

The Destructive Role of the Unconscious in Khalid Hosseini's *And The Mountains Echoed*

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Abstract

This paper is about the role of the unconscious, a psychoanalytic concept, in shaping the life of Abdullah in Khaled Hosseini's *And The Mountains Echoed*. This study simply examines the destructive effect the unconscious does possess on the lives of human beings and how it is strong enough to ruin and dominate people's life, if not controlled by the unconscious, from the beginning till the end, as in Abdullah's case. The main two characters in *And The Mountains Echoed* suffer from some forced separation and loss of interconnectedness, the ghost of which haunts the life of poor Abdullah leading him to live an irritable and unstable life. This study proves that the unconscious can recall and interact with repressed memories when time and life could have by far erased and healed wounds left by past memories, if fought and accepted, as the human being grows older, wiser and stronger. Yet, the alerted painful memories are activated and start to interact with the present life details and memories. Hence, it is difficult for the human being to separate past from present as this leads to living the painful past events once again but with the older version of the self.

Key Words: unconscious, memories, psychoanalysis, Hosseini

الملخص

تناولت هذه الدراسة دور العقل الباطن (اللاواعي) كونه مفهوم متعلق بالجانب النفسي - والذي بدوره أثر على شخصية عبدالله المذكورة في رواية بعنوان ورددت الجبال الصدى للكاتب خالد حسيني. تبحث هذه الدراسة بصورة مختصرة عن التأثير المدمر الذي يسببه ال تناولت هذه الدراسة دور العقل الباطن (اللاواعي) كونه مفهوم متعلق بالجانب النفسي - وأثره على شخصية عبدالله في رواية "ورددت الجبال الصدى" للكاتب خالد حسيني. وتبحث هذه الدراسة بصورة مختصرة عن التأثير المدمر الذي يسببه العقل اللاواعي على حياة البشر ومدى قوته للقضاء والسيطرة على تفكيرهم، هذا وإن لم يكن هو المسيطر عليها من البداية وحتى النهاية كما في حالة عبدالله. وقد تضمنت الرواية شخصيتين رئيسيتين وعرضت معاناتهما من حيث الفراق القسري وفقدان الترابط الأخوي الذي أثر بدوره على حياة عبدالله وراوده كشيخ مقيم جعله يعيش حياة تملؤها العصبية ويسيطر عليها الاضطراب. فالطفل عبدالله فقد شقيقته في سن مبكرة، ومن ذلك الحين بقيت الذكريات الأليمة في عقله الباطن بسبب حرصه الشديد على إبقاء حبه لأخته حياً في قلبه وخوابره حتى آخر لحظة من عمره. وقد كان قادراً على تذكر كل ما يتعلق بها رغم تقدمه في السن ومعاناته من الخرف ونسيان كل شيء يدور من حوله إلا ذكرياتها التي بقيت محفورة في عقله تسلب منه حياته شيئاً فشيئاً، وأدت به إلى ضرر بالغ وجسيم نفسياً وصحياً. لذا فإن قصة عبدالله تثبت بأن العقل الباطن لا يتوقف أبداً حتى مرحلة متقدمة من حياة الإنسان والتي لربما قد تصل إلى ما بعد سن التقاعد . كما أثبتت لنا هذه الدراسة أنه بإمكان العقل الباطن استعادة كل الذكريات المكبوتة والمخزونة في العقل الباطن رغم أن للوقت واستمرارية الحياة دور في أن تمحو تلك الذكريات وتداوي الجروح الموجهة التي تركتها. وكما نعلم أنه كلما تقدم الإنسان في العمر يصبح أكثر صلابه وحكمة، ولكنه ومجرد استعادة الذكريات المؤلمة وربطها بما يحدث في الحاضر فإنه يكون من الصعب على الإنسان أن يفصل بين الماضي والحاضر وحينها يعيش أحداث الماضي الموجهة مرة أخرى ولكن بشخصيته التي هو عليها الآن وروحه الكبيرة في السن.

1. Introduction

We, human beings, suffer at some point in this life. During war, for instance, most human beings feel distressed, destroyed and their inner being is unable to stabilize, particularly if a piece of their heart is lost and drifted away to some unknown place. Accordingly, such negative feelings of loss and separation can lead a person to destroy his/her own life, if not handled and accepted. This is precisely what happened to Abdullah, the main character in *And The Mountains Echoed* by Khaled Hosseini. The novel mirrors the loss of the self in the battle between the unconscious and the self as Abdullah's painful childhood experience of separation and his emotions towards his lovely sister is still inflamed till the last moment, he could count, even though he came across some difficult stations in life that would have put the flame of such emotions and experience down. Instead, these emotions and childhood experience, repressed in his unconscious, keep on revolving and flashing like a thunder in his mind under the effect of his rejection of what happened to him during his childhood. The darkness lying beneath such negative thoughts does not spare a moment to attack Abdullah; thus, consuming and destroying his health as well as his life.

