

## Comparative Analysis Of Psychological And Childhood Trauma In *The Almond Tree* And In *The Kite Runner*: A Study Of Cultural Trauma And Collective Identity

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### ABSTRACT

This research paper aims to provide a comparative and critical view of the psychological and childhood traumas presented in both *The Almond Tree* by Michelle Cohen Corasanti and *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini in order to better understand how trauma defines personal and communal identity. Following the theoretical perspectives from Suzanne Keen, Jeffrey C. Alexander, Neil J. Smelser, Ron Eyerman, and Piotr Sztompka, the analysis explores the symbols and meanings of trauma in these novels. This is due to the fact that Keen's narrative empathy theory is helpful to explain how the characters' emotional worlds are built and thus, the reader gets a better insight of the characters' possible psychological traumas. Cultural trauma theory by Alexander deals with the loss of a collective identity due to conflict and displacement in *The Almond Tree*. Similarly Smelser theory of Collective behaviour focuses on the social reaction to the trauma in both novels. Eyerman's social memory theory focuses on the process of remembering and cultural distribution of traumatic experiences and Sztompka's social trauma theory educates about collective conditioning, shock and loss in culture. In doing so, this paper shows how literature reveals the role of the written and spoken word in mitigating or magnifying trauma, along with the ways in which literature elicits concern, identification, and additional layers of oligophyleptic acculturation in depicting human survival or perseverance across the life span.

**Key Words:** Psychological trauma, Childhood trauma, Cultural trauma, Collective identity, Trauma theory, Narrative Empathy, Empathy

### 1. Introduction

Psychological and childhood trauma may be said to inscribe themselves on the experience of human persons and communities at large [1]. We see its impact on identity formation, an agent of change to behavioral patterns and the remaster of history. This research paper aims to conduct a comparative analysis of psychological and childhood trauma as portrayed in two poignant literary works: Michelle Cohen Corasanti's *The Almond Tree* and Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*. Both novels, set against the backdrops of political turmoil and cultural upheaval, provide rich narratives for exploring the themes of trauma and its profound impacts on personal and collective identity.

#### 1.1. Background of the Study

*The Almond Tree*, based in Israel and Palestine, tells the tragic story of a young Palestinian boy who due to political crisis in his country, has to overcome life altering struggles [2]. The role of sexuality in the novel is complex and symbolizes suffering and submission in the wake of war, violence and dictatorship. It reveals how these experiences have transformed Ichmad, his interpersonal relationships, and how he searches for knowledge as well as the state of peace amid the conflicts [3]. On the other hand, *The Kite Runner* depicts the life of a young boy from a rich family in Kabul, Afghanistan named Amir. The novel flows chronologically through the boy, specifically the events of the betrayal and guilt, in relation to the socio-political turmoil of Afghanistan and changes in its culture [4]. It provides a background of the main character, Amir, from childhood through adulthood

and shows how past trauma affects his actions and decisions and the search for atonement.

### 1.2. Purpose of the Study

Thus, analyzing the life of Ichmad from *The Almond Tree* and the life of Amir from *The Kite Runner* will help to draw the comparison and contrast of the day-to-day life after trauma in different cultures.

This paper seeks to understand the early cultural and collective trauma in the wake of political conflict and social change in relation to the two novels. It will evaluate how such vast tragedies affect characters and societies as a whole.

The study will explore how trauma pertains the construction of the collective mannerisms and identity in *The Almond Tree* of Palestinian identity and in *The Kite Runner* of the Afghan identity. It will outline how a group can form the basis of identity and unity through experiences of victimization.

### 1.3. Research Gap

As far as cultural and thematic parallels are concerned, prior research has devoted a significant amount of attention to the analysis of psychological and childhood trauma in *The Almond Tree* and *The Kite Runner* separately but lacks a theoretical comparison of the two novels. The socio-political contexts and the cultural identities within each of these narratives are studied to glean more about the narrative empathy, cultural trauma, collective behavior, social memory and social trauma theories yet there is lack of exploration of how these traumas are framed and understood from the four theoretical perspectives. Additionally, there is the lack of adequate examination of the purpose of literature in mediating trauma experience and trauma narratives across cultures. This paper shall seek to fill these gaps by undertaking a comparative analysis of the two novels using an analytic narrative comparative review method in order to offer a multi-theoretical perspective in order to improve understanding of how the trauma impacts individual and the group. In this way, this research aims to contribute to the understanding of trauma in literature, paying attention to interdependent processes of trauma in individual and collective contexts.

