

Faith and Discovery

July – December 2024 Vol:2, Issue:2

ISSN(p): 3007-0643

ISSN(e): 3007-0651

ECOLOGICAL COLLAPSE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCE: AN ECOCRITICAL PERSPECTIVE ON KHALID FATEH MUHAMMAD’S URDU NOVEL *KOH-E-GRAAN*

Shahzad Ahmad Bhatti

Ph.D. Scholar, Minhaj University Lahore

Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed Azmi

Director MTIC, Minhaj University Lahore

ABSTRACT: Khalid Fateh Muhammad’s *Koh-e-Graan* offers a profound exploration of environmental degradation and its intricate connection to human psychology. This paper examines the novel through an ecocritical lens, focusing on themes of ecological grief, alienation, and resilience. Set in a dystopian yet eerily familiar world, *Koh-e-Graan* narrates the journey of Haleem, who returns to his desolate ancestral village with a mission to restore it. Through his struggle, the novel highlights the psychological toll of environmental exploitation and the collective challenges of rebuilding in the face of ecological collapse. The story serves as both a cautionary tale and a call to action, urging humanity to embrace sustainable practices and ecological ethics to avert a bleak future. By integrating ecocritical theories, including solastalgia, slow violence, and environmental

justice, this study emphasizes the importance of reconnecting with nature to safeguard both human well-being and the environment.

KEYWORDS: *Koh-e-Graan*, ecocriticism, ecological grief, solastalgia, environmental justice, sustainability, psychological impacts, Khalid Fateh Muhammad.

INTRODUCTION

Literary works have long served as a mirror to societal challenges, and with the increasing threat of climate change, ecocriticism has emerged as a vital framework for analyzing the intersection of literature, environment, and human psychology. Khalid Fateh Muhammad's *Koh-e-Graan* provides an evocative exploration of these themes, presenting a narrative where environmental degradation and human resilience collide. The novel, set in a dystopian yet relatable world, tells the story of Haleem, who returns to his once-thriving ancestral village only to find it barren, abandoned, and stripped of its natural resources.

Lawrence Buell aptly notes, "Environmental imagination is not just about seeing nature but about situating oneself within it, recognizing the inseparable bond between human lives and ecological systems" (Buell, 1995). *Koh-e-Graan* embodies this principle, depicting how the destruction of an ecosystem disrupts not just the physical landscape but also the psychological and social fabric of its inhabitants. Haleem's quest to restore his village becomes a powerful metaphor for humanity's broader struggle to reconcile with nature and reclaim lost ecological balance.

SUMMARY OF THE NOVEL

Koh-e-Graan begins with Haleem, a retired professional, returning to his ancestral village. Once a thriving community built along the banks of a canal, the village is now desolate, abandoned by its residents due to the scarcity of water. The fertile lands have turned into barren stretches, and the once-lush trees have been ravaged by timber mafias. The empty houses stand as a testament to the exodus caused by the lack of basic resources, particularly water.

Despite the hopelessness surrounding him, Haleem resolves to rebuild the village. His vision is not limited to personal redemption but extends to creating a model for other deserted villages to follow. However, the primary challenge remains—how to bring water back to a canal that has long since dried up.

Contrary to his expectations, Haleem discovers three residents still living in the abandoned village: a disabled man, a tuberculosis patient, and a young woman whose mother Haleem once knew. These individuals survive by scavenging for food and supplies from nearby towns, returning only to the ruins of their homes. Initially skeptical of Haleem's ambitions, they dismiss his plans as unrealistic given the lack of water and resources.

Haleem's determination, however, begins to attract support. Gradually, others join his mission, and the process of rehabilitation takes its first steps. The initial solution is to plant cacti, a hardy, semi-arid species capable of surviving with minimal water. Once established, the cacti rely on dew for sustenance, symbolizing resilience and the possibility of life even in desolation. This small success becomes a beacon of hope, as Haleem's solitary struggle transforms into a collective effort, embodying the spirit of persistence against overwhelming odds.

