Metaphoric Analysis of "The Kite Runner" by Khaled Hosseini

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Abstract

It is necessary to deal with literature's evocation of history, religion and thoughts since historical fiction, in particular, serves as a memoire of human experience compressed in verbal images. In this regard, The Kite Runner is one of the literary works that embody the intricate relationships between literature, history, society, culture, and art. This article sheds light on the metaphorical expressions in used this literary work and analyzes their implications from the vantage point of cognitive stylistics.

Keywords: cognitive, conceptual metaphor theory, target domain, source domain, symbol, stylistics, verbal, nonverbal, concept, metaphorical expressions.

In the world of literature, metaphor is a key element that provides literary content in a work, it prose or poetry, offering it exceptionality and creativity. Authors who manage to convey hidden concepts in presenting their characters and scenarios use metaphors in their works. Among these writers is Khaled Hosseini, the Afghan American immigrant. It primarily focuses on metaphors in this fiction work within the framework of conceptual metaphor theory, one of the most influential theories in cognitive stylistics. In addition, metaphors are widely recognized as a literary device that facilitates for the readers not only to perceive the author's vision and portrayed experiences. Conceptual metaphor theory is formed by construing target domain is in relation to a source domain. A theory, for example, can be viewed metaphorically as a building, an airplane, or even as a bucket (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980):

a. His theory rested on such poor foundations that, despite all his attempts to buttress it, it finally just collapsed.

b. Your theory just won't fly; in any case, it could be shot down by any halfway competent linguist.

c. That theory is full of holes; it won't hold water.

(Tomasello, 1998) further contends that abstract notions tend to be structured metaphorically in terms of source domains pertaining to physical experience.

The major themes of this novel are: Redemption, Friendship, Betrayal, Social Class and Ethnic Tensions, Forgiveness and Guilt. In this article, some forms of metaphoric expressions that are given in this book are analyzed and clarified with a bright explanation.

Metaphors about Redemption:

Metaphor: "The kite was going to war" (p6)

Target domain: the kite

Source domain: the soldier

If the kite was a soldier, comparison between the kite flying and war comes out when Hindi boys moves into Kabul Neighborhoods and brags to Amir and Hassan that in Indian, kite flying has strict rules. So during the tournament, Hassan gets wounded while running his kite, while Amir commits the sin of betrayal and cowardice. Through Amir suffers from injuries and trails when he rescues Sohrab, kite running finally makes him feel redeemed in America. Thus the kite is a significant symbol with multiple layers of meaning. It is a sign of hope, life, happiness, power and freedom.

Metaphors about Parent-Child Relationship

Metaphor: "My door is and always will be open to you" (p28)

Target domain: Father

Source domain: Home

Here the writer means of proud and give the freedom to the son to become in any time by representing the high value of the son in the heart of the father , and how he can give the opportunity to his son to come whenever he wants, it is symbol of great love.

Metaphors about Guilt

Metaphor: "There is a way to be good again." (p2)

Target domain: life

Source domain: map with pathways

Recognizing the feeling of guilt often leads to changing one's direction in life towards the better. Everything Amir did later on, feeding the poor on the streets, building the orphanage, giving money to friends in need, it was all his way of redeeming himself, when guilt leads to good.

Metaphors about Friendship:

Metaphor: "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? (p77)

Target domain: Hassan

Source domain: price

The metaphor here shows that in the world to get something you must pay the charge; to achieve what you want, you must pay either by doing your own efforts and acquiring demanding ethics such as hard-work and persistence or by exploiting and taking advantage on others, even if they are friends.

Metaphors about Betrayal:

Metaphor: "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." (p105)

Target domain: Amir

Source domain: snake, monster

This metaphor depicts the person who feigns friendship with the intent to deceive as a harmful snake that hides in the beautiful grass or as a dangerous monster that dives deep in the gorgeous lake.

Metaphors about Social Class and Ethnic Tension:

Metaphor: "Boot heels clicked on asphalt. Someone flung open the tarpaulin hanging over the back of the truck, and three faces peered in. one was Karim, the other two were soldiers, one Afghan, the other grinning Russian, face bulldog's, cigarette dangling from the side of his mouth". (p106)

Target domain: Russian

Source domain: bulldog

The word Bulldog is the name for a breed of dog commonly referred to as the English bulldog, bulldog is a muscular, heavy dog with wrinkled face and a distinctive pushed in nose.

This study sought to analyze and identify metaphors with its kind implications in the novels of Khaled Hosseini. It can be concluded that through his novels, Hosseini has asserted both his individual and his cultural selves. Given that the contemporary world is a global village, we should be ready and willing to welcome and appreciate unfamiliar metaphorical expressions from unfamiliar parts of the world. Through textual manifestations of multilingualism, which should be recognized as an integral part of Hosseini's novel, this study has revealed the types of metaphor that Hosseini has created in the novel.

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