This part of human mind, the unconscious, where emotions, thoughts and memories are stored, is inaccessible, and unfortunately unstoppable once put into motion. This part itself is what leads Abdullah to lose his self and life due to his suffering throughout his life span from the unstoppable tsunami of memories inside his unconscious, which cast him to misery. This is just what Gardner states that the unconscious conflicts can cause "anxiety moodiness, or depressive thoughts, troubling personality traits; or difficulties at word or maintaining long-term relationship" (140).

The basic concept of 'the primacy of the unconscious', which affects our feelings, actions, relationships and endeavors, is the stone on which the analysis of the character of Abdullah in Hosseini's *And The Mountains Echoed* is based. This

concept is one of the main five concepts of psychoanalysis: (a) the primacy of unconscious, (b) the iceberg theory of the psyche, (c) dreams are an expression of our unconscious mind, (d) infantile behavior is essentially sexual, and (e) the relationship between neurosis as creativity, suggested by Freud, a psychiatrist and the founder of the psychoanalytic theory (Devardhi 437).

Subsequently, this investigation will primarily highlight how the unconscious restores the memories of the past especially childhood experiences, and how this unconscious is at work throughout different stages in life. It affects the course of human beings' life as embodied by the main character of Abdullah in *And The Mountains Echoed* by Khalid Hosseini.

2. Significance of the Study

Since this study applies a psychoanalytic approach in the investigation of how human unconscious functions and accordingly affects human's life through the analysis of the main character *Abdullah* in Hosseini's *And The Mountain Echoed*, it is considered to be one of its kind, as per the researcher's knowledge, amongst a very few studies on Khalid Hosseini's works, in general, and on *And The Mountains Echoed*, in particular.

3. Research Methodology

The psychoanalytic theory, introduced by Freud, is the theoretical framework on which this study is built up with special reference to his idea of the unconscious that can recall memories and affect the life of human beings, in general, and characters, in particular, when applied to literary works. The following sub-sections will provide further details on this psychoanalytic theory.

4. Literature Review

4.1 Psychoanalytic Theory and Literature

According to Hossain, modern theories of psychoanalysis are primarily concerned with two domains: treating people with mental disorders and dealing with the theories on human mind and its various complexities (42). He defines psychoanalysis as “not simply a branch of medicine or psychology; it helps understand philosophy, culture, religion and first and foremost literature” (43). In agreement to Hossain, Davardhi states that the main job of the psychoanalytic critic is “to reveal the true content, and thus to explain the effect on the reader of a literary work by translating its manifest elements into the dormant, unconscious deterrents that make up their suppressed meanings” (437).

Yet, in the field of literature, psychoanalysis also focuses on authors as well as the hidden motives. It clarifies the level of writing itself and the level of character action within the text (Hossain 10; 41). Before 1950, psychoanalysis tended to analyze the individual author while a later generation focused on characters in novels and plays.

It is worth mentioning that Freud's psychoanalytic theory, the theoretical framework of this investigation, can be taken both as body and mind. That is to say, Freud has first developed psychoanalysis as a treatment of mental diseases, and then extended this work to be applicable in different fields such as religion, mythology, literature and other arts (qtd. in Davardhi 437). He himself analyzes many literary works such as *Hamlet* and the oedipal elements it has, showing how it affects the audience. Freud understands also the mind of the characters in *Hamlet*. For this reason, Freud's theory is the most convenient theoretical framework that can be taken as a guideline in the analysis of Abdullah, the main character in the novel *And The Mountains Echoed*.

4.2. The Unconscious

The key concept of understanding psychoanalysis is the unconscious which Freud defines as “the dark, inaccessible part of our personality” (qtd in. Jarvis 293). Jarvis comments that there are parts in our minds which store our memories, desires and thoughts. These parts cannot be accessed but “which nonetheless shape our identity and behavior” (293). That is to say, the unconscious is the part of the mind which keeps on instructing human beings how to think, feel and behave and how to manage their lives whether in a good or a bad way, which is determined by how humans program this unconscious mind in first place.