ECOCRITICISM: A FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

Ecocriticism provides a lens to understand the complex and intertwined relationship between humans and the natural environment, emphasizing how literature reflects and shapes our ecological consciousness. Cheryl Glotfelty, one of the pioneers of this field, defines ecocriticism as "the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment" (Glotfelty & Fromm, 1996). This definition highlights the dual role of literature: as a cultural artifact that reflects humanity's

ecological engagement and as a tool to critique the social and environmental consequences of human actions. Through this lens, Khalid Fateh Muhammad's *Koh-e-Graan* emerges as a poignant critique of humanity's unsustainable exploitation of natural resources, revealing how ecological degradation permeates not only the physical landscape but also the psychological and cultural identities of individuals and communities.

In *Koh-e-Graan*, the village serves as a microcosm of broader environmental crises. Once a vibrant and self-sustaining community, the village's desolation symbolizes the devastating consequences of ecological neglect. The barren land, dried-up canal, and absence of trees highlight the fragility of ecosystems under anthropogenic pressure. This degradation is not limited to the environment; it extends to the psychological and emotional states of the characters. Haleem's profound grief upon returning to his ancestral village, now unrecognizable, reflects the deep personal and collective trauma caused by environmental collapse. The novel demonstrates that the destruction of the natural environment is intrinsically linked to the erosion of cultural and emotional ties, showing how the land's degradation parallels the disintegration of human identities and communities.

One of the key concepts within ecocriticism is solastalgia, introduced by Glenn Albrecht, which he defines as "the lived experience of distress caused by environmental change, a form of homesickness experienced without ever leaving home" (Albrecht, 2012, pp.18–25). Solastalgia is particularly relevant to *Koh-e-Graan*, as Haleem embodies this phenomenon. His return to a village that once symbolized prosperity and harmony but now lies in ruins evokes profound grief and nostalgia. This emotional response is not just a personal experience but a collective one, resonating with the broader struggles of displaced communities

worldwide. The novel vividly portrays how the destruction of familiar landscapes disrupts the sense of belonging and security that people derive from their environments.

Haleem's grief is compounded by the knowledge that the village's collapse was not an inevitable natural disaster but a result of human negligence and greed. The timber mafia's indiscriminate deforestation, the overuse of water resources, and the failure to adopt sustainable practices are emblematic of humanity's shortsighted exploitation of nature. *Koh-e-Graan* critiques this anthropocentric worldview, which prioritizes immediate gains over long-term ecological balance. In doing so, the novel aligns with ecocriticism's goal of challenging the cultural and ideological frameworks that perpetuate environmental harm. As Val Plumwood asserts, "The ecological crisis is not merely a physical or technical issue; it is a crisis of culture, identity, and reason" (Plumwood, 2002). This perspective underscores the role of cultural narratives in shaping human behavior toward the environment, as well as their potential to inspire change.

Furthermore, the novel illustrates the intersection of ecological and cultural loss. The degradation of the village's natural environment erases not only its physical features but also the traditions, practices, and memories tied to the land. The absence of trees, which once provided shade and sustenance, symbolizes the severed connection between the villagers and their heritage. The drying of the canal, once the lifeblood of the community, signifies the collapse of both ecological and social systems. Haleem's efforts to revive the village represent a resistance to this disintegration, embodying a desire to restore not only the land but also the cultural and emotional bonds that define the community.

Ecocriticism also emphasizes the ethical dimensions of environmental narratives, challenging readers to consider

humanity's responsibility toward the natural world. In *Koh-e-Graan*, the environmental collapse of the village is a direct consequence of human actions, serving as a cautionary tale of the dangers of unchecked exploitation. The novel's critique of human negligence aligns with the principles of environmental justice, which advocate for equitable access to resources and the protection of vulnerable communities. By portraying the psychological and cultural impacts of ecological degradation, *Koh-e-Graan* underscores the urgency of adopting sustainable practices to prevent similar crises.