## 2. Literature Review

The literature review part discusses the concept and brief analysis of psychological and childhood trauma, cultural trauma, collective identity in the context of literature analysis. It is intended to provide the context for the analysis of literary works: The subjects are the novels *The Almond Tree* and *The Kite Runner*. The review will focus on three main areas: the assumptions of trauma theory, the concept of cultural trauma and collective memory, and the function of literature in the context of the above-discussed concepts.

### 2.1. Trauma Theory

To recap, one important fact is that while the principles of the trauma concept have had a long history and development, their initial definitions were different. Psychiatry was first defined by Sigmund Freud whose psychoanalytical theory contributed greatly to the development of the trauma theory which posits wounding as a psychological catastrophe that disorganises cognition and emotion. Subsequently, the definition of PTSD in DSM-III [5] further highlighted the chronic effects of traumatic events. Despite agreeing with other commentators that contemporary trauma theory overextends the psychological consequences of traumatization past the self, there is an important way that such theory synthesizes both the social and the cultural. According to Caruth [6] trauma is not a private affair that only affects victims, but a cultural phenomenon that questions language and representation. Caruth goes on to establish that trauma does not submit to the ordinary narrative form of history, thus resulting in fragmented and episodic modes of storytelling that mimic memory. This is expanded on by Dominick LaCapra [7] with specific attention to the issue of history and trauma, whereby such events yield an ongoing after-effect that continues to resound in the individual and social psyche. By reflecting on Berger's notion of acting out and working through and entering a discussion about trauma narratives, LaCapra actively engages in the development and practice of trauma theory.

### 2.2. Childhood Trauma in Literature

Psychological trauma, especially the childhood trauma, has been a significant literary diacritic that reveals the main character arcs and story plots. Alice Miller [8] focused on the bringing up explaining that their consequences remain with a person for a lifetime prerequisite adverse childhood experience is likely to produce deep psychological trauma. In literature, the consequences of childhood trauma are often considered in the context of the coming of age genre. Such stories reflect the process of transformation from the main character's childhood to the adult person, with the use of crucial life forms of vital or destructive experience.

Childhood and psychological trauma are among the most popular themes in English literature, often used as the main factors that shape the characters' further evolution and the plot's progression. In "Beloved" Toni Morrison focuses on the effects of slavery and particularly on how the characters' childhood trauma affects their mental health and ethnicity. Likewise, in "The Catcher in the Rye," Kaplan [9] explores Holden Caulfield's anxiety about teenage trauma, which stems from his brother's suicide and subsequent loneliness and depression, which reflects broader social anxieties about identity and integration. Woolf's "Mrs. Dalloway" focuses on the theme of the post-

World War I period, as Thomas [10] points out, the character of Septimus Warren Smith, who suffers from severe psychological trauma due to the war and childhood memories of fear and loneliness. In “Lord of the Flies,” Knowles [11] describes the process of the boys’ regression to savagery on an island and explains their actions as the result of psychological abuse and the destruction of childhood. Finally, Bell [12] explores Cormac McCarthy’s ‘The Road’ depicting a world after the apocalypse, and how the psychological development of the novel’s protagonist, is formed by the constant exposure to the conditions of the world and the loss of human values. All these novels together depict how the experiences of childhood and psychological trauma affect people and are set in cultural and historical contexts that shape Collective identities.

### **2.3. Cultural Trauma and Collective Memory**

Cultural trauma therefore refers to a social fracture through which a community or a society has experienced a significant fracture as a collective whereby there is a shared feeling of loss. According to Jeffrey Alexander [1], cultural trauma is a process where people in a cultural group are made to feel that they have been exposed to a horrific event that imprints itself on their collective society. It triggers ontological insecurity in the group and demands the reimagination of the group mnemonic to encompass the traumatic event. Collective memory according to Maurice Halbwachs [13] is a pool of memories that are created within a given culture and are transferred through generations. Culture is important to the identity of the social group and trauma is likely to disrupt or change this particular form of memory all together as it generates new stories and interpretations of the past. Power, identity and social change are some of the areas where cultural trauma is most likely to be confounded with notions of both power conflict and resistance. According to Edward Said [14], literature acts as a hegemonic mirror, which can also be an instrument of conscious oppression; discussing the trauma narratives, he pointed out that they also represent rebellion against the oppressive cultural discourses.

