

Pathogenic Reminiscences in the Formation of Identities in Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns*

Navleen Kour and Harpreet Kaur

Abstract

Trauma is derived from the Greek word for wound, and it is characterized in current clinical and mental writing as an injury incurred not on the body but rather the psyche. Trauma is brought about by a profound shock that destabilises the brain's familiarity with time, self, and the world. Jean-Martin Charcot, a French neurologist, suggested in the 1890s that psychological stress was the cause of all cases of hysteria. Trauma is demonstrated by remembering incidents kept inside the unconscious that leads to hysteria and reconstruction of identity. The process of recalling a difficult, traumatic experience from the past generates psychological distress by adding significance to a previously suppressed event in the unconscious. The research examines the numerous psychological and social elements that impact the understanding of a traumatic experience. Psychoanalytic speculations on the circumstances and results of trauma emerged from the nineteenth-century investigation of shock and delirium by Sigmund Freud and Joseph Breuer. This article examines trauma in Khaled Hosseini's mother-daughter fiction. This research reveals the representation of post-traumatic disorder and behaviors encountered by the main character Mariam, which reflects the wartime sufferings of women in Afghanistan. It also notes how characters filled with tremendous dread, horror and helplessness emerge with resilience in the end. The article explores how trauma can disrupt episodic memory and fragment the sequence of events. *A Thousand Splendid Suns* exemplifies the true feelings of Afghan women who have survived wars, violence, and madness. The study explores Mariam's illegitimacy shaped her life, and how the predicament of Afghanistan's women eventually led her to recognize her talents and gain the ability to understand how unconscious conflict and imagination have essentially overshadowed the recovery of repressed childhood memories. Reminiscences have the most repercussions on the traumatized, and these reminiscences intertwine and

contribute to the reconstruction that is inherent in psychoanalysis.

Keywords: Identity, Psychoanalytical Theories, Hysteria, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Women, Resilience.

Introduction

Trauma as a scholarly field of study acquired prevalence seriously at the start of the mid-1890s; however, prior to that the term was utilized to signify a neurotic condition. Roger Luckhurst contends that there are major areas of strength between innovation and trauma. He cites Mark S. Micale and Paul Lerner in recommending how trauma is “receptive to and constitutive of advancement.”¹ Psychological and psychiatric illness is not new to human experience; however, the change in circumstances post the Industrial Revolution (like political arrangements, the ascent of the state, war, the overriding of the relations and customs of village life by urbanization, the ascent of free enterprise monetary relations, mechanical advancements and new machinery) adjusted individual and social feelings of reality. There is no specific period for the dormancy time frame; it could be days or years, yet the impacts of the first experience will eventually arise and show themselves, either in bad dreams or some generally baffling, unusual way of behaving. People who experienced begin seeing adjusted universes. Survivors frequently reconsider their psychological models of personality and adjust to new conditions. At the point when the close-to-home aggravation has been high, individuals frequently resort to special ways or endeavours to foster new self-ideas. Trauma is additionally investigated in innovation. The thoughts of Freud are huge in figuring out ‘trauma’ as a neurotic condition. He first connected trauma with madness in quite a while. This thought was additionally altered and explained regarding his treatment of casualties of close-quarters conflict during World War I.

Trauma alludes to a genuine event, a profound blow that overpowers the faculties and against which the psyche and body should guard themselves. Notwithstanding deadness, it resembles a condition where the ability to feel torment is briefly suspended; amnesia and suppression are

Navleen Kour has completed her master’s degree in English literature, and is pursuing her PhD, at Chandigarh University. Harpreet Kaur is an Associate Professor of English in the University institute of Liberal Arts and Humanities at Chandigarh University, Gharuan, Mohali, Punjab. She received her PhD from Panjab University, Chandigarh. Her research interests include psychoanalytic and cultural studies.