The concept of solastalgia in *Koh-e-Graan* also serves as a reminder of the emotional costs of environmental degradation. Haleem's grief is not merely a reaction to the physical destruction of the village but also a response to the loss of its identity and significance. His memories of a thriving community, filled with life and purpose, contrast sharply with the present reality of abandonment and despair. This juxtaposition highlights the psychological toll of ecological collapse, illustrating how the loss of familiar landscapes disrupts not only physical livelihoods but also the emotional and cultural foundations of individuals and communities. As ecocriticism reveals, this emotional response is a crucial aspect of environmental narratives, offering insights into the human dimension of ecological crises.

Ultimately, ecocriticism provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing the complex relationships between humans, culture, and the environment. In *Koh-e-Graan*, this framework illuminates the interconnectedness of ecological and psychological well-being, demonstrating how the degradation of the natural world reverberates through all aspects of human life. By critiquing the anthropocentric attitudes that drive environmental harm, the novel invites readers to reconsider their relationship with nature and embrace a more sustainable and equitable future. Through its vivid

portrayal of ecological collapse and its emotional and cultural consequences, *Koh-e-Graan* exemplifies the transformative power of literature to inspire ecological awareness and action.

PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF ECOLOGICAL COLLAPSE IN KOH-E-GRAAN

Koh-e-Graan vividly portrays the profound psychological impact of ecological collapse, weaving a narrative that extends beyond physical degradation to encompass emotional and cultural disintegration. The barren fields and dried-up canal depicted in the novel are not just environmental realities; they symbolize the severed connection between the villagers and their ancestral land. This loss of connection erodes not only their livelihoods but also their sense of identity and belonging. For Haleem, the protagonist, returning to his village is a heart-wrenching experience as his memories of a vibrant, thriving community—alive with lush greenery, bustling life, and a strong sense of togetherness—contrast sharply with the current desolation. This stark juxtaposition between the past and present deepens his grief, highlighting the psychological burden of witnessing the collapse of both the natural environment and the social fabric it once supported.

The emotional impact of this loss is intricately tied to the concept of solastalgia, as introduced by Glenn Albrecht. Solastalgia captures the distress of environmental change and the resulting homesickness experienced by individuals who have not left their homes but find themselves estranged from the places they once knew. Haleem embodies this phenomenon, his grief rooted in a profound sense of alienation from a land that was once a cornerstone of his identity. His sorrow is amplified by the knowledge that this collapse is not a natural disaster but a consequence of human negligence and greed. The absence of trees, the barren soil, and the

empty homes reflect a community and ecosystem that has been systematically exploited and abandoned, leaving psychological scars on those who remain.

Richard Nixon's concept of slow violence, described as "gradual and out of sight, its psychological effects creeping into the lives of the marginalized" (Nixon, 2011), provides a critical framework to understand the narrative of *Koh-e-Graan*. The slow but relentless decline of the village's resources—caused by deforestation, overextraction of water, and unsustainable practices—mirrors the creeping despair of its inhabitants. Unlike immediate and visible disasters, the gradual nature of ecological degradation in the novel makes it particularly insidious, eroding the villagers' sense of hope and agency over time. The psychological toll of this slow violence is evident in the despair of those who remain, struggling to survive amid the ruins of their once-thriving community. This despair is compounded by their forced migration, as they leave behind not just their physical homes but also the memories, traditions, and cultural identities tied to the land.

Ursula K. Heise's observation that "Global environmental challenges demand a shift in our sense of place, as local landscapes increasingly reflect planetary crises" (Heise, 2008) resonates deeply within the narrative of *Koh-e-Graan*. The displacement of the villagers due to water scarcity is emblematic of this shift. What was once a self-sufficient, harmonious ecosystem is now a barren wasteland, mirroring the larger planetary crises caused by climate change, deforestation, and resource exploitation. For the villagers, the loss of their homes signifies more than physical relocation—it disrupts their cultural and emotional ties to the land, severing their connection to a heritage that has defined their identity for generations. This dislocation highlights the cultural and psychological costs of ecological

collapse, illustrating how environmental degradation reverberates through every aspect of human life.