### **2.4. Trauma and Identity in *The Almond Tree* and *The Kite Runner***

In both *The Almond Tree* and *The Kite Runner*, it is possible to analyze the interaction between trauma and identity both in sum and in detail. As discussed in *The Almond Tree* by Michelle Cohen Corasanti, the main character, Ichmad Hamid, is a palestinian boy who loses his entire family to Israeli Palestinian conflict. The novel paints a living and intolerable picture of mental and emotional effects of war, imprisonment, and deportation. The traumatic experiences that linger with Ichmad from his childhood are captured in the way he perceives and interacts with other people, his academic accomplishments, and even his beliefs about peace and justice. Such themes are illustrated in Khaled Hosseini’s *The Kite Runner* in regards to its Afghanistan setting and main character Amir’s traumatic past experiences. Amir is still tortured by the loss of his friend Hassan, a betrayal that he experienced during his childhood years.

### **2.5. Comparative Literary Analysis**

Comparative literature analysis can help us better understand how different cultures reveal trauma. Both *The Almond Tree* and *The Kite Runner* depict the human dimensions of pain while also facing events in a larger sociopolitical context. This dual focus emphasises the relationship between individualism and collectivity. When analysing these stories, it is important to consider the historical and cultural circumstances in which they occur. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan provide distinct contexts for recurring characters and narratives. This exploration of these notions sheds light on how trauma and identity are produced and articulated across cultures.

### **2.6. Literature’s Role in Reflecting and Shaping Trauma**

Literature is human’s greatest tool when it comes to breaking down trauma and making sense of it in a certain way. Naturally, by narrating a story, an author can help to reveal the ‘shadows’ of trauma and bring into the light the often hidden pain of suffering. Other benefits of the literature also include coping with the traumatic experience that either be experienced by the characters or the readers too. In her 2002 article, Susan Brison pointed out that the process of narration is the true way of regaining the agency for the victims of trauma. People who tell a story of their ordinary life can start comprehending their pain and regaining control of their existence. This narrative process can be seen in both *The Almond Tree* and *The Kite Runner*, where the experiences and perspective of the protagonist trying to address wrongs and salvage what can be salvaged in their lives.

## **3. Methodology**

This chapter provides the details of research approach and methods used in the analysis of the cultural or psychological trauma presented in the novels *The Almond Tree* and *The Kite Runner*. Analyzing the nature of character relationship with the reader and the collective identity of characters within these novels, this work relies on the theoretical concepts developed by Suzanne Keen, Jeffrey C. Alexander, Neil J. Smelser, Ron Eyerman, and Piotr Sztompka. This methodological approach is going to try and ascertain how the authors manipulate the idea and the telling of a narration to ensure that the audience feels compassion, and, indeed, how these narratives form and are formed by specific cultural groups.

### **3.1. Theoretical Frameworks**

#### **3.1.1. Jeffrey C. Alexander's Cultural Trauma:**

Drawing from Alexander's [1] definition, cultural trauma can be defined as a communal affair that shapes a group's identity and history. His framework will be utilized to examine how the traumatic incidences reflected in the novels affect the social identities of Palestinians, and Afghanis. Drawing on Alexander's notion of cultural trauma, the analysis will elucidate how these shared erasures are produced as well as disseminated through the narrative.

#### **3.1.2. Neil J. Smelser's Social Construction of Trauma:**

To conclude Smelser [15] underlines the importance of societal frames when establishing trauma. In analyzing trauma within the characters, his theory will be used to determine the roles of the societal and cultural contexts present in the novels. This approach will enable the understanding of how social trauma is packaged and passed through different texts.

#### **3.1.3. Ron Eyerman's Memory and Trauma:**

By studying cultural trauma, Eyerman [16] puts into focus the societal memory. To this end, his impressions will be employed to analyze how the traumatic experiences in the novels are remembered and reported within the culture respective to the novels. This framework will help in developing a clear picture of how individual and collective memory construct the characters' personality.

#### **3.1.4. Piotr Sztompka's Sociology of Trauma:**

Sztompka [17] offers a sociological approach of trauma because it relates the changes or crises in society to the outcomes in collective identity. It will be used to study how the socio-political changes as presented in the novels affect belonging and identity among the characters as postulated by the theorist.