¹ Roger Luckhurst, *The Trauma Question* (London: Routledge, 2008), p. 20.

protections of the psyche against such an interruption. The respective person neglects or rejects whatever has happened. In fostering a unique model of trauma, Freud called this failing to remember a time of dormancy, where the traumatic individual can show up very typical in completing regular schedules. Roger Luckhurst in *The Trauma Question* (2008) proceeds to frame the beginnings of the idea of trauma across mental, lawful and social-political sources from the 1860s to the authoring of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in 1980. He further investigates the nature and degree of traumatic behavior from 1980 to the present, drawing upon the scope of social practices from writings including diaries, confessional reporting and letters. The approach of films and the message changed norms and examples of correspondence. Innovations like the online realm have contributed to savage attacks on human sensibilities and on the private and corporate character of individuals, often in horrible circumstances.²

Trauma as described by Cathy Caruth is rarely perceived and often is not completely experienced when it happens, given its undeniable unforeseen nature. It is simply not accessible to mindfulness until it returns as dreams, visualizations, or recollections that attack the individual without warning. In this sense, it tends to be expressed that it is unimaginable to expect to overlook mental illness since it becomes entwined in the construction of the one's character and identity. Contrary to this customary worldview of hypothesis, Michelle Balaev proposes a more nuanced and adaptable idea of injury. As per Balaev, it has been demonstrated that people respond to trauma in a wide range of ways. Further, the trauma itself is not the main perspective that is hurtful to the person in question; it is the suppression of its memory that delivers the side effects. Consequently, trauma and memory are profoundly associated. In the present with developing interest in the field of memory review and investigation of abstract structures, for example, diaries, tributes, confession booths and authentic reports is unavoidable.³

Trauma is caused by a profound shock so strong that it breaks the brain's insight of time, self, and the world and in the end shows itself in

² Roger Kurtz, *Trauma and Literature* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), p. 4.

³ Michelle Balaev (ed.), *Contemporary Approaches in Literary Trauma Theory* (Cham: Springer, 2014).

dreams and flashbacks.⁴ Trauma examinations have arisen as a field of study that targets perusing and understanding mental illness to advance recuperation. In Freud's work he focused on hysteria and pioneered a "talking cure" to decipher the events that traumatised patients. Freud and Breuer concluded in *Studies in Hysteria* (1895) that the primary event was not necessarily terrible in itself, yet rather its acknowledgment in the present or remembrance was troubling. It can be concluded from these observations that the recollection of memories operates for years not only indirectly but directly just as psychological pain causing lachrymal secretion long after the event. Reminiscences are the most common cause of hysteria.

For we found, to our great surprise at first, that each hysterical symptom immediately and permanently disappeared when we had succeeded in bringing clearly to light the memory its of the event by which it was provoked and in arousing accompanying affect, and when possible the patient had described that event in the greatest detail and had put the affect into words ... Hysterics suffer mainly from reminiscences.⁵

Trauma is subsequently described as equivalent to the most widely recognized approach to reviewing the unconscious, seeking the cause of the splitting or dissociation of the internal identity. The scholars, alluding to Pierre Janet's work on dissociation, elucidate: "the splitting of consciousness which is so striking in the well-known classical cases under the form of double conscience is present to a rudimentary degree in every hysteria, and that a tendency to such dissociation, and with it the emergence of abnormal states of consciousness is the basic phenomenon of this neurosis."⁶

Jean Laplanche has given an overall portrayal of how Freud might interpret trauma, which shifted fundamentally throughout his career. Delirium, the torturing of the body by the distraught soul, is among the most unavoidable human problems; but simultaneously, it is the trickiest. Freud's acknowledgment that delirium originated from trauma in the patient's past changed the manner we contemplate people's conduct and character. Delirium helped structure the field of analysis. The central ideas of the contemporary hypothesis on trauma were laid based on the remedial acts of late nineteenth-century European nervous system specialists like Jean-

⁴ Cathy Caruth, *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1996), p. 20.

⁵ Sigmund Freud and Josef Breuer, *Studies on Hysteria* (London: Hogarth Press, 1955), p. 7.

⁶ Onno Van der Hart and Rutger Horst, 'The Dissociation Theory of Pierre Janet', *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, vol. 2, no. 4 (1989), p. 8.