The psychological impact of ecological collapse in *Koh-e-Graan* also extends to the relationships between the remaining villagers. As despair takes root, trust and community bonds begin to fray. The few who stay behind view Haleem's determination to restore the village with skepticism, reflecting the hopelessness that has permeated their lives. For them, the idea of reviving a land that seems irreversibly damaged feels like a futile dream, underscoring the emotional weight of living in a place that no longer supports life. This skepticism is not just a practical concern about the feasibility of restoration but also an emotional defense mechanism, protecting them from further disappointment in the face of overwhelming loss.

In this context, Haleem's journey to rebuild the village represents more than a physical struggle—it is a fight against the psychological erosion caused by ecological collapse. His efforts to reintroduce life into the barren land symbolize a resistance to despair, offering a glimmer of hope in the face of insurmountable odds. By planting hardy vegetation like cacti, Haleem demonstrates the possibility of adaptation and resilience, even in the most hostile environments. These small acts of restoration not only begin to heal the land but also challenge the psychological narrative of defeat that has taken hold of the community.

Koh-e-Graan thus serves as a powerful exploration of the intricate relationship between ecological collapse and psychological well-being. By delving into the emotional toll of environmental degradation, the novel emphasizes the interconnectedness of the natural world and human identity. It invites readers to consider the profound psychological consequences of losing the landscapes that anchor us, urging a collective reckoning with the cultural

and emotional stakes of ecological crises. Through its vivid portrayal of grief, alienation, and resilience, *Koh-e-Graan* underscores the need for a renewed commitment to sustainability and environmental justice, not just to preserve the natural world but also to protect the emotional and cultural foundations of human life.

CULTURAL DISINTEGRATION AND ALIENATION

Koh-e-Graan poignantly captures the erosion of cultural practices and traditions that are deeply intertwined with the village's environmental collapse. The deforestation and water scarcity that define the physical decline of the village are not merely ecological issues; they also signify the disintegration of a cultural identity that had been nurtured over generations. For the villagers, the land was more than a means of sustenance—it was a repository of shared traditions, rituals, and communal values. The loss of this connection reflects the broader phenomenon of cultural alienation caused by ecological degradation, where the destruction of natural resources simultaneously erodes the cultural fabric of a community.

Timothy Morton's assertion that "The concept of nature as something 'out there' distances humans from the ecological realities they are deeply embedded in" (Morton, 2007) is vividly illustrated in the villagers' gradual disconnection from their environment. Historically, their practices were likely rooted in a sustainable harmony with the land, a balance that had enabled generations to thrive. However, as the natural environment deteriorated—driven by deforestation, overextraction of water, and the encroachment of exploitative forces like timber mafias—this equilibrium was lost. The villagers' growing reliance on unsustainable methods, such as digging increasingly deeper wells to extract groundwater, not only deepened the ecological crisis but also marked a cultural shift away

from traditional, sustainable practices. This alienation from nature reflects a broader mental disconnection, where the land, once seen as a partner in life, is reduced to a resource to be exploited.

This disconnection is not merely a consequence of ecological collapse; it also perpetuates it. As the villagers move away from their sustainable cultural heritage, they exacerbate the environmental problems that plague their land. The cycle of degradation feeds on itself, as the erosion of cultural practices contributes to further ecological harm, and the deteriorating environment, in turn, accelerates the disintegration of cultural identity. In this context, Morton's observation becomes even more significant, as it highlights how distancing ourselves from nature not only blinds us to our dependence on it but also fosters a dangerous apathy toward its preservation.

