

**AMIR'S REDEMPTION IN *THE KITE RUNNER* MOVIE
DIRECTED BY MARC FOSTER: A HUMANISTIC
PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH**



RESEARCH PAPER

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By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A) Background of the Study

The Kite Runner is a story about love, friendship, honour, guilt and mostly, fear and redemption that was directed by Marc Foster based on the novel of the same name by Khaled Hosseini. This movie was released on December 2007 by Paramount Vantage with budget is \$20 million. *The Kite Runner* released in Indonesia on February 2008 and was released on DVD on March 25, 2008 with the duration 128 minutes. Although most of the film is set in Afghanistan, but there were some parts mostly shot in Kashgar, China, due the dangers of filming in Afghanistan at the times. Most of the movie's dialogue uses Dari Persian with English subtitles and English.

Khaled Hosseini literary work is inspired from his life when he was as a child. Hosseini's memories of peaceful pre soviet era Afghanistan as well as his personal experiences with Afghanistan hazzara people, led to the writing of his first novel, *The Kite Runner*. The relationships of the major characters are inspired from Hosseini's experience meeting Hossein Khan, Hazara man. Hossein worked for Hosseinis when he was living in Iran. When Khaled Hosseini was in third grade, he taught Khan to read and write. Although his relationship with Hossein Khan was brief and rather formal, Hosseini's fond memories of the relationship served as an

inspiration for the relationship between Hassan and Amir in *The Kite Runner*.

The Kite Runner tells the story of friendship between two motherless boys, one of a servant and the other is a master's son. They are Amir and Hassan, two childhood best friends in Kabul. They are divided by class and ethnicity. Amir is wealthy Pashtun, a Sunni Muslim; and Hassan, his servant, is a Hazzara, Shi'a Muslim. Hassan is a child of preternatural goodness and self confidence, though he is illiterate and often disturbed by roving Pashtun boys. Hassan is not only as a playmate but he is also “the kite runner” and a loyal friend who always stood up for Amir against the local bully. His father is a servant to Amir's father. Amir likes literature and often reads stories to Hassan. He also teaches Hassan to read and write. Although they come from the difference class and ethnicity, Amir and Hassan are two friends that have good relationship.

Their relationships were ruined after Hassan is raped by an older teenager who sees Hazaras as barbarians, namely Assef. Herewith his two friends, Assef often fights Amir and Hassan, moreover he also rapes Hassan. Amir sees how Assef beats and rapes Hassan, but it is too scared for him to help Hassan. He just hides behind the wall. After that incident, Amir and Hassan become emotionally downcast. Amir feels guilty of being a coward. He is afraid if Baba knew what happened, he will love Hassan more than him. Sometimes, Amir is already jealous of Baba's love for Hassan. So, Amir decides it would be best if Hassan would leave. He

suggests to Baba to hire other servants but Baba angrily refuses. Amir frames Hassan as a thief and Hassan falsely confesses. Ali and Hassan decide to leave, in spite of Baba begging and ordering them to stay. That is the last meeting between Amir and Hassan. No longer after that incident, Soviet invaded the country so that sending Amir's family to the United States.

Long while later, Amir was as an adult and married to Soraya. He began on a successful career as a novelist. But in his long life, Amir was being tormented by his betrayal to Hassan in the past. He was ill-treated by his mistake. One day, Rahim Khan, Baba's business partner, contacted Amir later and invited him back to Afghanistan to pick up Sohrab. Sohrab is a son of Hassan. At first, Amir felt it was impossible to go there in that situation. It was too dangerous for him. He thought it was right to send the other one to pick up Sohrab, but Rahim Khan asked him to save Sohrab alone. "There is a way to be a good again", said Rahim Khan. Lastly, Amir was going on picking up Sohrab. Amir felt that it was the time to make everything be a good again. It was a chance for him to redeem his fault. He had to set a wrong right for Hassan. In his attempt to get Sohrab and come back to Afghanistan, Amir must brave the tortuous obstacles and dangerous. He must face again his old enemy, Assef who was being a member of regime Taliban. Finally, Amir could save Sohrab and brought him out from Afghanistan.

This movie received many mixed reviews from critics. Most of them are positive reviews. As of February 18, 2008, on the review aggregator Rotten Tomatoes, 67% of critics gave the movie positive reviews, based on 154 reviews. On Metacritic, the movie had an average score of 61 out of 100, based on 34 reviews. Roger Ebert from the *Chicago Sun-Times* named this movie as the 5th best film of 2007. The good response from public makes Marc Foster's *The Kite Runner* which only had \$20,000,000 for their budget; finally gain \$73,276,047 for the gross revenue.