Murphy claims that the best way of understanding what your mind is, and what the unconscious will be, is to think of it as a garden image; that is to say, to imagine that every day you unconsciously plant a seed in a garden and forget that. One day, you will discover that your mind becomes very beautiful from inside unconsciously (7). He adds that most men think always of their inner world more than the outer one. He means by the inner world “life full of emotions, memories and imaginations”(8). This point is agreed upon by Ellma who states that the unconscious is the system where memories are repressed. Such repression is “the chief system which provides unconscious with the latent desires and instincts of the mind and which are unfulfilled” (qtd. in Gardner 112).

To further understand the notion of *the unconscious*, Gardner, as Freud shows, classifies this notion into two fixed connections as he calls it. The first one deals with the behavior of the object. He means by the word object here the character, texts and other targets. The unconscious state, as he adds, is “identified by a definite description which is constructed out of reports of the object’s behavior” (137). For example, a person A may forget X. This behavior is due to repressed unconscious motives. The second reference is by “dreams, fantasies, symptoms, which give an indirect but nevertheless privileged insight into the content of unconscious states”.

Here, dreams and other symbols may be also affected by the behavior of human beings (138).

The unconscious can recall stored memories. For example, when one slept and had dreamt of something in his conscious, images and scenes would be shown while sleeping due to the fact that the unconscious can recall memories (Musa 17-19).

Moreover, your unconscious ultimately responds fast to your thoughts. It can restore everything in your life and recall them within your behavior (Murphy 9). When you tell your unconscious something, it will directly transfer them through your behavior. He elaborates that by giving an example of the singer Karsue when he was singing in front of some audience and suddenly something strange happened to his throat and he was about to leave the stage. He shouted to his mind and says “you unconscious spot, who stopped me because of my fear, get out of my mind”. Suddenly after that, he returns to sing because he totally believes that his fear leads to the problem that would bring him shame in front of people (9-10). Murphy claims that the unconscious is the one which gives order to you. It is like the captain who leads his ship towards anywhere (11-13).

This study is mainly focused on the impact of the unconscious on the life of Abdullah. It also highlights the symbols and situations which prove how the unconscious controls Abdullah's life, as his childhood experience memories are not erased or healed despite of his old age, but they rather have set their roots in his personality and thus affect his life and the life of those surrounding him.

4.3 Review of Related Previous Studies

To the researcher's best knowledge, there are only few studies related to the analysis of Khaled Hosseini's *And The Mountains Echoed*. One research is about finding personal identity in Hosseini's *And The Mountains Echoes* (2014) by Kurniawati.. The study focuses on Pari's character and how she realizes her "loss" after she becomes an adult. Pari does not know what happened in her life in the past and that her uncle Nabi is the one behind her separation from her brother, as the researcher discussed. Searching for herself and who she really is at the end and retuning to find her brother and her family in Shandbagh becomes essential. The research concludes that Pari as well as many other characters are in search for their personal identity (81).

Another study on Hosseini's same novel is by Michiko Kakutani entitled *Siblings Haunted by the Past And by Afghanistan's Cycle of Misery* (2013). This research sheds light on Pari's character and her feeling of how the present can be haunted by all past memories. As represented in Kurniawati's research, Pari realizes that she should search for her own identity and finds out her past (qtd. in Kurniawati 4).

Poornima searches for tools, symbols and allegory in Hosseini's *And The Mountains Echoed*. The researcher finds that the opening allegory of the div's story builds up the events of the novel. Symbols such as the word mountain, which Hosseini used instead of the word hills in Blak's last line in "The Nurse's Song" and all the hills echoed, the mask, tree, and the island, are discussed in the research. The researcher concludes that Khaled Hosseini uses many tools like allegories and symbols to bring a kind of "foreboding expectancy" to the novel *And The Mountains Echoed*.

Tundelkar (2016), however, investigates the pain and suffering of common men and even more than that of common women and children in Afghanistan and Afghani people throughout Hosseini's three novels. Thus, it is noteworthy that the previous studies focus on the character of Pari who is busy in searching for her

personality and the kind of life she has after she knows that she has a brother. However, the current study interweaves the psychological concept of the unconscious with the literary portrayal of the effect of human's experience recorded in the unconscious on human's life, which is done by shedding the light on the character of Abdullah and how the unconscious affects his life and turns it upside down.

5. Discussion of the Unconscious in the Novel

5.1 Khaled Hosseini and *And The Mountains Echoed*

Khaled Hosseini was born in Afghanistan 1965. His father was an Afghani diplomat. He moved to and settled in the US and earned a medical degree and thus worked as a physician. Tundlkar asserts that, “Khaled Hosseini, who is an Afghani-American writer, has written three novels which are read worldwide with all the three being prescribed for school studies in America.” These novels are *The Kite Runner*, *A Thousand Splendid Sun* and latest *And The Mountains Echoed*. They portray the story of “the Afghani people, women, children and men, those who are caught in the web of religion, politics and terrorism” (Tundelkar 2).