Haleem's frustration at this apathy is central to the narrative. His return to the village is driven by a deep sense of responsibility to restore both the land and the cultural heritage it once supported. However, his efforts are met with skepticism and resistance from the remaining villagers, who have grown despondent in the face of ecological collapse. This apathy is not merely a lack of interest but a psychological barrier shaped by years of witnessing the slow erosion of their environment and traditions. For Haleem, this resistance is a stark reminder that the restoration of the land is inseparable from the restoration of the community's cultural and emotional connection to it.

The novel illustrates how physical alienation from nature fosters a mental disconnection that makes ecological restoration efforts all the more challenging. As the villagers' memories of a harmonious relationship with the land fade, so too does their belief in the possibility of reclaiming it. The psychological scars of displacement and environmental loss manifest as a reluctance to engage in collective action, highlighting the

deep interplay between ecological and cultural alienation. Haleem's struggle to inspire the community underscores the difficulty of rekindling a sense of shared purpose in the face of widespread despair.

The deforestation and drying of the canal are particularly potent symbols of this cultural disintegration. The trees, once integral to the villagers' daily lives, provided not only shade and sustenance but also a space for communal gatherings and rituals. Their absence represents more than an ecological loss; it signifies the erasure of the social and cultural practices that had once defined the village. Similarly, the canal, which once sustained both the land and the people, now lies dry, severing the lifeline that had connected the community to its environment. The novel vividly depicts how these physical changes disrupt the rhythms of daily life, undermining the traditions and practices that had anchored the villagers' sense of identity.

This alienation is further compounded by the generational divide depicted in the novel. For the older villagers, the memories of a vibrant and harmonious past serve as a painful contrast to the present desolation. For younger generations, however, these memories are often distant or nonexistent, making it even harder to revive a cultural connection to the land. The generational loss of cultural knowledge and sustainable practices highlights the long-term consequences of ecological collapse, as the skills and values needed for restoration are increasingly forgotten.

Ultimately, *Koh-e-Graan* underscores the interdependence of cultural identity and ecological sustainability. The novel reveals how the loss of one inevitably leads to the erosion of the other, creating a cycle of alienation that is difficult to break. Haleem's efforts to restore the village are not just about reviving the land but also about reclaiming the cultural identity that has been lost. His determination to reintroduce

sustainable practices and foster a sense of community represents a vision for overcoming this alienation, offering a glimmer of hope in the face of overwhelming challenges.

By linking cultural disintegration to ecological collapse, *Koh-e-Graan* presents a compelling argument for the importance of preserving both the environment and the traditions it sustains. The novel highlights the urgent need for a cultural shift that recognizes the inseparable bond between humanity and nature, advocating for a return to sustainable practices that honor this connection. In doing so, it aligns with the broader goals of ecocriticism, emphasizing the need to address not only the physical but also the cultural and psychological dimensions of environmental crises.

Koh-e-Graan delves deeply into the ethical dilemmas surrounding humanity's exploitation of natural resources, weaving a narrative that critiques the moral failures inherent in the pursuit of power and dominance. The novel reflects on these ethical compromises through a critical passage:

”کیا تو میں ایک دوسرے کو شکست دینے کے لیے ایک دوسرے کے ذرائع کو ختم کرتی
ہیں یا اُن کی مقابلہ کرنے کی اہلیت کو کو مجروح کرتی ہیں یا اپنے بنائے ہوئے اخلاقی ضوابط کو
خود ہی توڑ کر بے اصولی کو اصول بنا کر فتح حاصل کرتی ہیں کہ کیا انسان فتح حاصل کیے بغیر
زندگی نہیں گزار سکتا؟“ (Muhammad, 2017, p.22)

This reflection underscores the ways in which ecological destruction is often weaponized as a tool for asserting power and dominance. It critiques the mindset of sacrificing ethical principles and environmental stability to achieve victory, highlighting the human tendency to prioritize immediate gains over long-term sustainability. The narrative questions the very nature of human progress, asking whether the cost of so-called

"victories" is too high when it entails irreparable damage to the environment and the undermining of collective survival.