Martin Charcot, Pierre Janet, Joseph Breuer, and Sigmund Freud. These men fostered a range of speculations to represent strange ways of behaving by their patients. The psychoanalytical trauma is characterized as an occasion so overpowering that it can't be handled typically at the hour of the event as its memory is successfully obstructed however gets back to torment the individual until it is fittingly gone up against and managed.⁷

It was Freud's work with Breuer analysing Anna O, a young lady encountering side effects of delirium, that lead to the advancement of psychoanalytic therapy. Anna found that just discussing her concerns with a specialist significantly affected her condition. She named this treatment the "talking cure," a name that endures to the present day. Carl G. Jung, a colleague of Freud's, analysed a young woman named Sabina Spielrein, who was likewise remembered to experience the ill effects of trauma. Jung and Freud frequently examined Spielrein's case, which deeply affected the theories. Spielrein trained as a psychoanalyst and took the psychoanalytic method to Russia before she was killed by Nazis during World War II.⁸ The subject of neglectful blockage of mental injury (controlled memory) stays alive in fiction, conveying critical mishaps or outrageous fears on the individual or societal levels. The individual may not recall what truly happened, while sentiments experienced during the injury may be re-experienced without the person getting a handle on the justification for why. This can result in shocking experiences being persistently restimulated like they were happening continually.

The dreams of the patient repeat the experience as a way to understand; according to Freud, the patient cannot remember the history of what is contained in him/her and what cannot be recalled may be the key to treatment. Thus, the patient is compelled to review the event as a contemporary event rather than analyze it as something from the past. The event's record is critical for recovery. According to Freud, the terrible memory of the event is anomalous and misses the point which is necessary to permit its incorporation into the psyche. The addition of a narrative survey for proper memory coordination and the notion of memory as a storage space of inclusion are essential foci for the literary critical conception of trauma.

⁷ Kurtz, *Trauma and Literature*, p. 3.

⁸ Karen Hall, 'Sabina Spielrein, 1885-1942', *The Shalvi/Hyman Encyclopaedia of Jewish Women* (1999), *Jewish Women's Archive*. At: <https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/spielrein-sabina#pid-18774>. Accessed 21 December 2022.

Subsequently, the powerlessness to discuss a horrible experience following its occurrence may not be because of the unspeakable idea of trauma but because of an extensive variety of individual, social or social reasons. Subsequently, separation or seclusion ought not to be viewed as simply as the conceivable reaction to trauma, as Caruth states, regardless of whether it is habitually addressed as the widespread response to trauma in writing.⁹ The field of trauma studies attempts to create and adjust the central post-structural perspective, as well as consolidating new perspectives from post-colonialism, women's activism, ethnic investigations, and eco criticism. Ongoing collections, such as *Contemporary Approaches in Literary Trauma Theory* and *The Future of Trauma Theory*, include more research into the social and semiotic repercussions of trauma in literature.¹⁰

Analysis of the Text

The text is set in Afghanistan from the early 1960s to the early 2000s and is an unbearably heartbreaking testimony to both Afghanistan's suffering and its fortitude. The purpose of this research is to investigate Mariam's character in light of trauma theory. The study looks at how trauma may affect an individual's identity and, as a result, influence the connections they have with others and the actions they do following the traumatic event. In this way, Khaled Hosseini's character Mariam's identity is influenced by childhood humiliation and recurring, undesired, and uncontrolled memories associated with the re-enactment of a terrible occurrence. It is commonly noticed that the results of such violence typically leave the character feeling isolated. Characters' terrible experiences frequently reappear in their psyches. The protagonists are frequently compelled to reconstruct and redefine their own identities as a result of the horrific nature of the occurrences. At the outset of the novel, Mariam, one of two female characters, is a calm, contemplative youngster. Mariam, a Tajik born in Herat in 1959, is the subject of this review. Nana, Jalil's ill-conceived girl, and his parental figure loathe her mother's severity, including the way that she just sees her dad one time each week. At the point when Mariam was five years of age, she heard the word *harami* and was interested. Initially, Mariam is identified by the image of a weed, something to rip out and throw away. Such words would hurt any

⁹ Dominick LaCapra and Farkash Yaniv, *Li-Khetovhistoryah, Li-Khetovtra'umah* (Jerusalem: Resling, 2006), pp. 41-42.