The positive review does not only come from the market, but also from the expert film. Binita Tiwari (2007) said that this movie find out what more is there in the movie; a spending blend of cast, location and strength of characters played by the actors with impressive performances. "It is a film of a friendship which failed to die in due course of time, 'for you thousands time over' from Hassan to Amir". Maria Rankin-Brown (2008) pointed that as a side note, the behind-the-scenes drama of *The Kite Runner* movie garnered attention with a story of its own. She also said that Amir possible reprisals and reaction in response to the rape scene, the movie's release date was postponed so Paramount could secure the safety of the child stars.

The Kite Runner in a novel was number three best seller for 2005 in United States according to Nielsen Book scan. Nevertheless not only had the novel that got a great success, *The Kite Runner* movie also found a

great appreciation from the International society. It obtains some nominations from the Industry Events and Special Interest Events in USA. On January 7, 2008, Broadcast Film Critics Association Awards nominated this movie as Best Picture in Critics Choice Award. Ahmad Khan Mahmoodzada, as Hassan child, won Best Young Actor. On December 16, 2007, Satellite Awards nominated David Benioff as Best Screenplay and Alberto Iglesias got the winner in Best Original Score. On January 13, 2008, this movie got a big attention from Hollywood Foreign Press Association when its 65th Golden Globe Award nominations as Best Foreign Language Film and Best Original Score-Motion Picture. A month later, On February 10, 2008 this movie obtained three nominations in two different events, BAFTA Film Awards and Visual Effects Society (VES) Awards. BAFTA Film Awards nominated *The Kite Runner* as Best Music and Best Film Not in the English Language. While VES Awards nominated this movie as Outstanding Supporting Visual Effects in a Motion Picture. World Soundtrack Awards gave two nominations for Alberto Iglesias as Best Original Score of the Year and Best Composer of the Year on October 18, 2008. *The Kite Runner* movie also got nominations in Excellence in Production Design Award and Christopher Awards. The great result was gotten when Academy Award, the main national film award in the USA, nominated it as Best Achievement in Music Written for Motion Picture-Original Score on February 24, 2008. On March 30, 2008, Zekeria Ebrahimi (Amir as a child) and Ahmad Khan Mahmoodzada (Hassan as a

child) were nominated as Best Performance in an International Feature Film-Leading Young Performer in Young Artist Awards. (The Internet Movie Database. 2007)

Though this movie mostly gets a good review and high appreciation from the International society, this movie exactly emerges controversy, especially in Afghanistan. The Afghan Government has banned the movie theaters and DVD shops because of the rape scene and the ethnic tensions and class struggles that the film highlights. They estimate this movie included the pattern of violence like the scene of rape to Hassan and also appearing conflict between Pashto and Hazzara which is valued will make raise sensitivity in that country. In the other scene, *The Kite Runner* also appears the rule of Taliban regime to torment an adulterer with stone until she was dead. To avoid the bad reacts from the Afghan society, Paramount delays the release of the movie for a month and relocated the three main boy actors playing Amir, Hassan and Sohrab from Kabul.

The Kite Runner is the appealingly familiar story that tells a struggle of personal recovery and unconditional love, written in redemption language immediately legible to Americans. The plot revolves around an act of childhood cowardice and cruelty that Amir as main character must make amends for years later, after he and Baba have immigrated to America. "There is a way to be good again," a friend

counsels him. It's clearly such messages of redemption that prompted by Rahim Khan to Amir Agha.

You will find redemption when you pay in some way for what you did wrong. In this way, the good things that you do will replace the bad ones and you will feel like you have paid for your error. The person who has achieved self actualization is someone who has seen the prison that they were in, and transcended it. Having betrayed his best friend, Amir was looking for it. These words let us to know as a person who has made a mistake he was looking forward to the relief of knowing that in some way he had paid for it.

Maslow (in Feist (1985: 387-393) said that self-actualized individuals are characterized by an acceptance of themselves, spontaneity, the need for privacy, resistance to cultural influences, empathy, profound interpersonal relations, a democratic character structure, creativeness, and a philosophical sense of humor". Based on the Maslow statement above, it is known that one of self-actualization characteristic is an acceptance of himself. In this movie, the major character, young Amir doesn't be able to accept him self fully because he has made a mistake in the past when he was as a child. It made himself be restless and guilty. So, when he knew there is a way to pay for his error, he paid for it. He must redeem himself for what he did to Hassan by doing traveling to Afghanistan for getting Sohrab.