Val Plumwood's assertion that "The ecological crisis is not merely a physical or technical issue; it is a crisis of culture, identity, and reason" (Plumwood, 2002) aligns seamlessly with the themes explored in the novel. This perspective situates environmental degradation within a broader cultural and ethical framework, emphasizing that the exploitation of natural resources is symptomatic of a deeper crisis in human values and reasoning. In *Koh-e-Graan*, this crisis manifests in the degradation of the village's land, where unsustainable practices driven by greed and short-sightedness result in widespread ecological collapse.

The ethical questions raised in the novel are not confined to individual actions but extend to systemic and societal behaviors. The timber mafia's unchecked deforestation and the overextraction of water are emblematic of how power structures exploit natural resources with little regard for the long-term consequences. These acts of exploitation are not merely environmental transgressions but also moral failings, reflecting a broader societal disregard for sustainability and intergenerational equity. By focusing on these dynamics, *Koh-e-Graan* critiques the systemic nature of ecological exploitation, emphasizing that these issues are rooted in power imbalances and a failure to value the intrinsic worth of nature.

The narrative also critiques the ethical compromises made by those who justify environmental harm in the name of progress or survival. This is evident in the villagers' reliance on unsustainable methods, such as digging deeper wells for water extraction, which further deplete the land's resources. While these actions are often born out of necessity, they highlight the ethical challenges faced by communities grappling with

ecological collapse. The novel portrays this tension between survival and sustainability as a central moral dilemma, forcing readers to confront the complexities of balancing immediate needs with long-term environmental stewardship.

Furthermore, the ethical failures depicted in *Koh-e-Graan* are not limited to ecological exploitation but also extend to the abandonment of communal and cultural responsibilities. The disintegration of the village's social fabric mirrors the environmental collapse, illustrating how the pursuit of individual or short-term gains undermines collective well-being. Haleem's frustration with the villagers' apathy reflects the psychological and ethical barriers to collective action, highlighting the difficulty of fostering a shared sense of responsibility in the face of widespread despair. His efforts to restore the village serve as a counterpoint to the ethical failures that have led to its decline, embodying a vision of resilience and moral integrity in the face of adversity.

The novel also draws attention to the global implications of these ethical questions, connecting the local struggles of the village to broader patterns of ecological and cultural exploitation. The displacement of communities due to environmental degradation, as depicted in *Koh-e-Graan*, echoes global phenomena such as climate-induced migration and resource conflicts. These crises are often driven by power dynamics that prioritize economic and political gains over environmental and social justice. By situating the village's collapse within this larger context, the novel underscores the interconnectedness of local and global ethical challenges, urging readers to consider the broader implications of humanity's unsustainable relationship with nature.

At its core, *Koh-e-Graan* critiques the anthropocentric worldview that places human needs and

desires above the intrinsic value of nature. This perspective, which sees the natural world as a resource to be exploited rather than a system to be respected, lies at the heart of the ethical failures depicted in the novel. The narrative calls for a shift toward an ecocentric ethic, one that recognizes the interdependence of humans and the environment and prioritizes the preservation of ecological balance over short-term gains. As Val Plumwood argues, addressing the ecological crisis requires not only technical solutions but also a fundamental transformation of cultural and ethical values (Plumwood, 2002).

In conclusion, *Koh-e-Graan* raises profound ethical questions about humanity's exploitation of natural resources, critiquing the moral compromises that underpin ecological destruction. Through its vivid depiction of environmental collapse and its consequences, the novel challenges readers to reflect on the ethical dimensions of their relationship with nature. It emphasizes the need for a cultural shift toward sustainability and environmental justice, highlighting the importance of valuing the intrinsic worth of nature and recognizing the interconnectedness of ecological and human well-being. By weaving these themes into its narrative, *Koh-e-Graan* serves as both a critique of current practices and a call to action, urging humanity to adopt a more ethical and sustainable approach to the natural world.

PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS OF RESTORATION

Haleem's efforts to restore the village in *Koh-e-Graan* are emblematic of the psychological resilience needed to confront ecological crises. His unwavering determination to breathe life back into the barren land, despite overwhelming odds, highlights the depth of human hope and the innate drive to rebuild. In a world devastated by ecological collapse, Haleem's mission

reflects Thomas Berry's assertion that "The great work of our time is to reconnect the human spirit with the living world" (Berry, 1999). Haleem's endeavor to restore his village is not just a physical undertaking but also a profound attempt to heal the fractured bond between humans and the natural environment.

The novel uses the planting of cacti as a potent metaphor for resilience and adaptation. These hardy plants, capable of surviving on dew in arid conditions, symbolize the possibility of regeneration even in the harshest circumstances. The act of planting cacti marks the first step in Haleem's restoration journey, signifying both his refusal to give up and his acknowledgment of the challenges ahead. While the cacti's growth is slow and modest, it serves as a tangible representation of hope, showing that even small, deliberate efforts can pave the way for larger transformations.

Haleem's journey also underscores the transformative power of moving from isolation to collective action. Initially a solitary figure, he gradually inspires others to join his mission, creating a shared sense of purpose and resilience within the community. This collective effort amplifies the psychological impact of restoration, fostering a sense of agency and optimism among the villagers. Haleem's persistence becomes a rallying cry for renewal, demonstrating that even in the face of ecological devastation, human resilience and solidarity can spark meaningful change. His story emphasizes the psychological and emotional dimensions of restoration, showing how ecological recovery is intertwined with the healing of human communities.

CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE OF KOH-E-GRAAN

Koh-e-Graan addresses critical global issues that resonate deeply in the contemporary era, including climate anxiety, eco-grief, and resource scarcity. These concerns reflect the growing psychological and emotional toll of environmental crises on individuals and

communities worldwide. As Koger and Winter note, “The psychological toll of environmental destruction includes grief, anxiety, and a profound sense of loss” (Koger & Winter, 2011). These themes are intricately woven into the narrative, where the desolation of the village mirrors the emotional and cultural consequences of humanity’s unsustainable relationship with nature.

The drying canal in the novel serves as a poignant metaphor for the real-world water crises plaguing regions like South Asia, where overextraction, pollution, and climate change have led to severe water shortages. This mirrors the displacement and suffering faced by communities who are forced to abandon their ancestral homes due to resource scarcity. Similarly, the rampant deforestation described in *Koh-e-Graan* draws parallels with global struggles against biodiversity loss, such as the large-scale destruction of the Amazon rainforest. These environmental crises, driven by deforestation, habitat destruction, and climate change, highlight the interconnectedness of local and global ecological challenges.

The novel also encapsulates the pervasive sense of helplessness and despair experienced in the face of mounting environmental threats. Climate anxiety, a growing psychological phenomenon, finds expression in the villagers’ despair and skepticism about Haleem’s restoration efforts. Their apathy reflects a larger narrative of environmental disenfranchisement, where individuals feel powerless against the scale of ecological destruction. Yet, *Koh-e-Graan* also offers a counter-narrative to this despair, emphasizing the potential for resilience and renewal through collective action and sustainable practices.

By situating its story within a global context, *Koh-e-Graan* underscores the urgency of addressing these challenges, advocating for both environmental and psychological resilience. The novel’s portrayal of ecological collapse and its impact on human lives serves

as a cautionary tale and a call to action, reminding readers of the need to adopt sustainable practices to mitigate the devastating consequences of environmental exploitation. It resonates as a timeless and relevant critique of humanity's fraught relationship with nature, offering insights into the broader implications of contemporary environmental crises.