¹⁰ Michelle Balaev, *The Nature of Trauma in American Novels* (Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 2012), p. 20.

and everyone, but they affected Mariam drastically because they came from the mother. The world treats Mariam like a weed and reject her because she does not fit into the social order. "And the past held only this wisdom: that love was a damaging mistake, and its accomplice, hope, a treacherous illusion. And whenever those twin poisonous flowers began to sprout in the parched land of that field, Mariam uprooted them. She uprooted them and ditched them before they took hold."¹¹ Mariam eventually becomes convinced that she is nothing but a weed. She describes love and hope as twin poisonous flowers that she uproots whenever they sprout inside her as she grows older. Mariam discovers how to uproot love in the same way that she was uprooted. She experienced humiliation her whole childhood as a result of her birth circumstances, and following her mother's death, she is forced to marry a much older shoemaker and go to Kabul.

Mariam's humiliation at being illegitimate prevents her from standing up for herself. Mariam's mother commits herself after fleeing at the age of fifteen, which affects her for the rest of her life and relates to her tolerance for being coupled with the hostile Rasheed. Throughout her extensive conversation, Hosseini referred to Mariam as alone in every sense of the word. She is indeed a lady who is separated from human existence's customs. She legitimately wants to converse with another human person. Despite her early disdain of Laila, as a result of the shared burden of being married to the abusive, psychologically intrusive Rasheed, she gradually becomes a friend and a doting substitute mother to her. Rasheed, who used to treat Mariam as if she were a fairy tale princess, was expecting a boy baby. However, Rasheed transformed from the day of the abortion. "In the four years since the day at the bathhouse, there had been six more cycles of hopes raised then dashed, each lose, each collapse, each trip to the doctor more crushing for Mariam than the last."¹² Mariam's inability to conceive throughout her long marriage to Rasheed makes her an angry, cynical, and frightening woman. He torments her, beating her for something like the smallest perceived slight, and making her feel like "the goat, released in the tiger's cage, when the tiger first looks up from his paws, begins to growl".¹³ This assists her with

¹¹ Khaled Hosseini, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (New Delhi: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018), p. 26.

¹² Hosseini, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, p. 98.

¹³ Hosseini, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, p. 240.

genuinely figuring out her mother's life and the advent of Laila, Rasheed's subsequent spouse, completely changes Mariam.

Through her affection for Laila and Laila's children, Mariam can understand her fantasy about becoming a mother and, ultimately, giving and acknowledging love. Nana, who shouts at Mariam and brands her a liar when she accidentally harms a valued sugar dish, scrutinizes her caring nature. Nana likewise educates her that the blaming finger regarding a male generally tracks down a lady. This outrage is elevated by her record of Mariam's introduction to the world. Nana used to upbraid her by communicating, "A man's heart is a wretched, wretched thing. It isn't like a mother's womb. It won't bleed. It won't stretch to make a room for you."¹⁴ The accounts are valid in laying out Nana's sharpness and Jalil's liberality, as well as both of their perspectives towards Mariam. Mariam should construct the third truth through these accounts her account of herself and what her identity is, free from yet educated by her folks' depictions.

The past experience of trauma can come to haunt the child beyond comprehension; that happy common childhood becomes an illusion. It leads to the reconstruction of the very character. Children receives end of thoughts and pattern of behavior from elders and eventually endure no guilt of theirs, looking for the hope and much of the time in anguish and distress. Unexpected post-traumatic responses are common. Theorists feel that it is unclear what causes distinct traumatic reactions in people. Dysphoria can occur in some traumatic situations, but it is not the only response to the trauma's catastrophic consequences. Many symptoms of trauma, according to psychologists working in non-Western regions, are universal, appearing across time and throughout cultures. Balaev argues that trauma survivors all across the world experience great sorrow, numbness, emotion dysregulation, detachment, and survivor's guilt. In Mariam's case survival required first separation and then the formation of a new identity in a new place. Mariam becomes her own person when she decides to go to Herat and locate Jalil on her own, no longer a kid ready to follow the restrictions imposed by parents. Finally, Mariam is bereaved and forced to confront life alone as a result of her grief and loss, brought on first by Jalil's rejection of her and then by her mother's suicide. Mariam must deal with the challenges of her new life.