There are at least four aspects that make this movie interesting to study, namely: first, character and characterization. Amir's character as a protagonist here does not always represent as a kind boy, but he also has a dark side of human in his life that make him feels guilty so causing his life isn't quiet. He is being cowardice and betrayer. He is also often jealous to Hassan when Baba loves him more. His character maybe makes the audience feels irritated and angry but it is nature for the child that less love from his parent. Hassan's character that is 'straight' has made a few uncomfortable for the audience. However it seems amazed for Hassan that is very loyal and brave. Beside that the actors also can play their characters that representing human nature quality impressively and attractively.

The second aspect that makes this movie interesting is visualization. Marc Foster visualizes Kabul beautifully and all out. He shot most of Afghanistan areas. The audience is like invited to pleasant the beautiful scene of Kabul before the Soviet Invasion and the rise of the Taliban regime. The other visualization that makes the audience astonishment is when Marc Foster visualizes how the competition of flying kite is truly played by the Afghan boys. It looks amazing when the camera looking behind the kite and following it moves with gliding action.

The third, the background of culture in Afghan society is described by the director attractively and clearly. The audience can see how the situation of Afghanistan as in economy, politic and social before and after Soviet invasion or Regime Taliban. It is very contrast the condition of

Afghan before wars where the society can do everything calmly and peacefully. But after Soviet invaded that country, everything might be different. It was so bad to the Afghan society. It seems that Marc Foster wants to say through this movie that war just causes suffering to the civilization. Based on the situation above, this film also acts as a powerful platform that creates a space to discuss a variety of human rights issues, like freedom from discrimination, freedom from slavery, and right to life, liberty, and personal security.

The last, *The Kite Runner* is a familiar story with the universal themes like friendship, love, compassion, treachery, suffering and redemption. Though the story is just simple, but it has empowered in the deeply meaning and the truth messages. This movie also can be meant as a satire movie alluding a common people quality that often egoist, cowardice and more escape from the problem. Through his characters, Marc Foster tried to show to the audience how those qualities have empowered to danger their loving one

Based on the reasons above, the researcher is interested in analyzing how the major character doing redemption to his close friend. Specifically, this study analyzes the movie using Maslow's theory, Humanistic Psychology theory, especially in Maslow's hierarchy needs, Furthermore, the researcher entitles this research AMIR'S REDEMPTION IN *THE KITE RUNNER* MOVIE DIRECTED BY MARC FOSTER: HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH.

B) Previous Studies

The researcher finds there is a student in Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta conducting *The Kite Runner* novel by Khaled Hosseini, namely Anis Kurilah (2009). Her research's entitled "Social and Moral Responsibility in Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*: Sociological Approach. She analyzes how social and moral responsibility is reflected in Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* by using Sociological perspective.

A similar attempt is also conducted by Sheetal Khemchandani-Daswani (2007) in *The Kite Runner: Companion Curriculum*. This book provides activities and lessons to engage the learners in a discussion of issues which seem difficult and complex, such as ethnic diversity, gender inequality, and the interplay between upper and lower socioeconomic and political classes in Afghanistan. He uses the release of *The Kite Runner* movie as an opportunity to build bridges and engage the students in meaningful discussion about that issues above given the reality of today's world. There are some objectives of this study such as: *First*, to give understanding to the students about the group and cultural influences contribute to human development, identity and behavior. *Second* is to introduce the ethnic group of Afghanistan and to understand human right issues that arise through ethnic rivalries. *Third*, it is to explore the history of political influence in Afghanistan and to recognize its role in creating channel of human right abuse and etc. Those objectives become bases of presenting the movie in curriculum.

An actually there are many kinds of general discussion of this movie in website. This movie certainly was criticized by most of the people in their articles that were published in the internet. One of them is Maria Rankin-Brown. Her articles entitle *The Kite Runner: Is Redemption Truly Free* Just gives a little description about redemption in *The Kite Runner*. She asked some questions about redemption that is done by Amir, but there is nothing being answered in her article. His questions maybe just a way the writer to asked the reader respond about the doctrine that is thought not relevant to the reality. Her questions are likes: “when we sin, do we essentially become bad? Christians are taught that redemption is solely brought about through Christ’s sacrifice? Can it possibly be this simple? Why do we feel compelled to perform penance when we are told that our debt has been paid?” Whereas, those are good questions that is interesting to be explained more clear. But the writer doesn’t do it. Her statement that correlated with entitle of her article is “for Amir, achieving redemption requires more than faith in a Savior.”

