not only in Greek culture and mythology, but also in Afghan culture, too. Moreover, they sit under the shadow of acacia tree and play games with watermelon seeds. Amir states that, "[w]hen I was very little, Baba took Hassan and me to Kunduz. I don't remember much about the trip, except sitting in the shade of an acacia tree with Baba and Hassan, taking turns sipping fresh watermelon juice from a clay pot and seeing who could spit the seeds farther" (Hosseini, 2004: 316). Besides, their childhood memories are full of natural images such as dried mulberries and walnuts. This is expressed in the following passage: "The park shimmered with snow so fresh, so dazzling white, it burned my eyes. It sprinkled soundlessly from the branches of white-clad trees. I smelled turnip greens now. Dried mulberries. Sour oranges. Sawdust and walnuts. The muffled quiet, snow-quiet, was deafening" (Hosseini, 2004: 323).

The Worst is Yet to Come

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¹ There is a detailed description of the flora and fauna of their childhood habitat, "mulberry trees" (Hosseini, 2004: 53), "apple and persimmon trees" (Hosseini, 2004: 74). Moreover, Hassan "sang old Hazara songs about tulip fields" (Hosseini, 2004: 76), even his songs contain natural images.

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Table of Contents Human Relationship In Kite Runner

1. Understanding the eBook Human Relationship In Kite Runner
 - The Rise of Digital Reading Human Relationship In Kite Runner
 - Advantages of eBooks Over Traditional Books
2. Identifying Human Relationship In Kite Runner
 - Exploring Different Genres
 - Considering Fiction vs. Non-Fiction
 - Determining Your Reading Goals
3. Choosing the Right eBook Platform
 - Popular eBook Platforms
 - Features to Look for in an Human Relationship In Kite Runner
 - User-Friendly Interface
4. Exploring eBook Recommendations from Human Relationship In Kite Runner
 - Personalized Recommendations
 - Human Relationship In Kite Runner User Reviews and Ratings
 - Human Relationship In Kite Runner and Bestseller Lists
5. Accessing Human Relationship In Kite Runner Free and Paid eBooks

- Human Relationship In Kite Runner Public Domain eBooks
- Human Relationship In Kite Runner eBook Subscription Services
- Human Relationship In Kite Runner Budget-Friendly Options
- 6. Navigating Human Relationship In Kite Runner eBook Formats
 - ePub, PDF, MOBI, and More
 - Human Relationship In Kite Runner Compatibility with Devices
 - Human Relationship In Kite Runner Enhanced eBook Features
- 7. Enhancing Your Reading Experience
 - Adjustable Fonts and Text Sizes of Human Relationship In Kite Runner
 - Highlighting and Note-Taking Human Relationship In Kite Runner
 - Interactive Elements Human Relationship In Kite Runner
- 8. Staying Engaged with Human Relationship In Kite Runner
 - Joining Online Reading Communities
 - Participating in Virtual Book Clubs
 - Following Authors and Publishers Human Relationship In Kite Runner
- 9. Balancing eBooks and Physical Books Human Relationship In Kite Runner
 - Benefits of a Digital Library
 - Creating a Diverse Reading Collection Human Relationship In Kite Runner
- 10. Overcoming Reading Challenges
 - Dealing with Digital Eye Strain
 - Minimizing Distractions
 - Managing Screen Time
- 11. Cultivating a Reading Routine Human Relationship In Kite Runner
 - Setting Reading Goals Human Relationship In Kite Runner
 - Carving Out Dedicated Reading Time
- 12. Sourcing Reliable Information of Human Relationship In Kite Runner
 - Fact-Checking eBook Content of Human Relationship In Kite Runner
 - Distinguishing Credible Sources
- 13. Promoting Lifelong Learning
 - Utilizing eBooks for Skill Development

- Exploring Educational eBooks

14. Embracing eBook Trends

- Integration of Multimedia Elements
- Interactive and Gamified eBooks

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