#### **3.1.5. Suzanne Keen's Conceptual Framework of Narrative Empathy**

The writers' narrative strategies are analysed using Suzanne Keen's [18] theory of narrative empathy. Keen's research focuses on how literature develops empathy in readers, as well as how narrative elements like point of view, characterisation, and story structure influence the reader's empathic reaction.

### **3.2. Methodological Approach**

#### **3.2.1. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)**

CDA is chosen as the most appropriate methodological framework for analysing the data in the current research. CDA is a qualitative research process that focuses on the formation of language and discoursed that condition social and cultural realities. It is especially useful for carrying out the literature review due to its focus on analyzing the ways in which authors employ language to build up and represent elaborate social structures.

#### **3.2.2. Data Collection**

The manner in which data was collected for this comparative analysis was a three pronged process. As suggested in the literature review above, two novels by different authors including *The Almond Tree* and *The Kite Runner* will be analyzed to draw conclusions about the portrayal of trauma. The impact of trauma in the lives of the protagonists and other valuable characters in the novel will also be highlighted and supported through careful readings of the texts. It is important to pay attention to the sociopolitical contexts of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict depicted in *The Almond Tree* or the historical narrative of Afghanistan presented in *The Kite Runner* to fully grasp how cultural trauma and collective identity are constructed. To this contextual analysis, the authors' biographies and their reasons for writing these narratives will be used which gives more information about their perception about trauma and personality.

### **4. Text Analysis**

#### **4.1. Comparative Analysis of Childhood Trauma**

One of the major components of the narrative is the childhood trauma, which is illustrated through significant, devastating experiences that shape the ongoing life of the characters in *The Almond Tree* and in *The Kite Runner*. In *The Almond Tree*, the main character, Ichmad learns about war and occupation from a very early age and thus develops his vision of the world that encompasses all possible emotions. For instance, the depiction of soldiers fencing their land and home with barbed wire illustrates the intrusion of violence into the protagonist's childhood:

"More than a dozen soldiers were fencing our land and home with barbed wire. My sister Nadia was kneeling under our olive tree holding my middle Brothers Fadi and Hani while they cried". [19]

This scene also portrays another aspect of conflict as children because it shows how war affects a family at first

instance by having young kids like Abbas grow up to understand the difficulties of war and living in a new country. The psychological toll of such experiences is further emphasized through Abbas's (brother of protagonist) emotional reactions to his father's unjust imprisonment and torture:

"With the back of my hand, I wiped the sweat off my forehead. The images of Baba in the black prison jumpsuit... filled my mind... My mind began to conjure hideous scenarios". [19]

This passage is an example of Abbas's creative fancy and his rooted phobias concerning the wellbeing of his father, and, to an extent, mirrors the effects of the posttraumatic stress disorder in children who experienced the torture of their close ones.

Likewise, in *The Kite Runner*, the main character of the novel, Amir, suffers from some childhood trauma which is illustrated in situation when he betrays his close friend Hassan. Amir's guilt and shame are palpable as he recalls the moment of betrayal and its aftermath:

"I ran because I was a coward... Maybe Hassan was the price I had to pay... Was it a fair price?... He was just a Hazara, wasn't he?" [20]

This inner conflict is interesting as it shows the extent to which the decisions made in childhood can influence an individual's action and character as an adult; this is true of Amir in the context of the story.

The aftermath of Hassan's assault leaves both characters scarred, emotionally and physically, affecting their relationship deeply:

"He began to say something and his voice cracked... That was as close as Hassan and I ever came to discussing what had happened... I thought he might burst into tears" [20]

This paragraph highlights the difficulty of processing trauma and the strain it puts on childhood friendships, as both boys struggle to express their anguish and betrayal.

In examining these two portrayals of childhood trauma, both novels focus more on how violent and betrayals affect young characters. The *Almond Tree*, like many other war-based novels, revolves round external conflict and disappears or displacement where the safe world of childhood is often destroyed and children are forced to grow up according to circumstances while *The Kite Runner* does not focus on external battle but rather deals with internal strife born out of guilt and betrayal within the context of friendship against the backdrop of inter-ethnic animosity. Both are good examples of how a child abuse impacts on the major characters in the novel as they relate to others and see themselves even in their adulthood.