THE ROLE OF LITERATURE IN ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCACY

Koh-e-Graan exemplifies the transformative power of literature to address ecological and psychological issues, serving as a compelling medium to engage readers with the complexities of environmental degradation and its profound human consequences. By crafting a narrative that vividly illustrates the interplay between ecological collapse and human suffering, the novel fosters a deep sense of empathy and awareness among its audience. Through its portrayal of Haleem's journey to restore his village and the emotional toll of ecological devastation, the novel provides an intimate lens into the psychological and cultural impacts of environmental crises, encouraging readers to reflect on their relationship with nature.

Walker and Bulkeley's (2006) assertion that "Environmental justice is not merely about equitable resource distribution but about addressing the psychological burdens borne by affected communities" (pp. 655–659) resonates strongly with the themes of *Koh-e-Graan*. The novel transcends the depiction of ecological degradation as a purely physical or economic issue, highlighting its psychological dimensions and the disproportionate burdens placed on marginalized communities. By advocating for environmental justice, *Koh-e-Graan* underscores the urgent need for sustainable practices that prioritize not only ecological preservation but also human well-being.

As a work of environmental advocacy, the novel demonstrates how literature can bridge the gap between scientific discourse and public consciousness, transforming

abstract environmental challenges into relatable human experiences.

CONCLUSION

Khalid Fateh Muhammad's *Koh-e-Graan* is a multifaceted exploration of the profound interplay between ecological collapse, cultural disintegration, and psychological resilience. The novel intricately weaves together the physical, emotional, and ethical dimensions of environmental degradation, offering a narrative that is as much about human survival as it is about ecological restoration. Through its vivid portrayal of a village on the brink of extinction, *Koh-e-Graan* captures the deep psychological toll of environmental destruction, including grief, alienation, and the erosion of cultural identity. It emphasizes the complex challenges of restoring not only the land but also the cultural and emotional bonds that connect communities to their environments.

The novel serves as a powerful critique of humanity's unsustainable practices, highlighting the ethical failures and power dynamics that perpetuate ecological exploitation. It draws attention to the urgent need for environmental justice, advocating for sustainable practices that address both ecological preservation and the psychological burdens borne by affected communities. By situating local struggles within the broader context of global environmental challenges, *Koh-e-Graan* underscores the interconnectedness of ecological and human well-being.

At its core, *Koh-e-Graan* exemplifies the role of literature as a tool for environmental advocacy, fostering empathy, awareness, and action. It bridges the gap between abstract environmental issues and lived human experiences, inspiring readers to reflect on their relationship with nature. As a cautionary tale, the novel warns against the devastating consequences of ecological neglect; as a beacon of hope, it illustrates the transformative

power of resilience, community, and sustainable practices. Ultimately, *Koh-e-Graan* urges humanity to embrace a future where ecological balance, cultural heritage, and human well-being are deeply intertwined, reinforcing the critical need to reconnect with and protect the natural world.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Buell, L. (1995). *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture*. Harvard University Press.
2. Glotfelty, C., & Fromm, H. (Eds.). (1996). *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. University of Georgia Press.
3. Heise, U. K. (2008). *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet: The Environmental Imagination of the Global*. Oxford University Press.
4. Koger, S. M., & Winter, D. D. (2011). *The Psychology of Environmental Problems: Psychology for Sustainability*. Routledge.
5. Nixon, R. (2011). *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Harvard University Press.
6. Morton, T. (2007). *Ecology Without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics*. Harvard University Press.
7. محمد، خالد فتح (2017)، کوہ گراں، لاہور: الحمد پبلی کیشنز۔
8. Plumwood, V. (2002). *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason*. Routledge.
9. Albrecht, G. (2012). *Psychoterratic Geographies: Exploring the Psychological Toll of Environmental Degradation*. In *Ecopsychology*, 4(1).
10. Berry, T. (1999). *The Great Work: Our Way into the Future*. Bell Tower.
11. Walker, G., & Bulkeley, H. (2006). *Geographies of Environmental Justice*. *Geoforum*, 37(5).