

**Inherited Wounds: Trauma, Silence and Healing in Khaled Hosseini's
Novels**

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Abstract:

Khaled Hosseini's novels is a profound reflection on the transmission of trauma across generations, families and cultures. This study examines how *The Kite Runner* and *And the Mountains Echoed* build intergenerational tales of tragedy and redemption. The challenging connection between Baba and Amir in *The Kite Runner* reveals how secrecy and guilt create emotional legacies that shape identity and moral consciousness. Meanwhile, *And the Mountains Echoed* explores this topic across generations showing how Abdullah and Pari's loss and separation rebound through their descendants, creating a network of silent sorrow and memory. The study compares biological heredity to cultural and psychological transmission, highlighting that Hosseini's concept of legacy includes inherited stories, silences and moral debts. Confession, empathy and narrative restoration stop the cycles of suffering, redefining trauma as a shared inheritance that can be acknowledged and healed. This perspective frames Hosseini's works as meditations on memory, compassion and the moral need to restore across generations.

Keywords: Memory and silence, Family bonds, Emotional inheritance, Cultural legacy, Moral healing.

Introduction

One of the most powerful forces affecting human experience is trauma inheritance, which frequently happens through silence, memory and emotional resonance rather than genetics. In family and cultural situations, pain is passed down through generations sometimes spoken occasionally hidden. Literature as a place of recollection and reckoning, is a tool for tracing and healing such inherited traumas (Caruth 4). Khaled Hosseini's novels, rooted in Afghan history yet universal in emotional dimension illustrates the transfer of sorrow across familial and cultural divides. His books show how hiding, regret and displacement endure over time hurting relationships long after the initial pain has passed (Hirsch 5). In these stories, silence acts as both an instrument and an expression of suffering, while narrative is the first step toward healing. This study investigates the intersections of personal loss, collective memory, and moral awakening to see how inherited wounds might be reimagined not only endured, but acknowledged, shared and finally recovered (LaCapra 144).

Parental Secrets and The Weight Of Inheritance In *The Kite Runner*

In *The Kite Runner*, Baba and Amir's father-son bond serves as an experiment for understanding how trauma and secrecy can shape identity. Baba's hidden sin of fathering Hassan causes a moral split between the family, which Amir unintentionally inherits (Hosseini, *Kite Runner* 225). His lifelong regret made up of jealousy and shame, indicates how the silence surrounding Baba's crime serves as a trauma vehicle (Caruth 7). The hidden secret hounds both men, trapping them in a mirrored cycle of moral avoidance and emotional denial (LaCapra 22). Baba's patience, established in a patriarchal Afghan culture that associates emotions with weakness prevents genuine connection, supporting the intergenerational cycle of silence and emotional exile.

Amir's final task to save Sohrab represents the novel's turning point in breaking the cycle (Hosseini, *Kite Runner* 289). Acts of redemption do not completely remove the inherited pain, instead they disturb its growth. Healing comes not from negating history but from accepting it, a narrative renewal that turns silence into words (Hirsch 12).

The Architecture Of Multigenerational Trauma In *And The Mountains Echoed*

If *The Kite Runner* portrays the psychic legacy within a single heritage, *And The Mountains Echoed* builds on this theme to create an architectural structure of dispersed suffering. The novel develops like a broken mosaic, spanning generations and continents with each story repeating in the next (Whitehead 119). The initial separation of siblings Abdullah and Pari is the primary wound that resonates through

the next generation (Hosseini, *Mountains Echoed* 45). The novel's emotional design is similar to the structure of trauma itself; fragmented, recursive and recurrent over time. Similarly, Abdullah's hidden feelings manifest through obsessive acts of remembrance collecting feathers and keeping historical artifacts. Their children faraway but emotionally connected to ancestral loss, represent how trauma evolves rather than diminishes across generations (Hirsch 24). Hosseini represents memory as both connective tissue and scar, with its perseverance maintaining continuity but at the expense of peace (LaCapra 41).

Biological Vs Cultural Inheritance: Genes, Stories And Silences

Both works explore what it means to inherit not just DNA, but also emotional and ethical history. Biology establishes lineage, but tales build identity (Eyerman 7). Hosseini's characters are frequently burdened by cultural narratives that define belonging, shame and love instead of natural inclination. Silence whether chosen or imposed, works as a manner of inheritance that preserves trauma. In breaking the silence, the characters reclaim control over their family's history. Thus, storytelling develops as a counter biological act, converting trauma into memory (Lambek 60).

The Role of Memory, Objects and Symbols in Transmitting Trauma

Hosseini's narratives use objects, memories and symbolic gestures as silent carriers of inherited trauma. In both *The Kite Runner* and *And the Mountains Echoed*, emotional legacies can be preserved not only through relationships as well as using literal and symbolic objects that outlast their owners. In *The Kite Runner* the pomegranate tree, Hassan's slingshot and the kite itself serve as recollection spots for guilt and longing (Hosseini, *Kite Runner* 73). These things act as emotional archives, reminding Amir of both betrayal and the prospect of redemption. They face the burden of unresolved history, serving them mute witnesses to moral splits within the family (Caruth 22).

Similarly, in *And the Mountains Echoed* Abdullah's preserved feathers, Pari's broken memories and Nabi's letters serve as symbolic connections between the past and the present (Hosseini, *Mountains Echoed* 112). These material remains act as containers of memory and sadness, allowing characters to explore their emotional landscapes from childhood and heritage. Hosseini uses these objects to show how trauma is not eradicated by time, instead it becomes embedded in the everyday things that people value (Hirsch 15). The past speaks to future generations through symbolic items, building identity and emotional inheritance. Thus memory - material, emotional and symbolic appears as a strong mediator of both suffering and healing, connecting someone to past they struggle to learn yet cannot escape (Whitehead 133).

Interrupting The Cycle: Moments Of Healing

Despite the deepest levels of hereditary pain, Hosseini finds hope in acts of compassion and narrative reconstruction. Amir's return to Kabul, Pari's reconnection with her brother's memories and a child's simple act of kindness all point to the possibility of emotional recovery (Hosseini, *Mountains Echoed* 320). Healing in Hosseini's reality, does not eliminate wounds; rather it restores continuity and purpose to them. The transmission of trauma leads to the exchange of empathy, turning inheritance into the intentional act of development rather than repetition (Eyerman 21).

Conclusion

Khaled Hosseini's works show how trauma is handed down not only through biology but also through silence, guilt and unspoken family history. Relationships between parents and children or separated siblings demonstrate how emotional traumas impact identity across generations. These inherited sufferings are frequently unsaid, even if they have a profound impact on personal and cultural identities. However, moments of honesty, empathy and reconnection provide breakthroughs that transform pain into healing. Individuals can break the cycle of trauma by facing silence and sharing tales, transform inherited scars into chances for moral growth and empathy (Hirsch 28). Ultimately, Hosseini's works suggest that, while tragedy unites families, it may also inspire resilience and change through healing tales.

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