Mariam has finally moved into the apartment she has always desired, but her dream has turned into a nightmare as she understands the social and cultural disparity between her and her half-siblings. Mariam's newfound

¹⁴ Hosseini, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, p. 20.

understanding of this separation is evident when, despite Jalil's prodding, she refuses to join in family activities; "But Mariam could not hear comfort in God's words. Not that day. Not then. All she could hear was Nana saying, I'll die if you go, I'll just die. All she could do was cry and let her tears fall on the spotted, paper-thin skin of Mullah Faizullah's hands."¹⁵ Mariam's meeting with Mullah Faizullah uncovers that she feels remorseful for her mother's passing. This regret drives her activities and feeds her longing to be separated from everyone else. Mariam remained in her room except when she uses the bathroom in the lobby. Most dinners on the plate went uneaten.

In *Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety*, Freud discusses isolation, which is important in this case. Motor isolation is intended to ensure that the connection in thought is broken. It is also thought that isolation is a good way to ensure a normal defensive strategy. The normal phenomenon of concentration serves as a justification for this type of neurotic tendency. Mariam noticed emotionlessly from the window that she had thought about and wished to be an observer for quite a bit of her life. Mariam's culpability would impact her gathering with Afsoon and Jalil's different spouses, as Nana implied when she noticed him cross his hands on his chest and highlight his wives. Nana knew that she had no place here: "But where do I belong? What am I going to do now? I'm all you have in this world, Mariam, and when I'm gone you'll have in this world, Mariam and when I'm gone you'll have nothing. You'll have nothing. You are nothing!"¹⁶

Mariam finds refuge in Mullah Faizullah's presence. While she is unable to let go of her guilt, Mullah Faizullah can provide her with religious and personal guidance, hinting that personal relationships and religious beliefs may be important in her rehabilitation following her mother's untimely death. Through discourse and aesthetics, Hosseini creates Mariam's environment and a theme of society vs the individual. First, Hosseini portrays each spouse individually, representing their physical appearance as seen by Mariam. The three females combine into a hazy entity fighting against Mariam as their prime objective becomes apparent. Mariam admits this by no longer keeping track of their conversation. Mariam understood how he and his family viewed her: as a burden, not a person. As she sees her breathing cloud on the tabletop, she feels herself dissolving; experiencing a new life as a stranger's wife and departing her previous life,

¹⁵ Hosseini, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, p.38.

¹⁶ Hosseini, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, p. 40.

where all of the things she had regarded as constant forces are irreparably lost. Mariam, unable to identify herself as a daughter or a wife, must begin to develop a new sense of self if she is to face the challenges that await her.

Experts have underlined that trauma is not just to be perceived as an individual, mental as well as actual reaction, but rather in addition as a group, political, and social condition with extensive material and irrelevant aspects.¹⁷ Mariam's reaction to the injury she endured was likewise sweeping. True to form the horrendous experience made her a loner and she favored confinement. Freud writes in *Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety* that "When something undesirable has happened to the subject or when he has accomplished something which has importance for his despondency, he inserts a span during which nothing further should occur during which he should not see anything and do nothing." Here, the experience is not neglected, but it is denied its effect, and its cooperative associations are smothered or hindered so it stays segregated and is not recreated in the patient's thought-cycles. Freud discusses detachment and for this situation, it is a pivotal one. Mariam's adoption of the *burqa* demonstrates her unwillingness to oppose her husband as well as her developing knowledge of Rasheed's stringent principles and their impact on her lifestyle. When Rasheed strives to marry Laila to have a male child, Mariam never expresses her feelings for Laila. However, after Laila gave birth to Aziza, Mariam gradually started to relish the company of Laila and Aziza. Mariam quickly becomes Aziza's second mother. Mariam perceived: "Love had never been declared to her so guilelessly so unreservedly" and following all these years of trauma, "She had found in this little creature the first true connection in her life of false, failed connection."¹⁸

Mariam's burgeoning concept of identity as a mother to Laila, Aziza, and Zalmai is portrayed in her closeness with them, and her readiness to make sacrifices for them. Mariam and Aziza share the closeness of a grandma and a granddaughter. Mariam indulges in the foolish game, finding delight in Aziza's enjoyment of it, as the two pretend to be Rose and Jack. Mariam also becomes more motherly towards Laila, especially when she advises her to stop picking on Rasheed. Mariam expresses worry for Laila's safety by telling her to leave Rasheed alone, attempting to communicate what she's learned: sometimes quiet is more beneficial than speaking one's opinions. Mariam has matured significantly as a result of her encounters with

¹⁷ Kurtz, *Trauma and Literature*, p. 126.