It is worth mentioning that the credit of the pathetic and psychologically disturbed tone of the novel as well as the mentally disturbed, scattered and pathetic inner self of the characters goes to the era when it was written. That is to say, the reason behind Hosseini's highlighting of human suffering in his novel *And The Mountains Echoed* is due to the context where it was written, i.e., the context of war and its consequences which Afghanistan suffered from and which affected people's lives and inner self. Augstina comments on this by arguing that “Afghanistan is a country full of conflicts which become terror for people there. This country was never released to get its freedom since the invasion of the Soviets, the brotherhood war among Mujahedeen and finally the presence of the strict rules of Taliban. All of these cruel actions influence people's aspects” (199).

Thus, Hosseini writes about people's suffering in post-World War II whereby happiness disappeared from their life. All what they have is to mourn over their lives. Babu describes how people felt down and lost their happiness. People tend to commit suicide because they find no beauty in their life (qtd in Murphy 472). Hosseini in this novel *And The Mountains Echoed* describes war in details; he says that you cannot expect anything rather than darkness and gloomy atmosphere. He elaborates:

The street where we lived once, so quiet and pristine and gleaming, turned into a war zone; Bullets hit every house. Rockets whistled overhead. RPGs landed up and down the street and blasted craters in the asphalt... and then sudden bursts of fire would break it, rounds cracking off from every direction, people on the street, screaming war was ruthless on the once beautiful house. Windows shattered by nearby RPG blast. A rocket pluralized the wall on the eastern face of the garden as well as half of the veranda. A grenade damaged the roof. Bullets scarred the walls. (122)

The story of his novel *And The Mountains Echoed* which is the concern of this study is about the main siblings Abdullah and Pari. It opens with the allegory of the div¹ who takes the child Qais, the son of a man called Baba Ayub, which prepares readers to the story in which someone will be missed not by the div but may be by someone else. It discusses Baba Ayub's fear of the div whose task is to come home and take people's sons and leave. Baba Ayub was afraid of losing his beloved son Qais; he doesn't want to give his children away. But the div should take one to some unknown land which nobody has ever seen. The div has no mercy, and Baba Ayub has to send his son to the unknown place, but the div promises that he will give Baba Ayub some potion that he may drink, and thus forget everything.

¹ In the fairy tale, Saboor tells his children about an evil demon that is called a div.

The beginning of the story of the div is echoed later in the events of the story of Abdullah and Pari. It is noticed that what happened in the story of the div has repeated itself in the story of Abdullah and Pari, which is implied in the title of the novel *And The Mountains Echoed*. This indicates an undeniable truth we experience as human beings, whereby things in human's life at some point of time span do have an echo in later times. Yet, the writer's awareness of such a truth is implied in the title of this novel *And The Mountains Echoed*. This means that everything in humans' lives is returned and echoed sooner or later during their lifetime simply as the sound that echoes when shouted to mountains. Thus, with respect to Abdullah and Pari, what happened is that a very small child, Pari, from a very poor family who has a little brother older than her, Abdullah, is given away to Mr. and Mrs. Wahdati, the childless couples, by her father Saboor in order to raise up the family status financially. Tundelkar comments that it is because of "the family status, the father, Saboor, has sold Pari to a couple who cannot have kids". He takes this decision so that the Wahdati's will take good care of Pari, so she does not live in poverty. "He also takes the decision to lessen the burden from his own self" (27). Qais is given away to div in the same way as Pari to Nila. Poornima says "Though Nila Wahdati promises to take care of her, Pari has to be uprooted from everything that she held dear and longed to be with" (23).

Regarding Abdullah, Pari's brother, he lost his mother when he was a child. After her death, his father Saboor married another woman called Parwana. Parwana is cruel to Abdullah, and whom he could never call his own mother (Tundelkar 26). This devastates Abdullah who could not live without his sister, Pari. Since his sister was born, his main focus is to look after her. Hosseini says that "She became the jewel of his eyes, the sole happiness in his happiness" (30).

The sad scene of the forced separation between the siblings is heartening for the reader. Hosseini explains that the finger had to be cut in order to save the hand. In

order to live a good financial life, the family has to cut the finger 'Pari' in order to save 'the whole family'.