#### 4.2. Comparative Analysis of Psychological Trauma

This paper will focus on the depiction of psychological trauma, as illustrated in *The Almond Tree* through the character of the brother and sister relationship especially following the death of the sister, Amal. The reality of her death being brutal is depicted in this narrative since it brings out the feelings of the family at that time. For instance, the protagonist describes his father's desperate attempt to reach Amal's body, revealing the intense grief and helplessness they feel:

"Baba tapped the ground in front of him before every single step... Amal's head was approximately a metre in front of him... His arms weren't long enough to reach it, so he crouched and tried again" [19].

These lines perfectly captures the psychic toll of Amal's passing on the family and underscores how grief-stricken and traumatized they are. Further illustrating this trauma, Baba's reaction upon seeing Amal's body is particularly heart-wrenching:

"Strands of Baba's black hair lifted off his face in a gust... His white Kaffiyah, no longer covering it, was soaked with blood... He held Amal in his arms the way he did when she fell asleep on his lap" [19].

This description once again establishes the tragedy and grief in the family and shows how Baba tries to cover up the atrocities while he is also grieving. It is important to differentiate between the psychological aftermath of losing their children, and the impact it has on the entire line of action and decision of the family in the future This is seen when the protagonist says,

"For the last two years, when they thought Abbas and I were sleeping, my parents talked about them coming to take our land... They fought because Mama wanted to bury Amal on our land... but Baba said no" [19]

This passage indicates how the trauma of Amal's death and the constant threat of losing their land shape the family's collective psyche and decisions.

In *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini, psychological trauma is depicted through the protagonist Amir's recurring nightmares and pervasive guilt over his betrayal of Hassan. The trauma manifests in his vivid, distressing dreams:

"I woke up with a start, heart pounding, sweat clinging to my skin... Hassan was there, whimpering, trying to fight back... the image of Hassan's face burned into my retinas" [20].

This portrayal of Amir's nightmares underscores the lasting emotional impact of the traumatic event, highlighting how it continues to haunt him long after it occurred. Amir's longing for a lost sense of innocence and his internal struggle with guilt are poignantly expressed:

"I ached for something I couldn't name. For something I couldn't recapture. Maybe for the time before the kite tournament... before I'd lost Hassan" [20]

This passage reflects the profound psychological impact of the traumatic event on Amir's sense of self and his nostalgia for a time when his conscience was unburdened. The depth of Amir's guilt is further explored as he contemplates his responsibility for Hassan's suffering:

"I wasn't sure what I was anymore. I didn't know who I was. All I knew was that I was responsible... for the look in Hassan's eyes, the way he flinched when I came near him" [20]

This acknowledgment of responsibility highlights Amir's internal conflict and the enduring psychological scars from his betrayal.

When comparing the psychological trauma in both the novels, one can identify the concept of an enduring and extensive effect of the post-traumatic experiences reflected in the characters' psychological condition. In *The Almond Tree*, the sources of trauma are violence, prolonged insecurity, and constant danger to the family's property and what they stand for. In *The Kite Runner*, the trauma is the direct experience of personal violation and the subsequent sense of guilt; the experience that marks Amir for life and shapes who he is and how he relates to others. Thus, these two narrations highlight the role that cultural and personal factors play in shaping the characters' traumatic experiences in *The Almond Tree* that chronicles collective cultural trauma and *The Kite Runner*, where the key issues are psychological guilt and redemption.

## **5. Discussion Chapter**

As the researcher has compared the psychological and childhood trauma in *The Almond Tree* and *The Kite Runner*, the texts explain about deep impact of feeling and effect on the personalities and cultures. When applying the theoretical concepts by Suzan Keen, Jeffrey C. Alexander, Neil J. Smelser, Ron Eyerman, and Piotr Sztompka, one is able to provide further insights into how trauma is portrayed and managed in these novels and how it interacts with other socio-cultural meanings of existence.

### **5.1. Suzan Keen's Theory of Narrative Empathy**

Narrative empathy as proposed by Suzan Keen offers a plausible and coherent framework for understanding the reader's interaction with the traumatic account presented in *The Almond Tree* and *The Kite Runner*. The vivid and the realistic picture depicted in *The Almond Tree* can make Abbas's story moving for readers such as soldiers fencing their land, and imagining how father would have been tortured by the Israelis after the family was arrested. It is from this engagement that the audience is able to grasp the mental afflictions Abbas is plagued with, thereby creating an empathetic bond regardless of culture or location. Likewise, in *The Kite Runner*, use of nightmares and the depth of the guilt felt by Amir ensure readers feel for the man and the warfare happening in his conscience. These are the points Keen has concentrated on in his theory to emphasize the potential of literature and fostering of a deeper sense of concern in the characters' suffering.