Be different from the previous researchers, Kurilah (2009) who analyzes the novel using Sociological Approach or Daswani (2007) focusing on social and political issues, here the researcher tries to analyze *The Kite Runner* movie directed by Marc Foster by using Humanistic Psychological perspective, especially uses Maslow’s theory. While Brown’s article and the other articles about *The Kite Runner* will be used by the researcher as a data source then the researcher will compare those

are with the researcher's analysis of *The Kite Runner* movie that have the same object but different approach. In this research, the researcher tries to analyze **AMIR'S REDEMPTION IN *THE KITE RUNNER* MOVIE DIRECTED BY MARC FOSTER** based on **HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH**.

C) Problem Statement

Based on the ideas that have been explained in the previous background of the study, the main problem statement that emerged in this research is how redemption is reflected in Marc Foster's *The Kite Runner* movie.

D) Limitation of the Study

To make the study easier, the researcher focuses on analyzing redemption reflected by Marc Foster in *The Kite Runner* movie based on Humanistic Psychological Approach.

E) Objective of the Study

The objective of the study can be formulated as follows:

1. To analyze the movie based on its structural elements that helping the researcher to identify how the major characters represent the form of redemption.

2. To analyze *The Kite Runner* movie based on the Humanistic Psychology perspective that helping the researcher to describe how redemption was represented by the major character.

F) Benefit of Research

1. Theoretical Benefit

To give a contribution and information in developing the large body of knowledge, particularly the literary study on *The Kite Runner* movie.

2. Practical Benefit

- a) To enrich the researcher's knowledge and experience dealing with the psychological approach
- b) To give a deeper understanding in literary field for the researcher and as a reference to the other researcher in analyzing the movie into a different perspective.

G) Research Method

1. Type of the Research

In analyzing the data, the researcher uses a qualitative method as a type of the research. Qualitative research is especially effective in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviors, and social contexts of particular

populations. It purposes to analyze the movie using Humanistic Psychological Approach.

2. Object of the Research

The object of the research is classified into two kinds: formal object and material object. The formal object of this research is Amir's redemption and the material object is *The Kite Runner* movie that was directed by Marc Foster based on the novel of Khaled Hosseini.

3. Type of Data and Data Source

The types of data are scene, image, cinematography, music, lighting and the text of the film that can be classified into two categories: primary data and secondary data source.

a. Primary data source

The primary data source of the study is *The Kite Runner*.

The source of data of this research is discourse of script entitled *The Kite Runner* movie directed by Marc Foster

b. Secondary data source

The secondary data source are taken from the other data which have relation with the study like a biography of the author and the other relevant information that is got from book, internet, article, journal and the other relevant sources.

4. Technique of Data Collection

This research uses the library research as a technique of data collection. The researcher collects and records both of the primary and secondary data. Furthermore the researcher uses capturing and note-taking techniques to collect the data. To make it is easier to apply Humanistic Psychology theory in this study; the researcher takes the following steps:

- a. Watching the movie several times.
- b. Determining the major character that will be analyzed.
- c. Reading some related books to find out the theory, data, and information required.
- d. Taking notes of important information in both primary and secondary data source.
- e. Capturing the pictures from the movie.
- f. Classifying and determining the relevant data.
- g. Arranging and developing the selected data into good unity toward the topic of the study.

5. Technique of Data Analysis

The technique of data analysis is descriptive qualitative technique. It is used to describe and analyze the structural elements in detail through psychology, especially a Humanistic Psychology.

H) Research Paper Organization

This research paper is divided into five chapters. Chapter I is introduction that consists of background of the study, previous study, problem statement, limitation of the study, objective of the study, benefit of the study, and research paper organization. Chapter II is Underlying Theory that includes the Notion of Humanistic Psychology, Theory of Humanistic Psychology, Structural Elements and Theoretical application. Chapter III is Research Method. This chapter consists of type of research, object of the research, data and data source, technique of collecting data, technique of analyzing data. Chapter IV is Structural Analysis. This chapter explains the structural elements of the movie that consist of Characters and characterization, setting, plot, point of view, style, etc and its discussion. Chapter IV is Research Finding and Discussion. This chapter tries to answer and discuss the question in objective of the study that analyze the structural elements of the movie in Marc Foster's *The Kite Runner* and analyze *The Kite Runner* movie based on the Humanistic Psychology perspective. Chapter V is Conclusion and Suggestion. This chapter contents the research founding based on the previous study and the suggestion to the readers or the other researcher