¹⁸ Hosseini, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, p. 246.

Aziza and Laila: she is no longer silent and obedient, but instead adds her wisdom and compassion to her new family. Mariam's choice to contact Jalil demonstrates how seriously she takes her responsibilities as a mother. When Laila laments that she would have to watch her children starve to death, Mariam takes action. She exhibits one of the best traits of parenting by letting go of her animosity towards Jalil. She is prepared to give up her dignity to preserve Aziza and Zalmai's lives. Despite its failure, she grows to feel sympathy for her father, who she sees as not cruel in the manner Rasheed is, but rather a sad blend of frailty and good intentions.

Memory denotes a connection to previous experiences that deeply influences the manner of cognitive abilities and behavior. However, the traditional representation of trauma conceptualizes memory as a real record of the past, marked by involuntary flashbacks caused by a "literal return of the event against the will of the one it inhabits".¹⁹ Memory might be perceived as developing redemptive and therapeutic potential, it cannot be disputed that its influence can also destroy all "representational capacities, leading only a flood of terrifying affect and disrupting an individual's coherent sense of self."²⁰ Mariam reviews what Nana said by demonstrating that every snowfall addresses a murmur heard by a displeased woman someplace on the planet. Each of the murmurs floated up high, shaping mists and afterwards separating into little pieces that landed delicately on individuals beneath. To act as a wake-up call of how ladies endure. The pain and endurance Rasheed has given her, as well as the delight and love she feels for Laila, propel her to kill Rasheed. Mariam is first persuaded by noble rage and a sensation of equity. Mariam has acknowledged her predetermination all through her marriage, requesting nothing from Rasheed or any other person. During her battle with Rasheed, she understands how little she has requested and how little mischief she has procured; she has consumed her time on earth as a saint. Yet, Mariam finds that every last bit of her constancy has not upgraded her worth in Rasheed's eyes.

Mariam recognizes herself interesting and thinks she has never acquired the hopelessness she needed to go through. Her second and convincing objective is to save Laila. After her most memorable stroke at Rasheed, Mariam seems to trust that on the off chance that she doesn't kill

¹⁹ Caruth, *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, p. 5.

²⁰ Silke Arnold-de Simine, 'Trauma and Memory', in *Trauma and Literature*, ed. J. Roger Kurtz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), p. 141.

him, he could have killed them both. While Mariam battles, she will never relinquish Laila. Mariam loves her true performance as a mother regardless of anything else, as seen by her decision to kill Rasheed, like any mother to go the extra mile to safeguard her child (Laila). These two drives, one in light of another identity worth and the other on unselfish love give a multi-layered image of Mariam and exhibit how both love and contempt are strong shapers of the human psyche.

Mariam wished for so much in those final moments. Yet as she closed her eyes, it was not regret any longer, but a sensation of abundant peace that washed over her. She thought of her entry into this world, the *harami* child of a lowly villager, an unintended thing, a pitiable, regrettable accident. A weed. And yet she was leaving the world as a woman who had loved and been loved back. She was leaving it as a friend, a companion, a guardian. A mother, a person of consequence at last. No. It was not so bad, Mariam thought, that she should die this way. Not so bad. This was a legitimate end to a life of illegitimate belongings.²¹

Hosseini utilizes unobtrusive ways of portraying how Mariam answers unforgiving encounters and as a woman, attempts to defeat her past with steadiness, trust, and fulfillment, and without second thoughts.

Conclusion

Trauma can be characterized as a person's experience of a terrible incident or situation that hinders productive thoughts about the individual's identity, or a collective experience that damages society. Considering the standards by which one assesses society and also the character of an individual Hosseini's novel is worth researching and examining from the perspective of trauma studies. Mariam confronts a tragic occurrence that is unintelligible at first, harsh and terrifying when confronted, but which leads to a new way of perceiving herself and the world around her. *A Thousand Splendid Suns* delves into trauma and how individual experiences and memories may be used to remodel personal identity so one can emerge with resilience and greater empowerment.

²¹ Hosseini, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, p. 361.