### **5.2. Jeffrey C. Alexander's Cultural Trauma Theory**

Drawing from the works of Jeffrey C. Alexander, cultural trauma theory focuses more on disruption of shared mnemohistory or collective identity. An example of the enforced displacement of Abbas's family from their home in *The Almond Tree* and the suffering that they undergo represent the collective postmodern cultural losses of Palestinians. The loss of their land and people is something that they will always struggle with, yet it has not diminished their cultural identity. Alexander's framework helps explain how these processes unsettle taken-for-granted orders of social relations and their associated values, requiring the realignment of sociopolitical memory and subjectivity. Ethnic and socio-political fragmentation in *The Kite Runner* exposes community and national sentiments that create cultural trauma in characters such as it is shown through Hassan and Amir.

### **5.3. Neil J. Smelser's Theory of Collective Behavior**

Using the theory of collective behaviour advanced by social scientist Neil J. Smelser, it is easy to understand the social reaction to trauma that underpins both novels. The way in which the residents of the community perpetuate the constant threat of displacement and violence is another example pointed out in *The Almond Tree* that highlights collective behaviours on tragedy. The action of the family including burying of Amal, shows a clear instance of how trauma becomes determinants of group dynamics and perhaps social norms in the affected community because of the constant influence the threat of losing their land exerts on their decision making. By taking references from Smelser, *The Kite Runner* portrays the role of collective behavior by the society that remained mute and ignored Hassan when he was being sexually assaulted. This is an aspect that reveals how guilt becomes internalized in the characters like Amir and the failure of the community to stand up for justice shows how communities adapt mechanisms in dealing with trauma.

#### 5.4. Ron Eyerman's Social Memory Theory

As a theory, social memory by Ron Eyerman, focuses on how disasters and other forms of trauma are cognately reminisced and passed forward. In *The Almond Tree*, the narration of Ichmad's family's experiences of hardship and endurance play a role of constructing social memories receivable. By focusing for needling on pervasive traumatization, the novel becomes a container for collective memory, which attempts to transmit and record such experience. This paper suggests that the understanding of the role of literature as a way of preserving social memories of traumatic events handles this function effectively. Therefore, the distance travelled and the shift in time are reflected in the narrative of *The Kite Runner*, where Amir's betrayal and socio-political changes in Afghanistan are part of the collective memory of the given events and their consequences.

#### 5.5. Piotr Sztompka's Theory of Social Trauma

Having outlined the disrupted and lost experience in general, it is now necessary to take a closer look at the more specific conception that deals with these matters: Piotr Sztompka's theory of social trauma. By discussing the question of how the socio-political conflict impacts people's identities, the events described in *The Almond Tree* are evidence of how social trauma influences the formation of both personal and communal selves of individuals and their families. The present vignette portrays life threatened by violence and displacement, which challenges social relations undermining stability along with social and gendered norms. It makes sense to turn to Sztompka's framework to explain how organizational disasters, in broad sense, affect individual suffering and community configurations. Conflict and violence create social trauma in *The Kite Runner*: owing to the ethnic tensions and political instability of Afghanistan, inexorably affecting the fate of characters like Hassan and Amir. Sztompka discusses macro changes that shape societal structures and thus gives a framework for viewing how these changes impacts personal life and relationships.

### 6. Conclusion

When using these theoretical frameworks in examining the elements of psychological and childhood trauma in both novels, the researcher is able to find out how best to understand trauma. These novels readily portray how traumas play out in psyches and cultures and evil in the form of violence, displacement, and betrayal coalesces to unravel individual and collective subjectivities. Literature, therefore, is a crucial medium through which victims navigate their experiences and the ways and means through which those who have not encountered such hardships gain an insight into how other people endure and survive in such situations. In as much as it may be an understatement to describe these narratives as compelling, it is purely fitting through the prism of narrative empathy, cultural trauma, collective behavior, social memory, and social trauma theories and approaches that one can commend the ways in which trauma is depicted and processed in these narratives.

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