Mrs. and Mr. Wahdati, the childless couple who take care of Pari, left each other and traveled to Paris after years where Pari studied mathematics. Nila gives an interview in a poetry magazine stating that she never had a romantic relationship with her husband since he was in love with the Chauffeur. After the interview, she killed herself, and Pari felt gloomy after hearing of her mother's suicide. She was then eager to proceed on her studies and complete her PhD. She marries Eric Lacombe and has three children. When she becomes old, Marko Varvaris, her uncle's friend, calls her and tells her about her sibling Abdullah. Returning to Abdullah, he lived a gloomy life without his sister. Trying to escape to Pakistan and then to California, he gets married and has his own individual life. Abdullah could not forget his sister even with his new life; his daughter was named Pari. Pari II, Abdullah's daughter, at the end of the novel receives a call from Pari, the sister, and arranges for the siblings' meeting in California where Abdullah has settled. The novel ends with the meeting of the siblings at a time when Abdullah is suffering from dementia, so he forgets everything (252-259).

5.2- The Unconscious in Abdullah's Life after the Siblings' Separation

Human beings are weak creatures who cannot survive without struggling against what they see or what they do not see, to assure their survival. A very small invisible entity can knock them down without fighting. They, themselves, could be their own selves' enemies, most of the time, i.e., a person could find him/herself locked up in his/her unconscious where s/he keeps on wandering and could get imprisoned in there forevermore unless s/he gets the courage to control it. Otherwise, it could be the worst enemy to struggle against and defeat if there is no will to take over it.

Based on what is stated above, the unconscious with all its negative thoughts, in particular, can lead to a great damage to human being's life, especially when human

experiences take place in an early stage of life. Thus, they get merged with every cell in human's body especially his/her brain and heart cells. This is exactly what happened to Abdullah. He locks himself in his child experience memories and keeps on reminding himself of what happened in the past since he was a child until he grows into an old man who suffers from dementia. Not only this, but what complicated Abdullah's situation more is Abdullah's unconscious itself that displays the *justification bias* card against himself. In other words, this bias gives the person the justification why s\he should remember or do something whether it's right or wrong, or even whether it is useful or not. This is exactly what happened to Abdullah which worsened his life. He was not only stuck in his own old painful memories, but rather interacted by far with them holding himself responsible for what has happened to himself and to his baby sister.

This struggle with the self, particularly the unconscious, takes place in Abdullah's life after the death of his mother, when he was only a child of three years of age. Abdullah could not find anyone close to him but his sister Pari. Every moment he lived was with the company of Pari. The repressed past memories of his life with Pari, which did not last long, lay deep down in his unconscious, affect his life and lead him to miseries.

The struggle between living in the shadow of the past and living in the actual life accompanies Abdullah throughout his life. The ignition key of Abdullah's unconscious was turned on for the first time in his early age when he was only three years old. Abdullah remembers how his father's decision destroyed his life. The father, Saboor, was wavering either to keep Pari with him to live a poor life and may die of hunger or to give her to a rich family to live a luxurious life. He was unaware that these unconscious decisions would defiantly affect others unconsciously. Contrary to Saboor's expectations, his decision to give Pari to another family, in order to avoid a life of misery, saves Pari's life from poverty and leads Abdullah to suffer and changes his life to an intolerable one, instead.

It is noteworthy that the unconscious is a machine that interprets what human perceives, hears, sees and experiences into unconscious behavior, thoughts that, as a consequence, affect one's life and well-being. Thus, Abdullah's unconscious could not find rest or even get some break time away from thinking or remembering what happened. What he saw when separated from his sister made Abdullah, the child, know that they will take her away and he realized that "she will never come back home" (Hosseini 20). Only then, Abdullah's unconscious got activated flashing back that moment of separation all his life long which was interpreted into a miserable life that he had. That moment of separation does not only lit the spark of Abdullah's painful memory of the separation, but it rather fed the huge tsunami of other memories that Abdullah had once with his sister. Since then, Abdullah's unconscious alarm keeps on reminding him of Pari every moment as his sister's memories were everywhere. They were in his head, on his clothes, in front of him and even at his feet. This painful overweighed experience that weigh on Abdullah's shoulders promotes Abdullah's suffering to a greater level of struggle. That is to say, Abdullah gets stuck in a new struggle whereby at one end Abdullah is trying to wash away those painful memories from his mind to be able to go on living a normal life. Yet, at the other end his unconscious is keeping on flashing back those painful memories of his miserable childhood. This struggle is interpreted as Abdullah's constant attempts to forget about his sister when he realized that it was the final scene of their life together at the time she was sold to the rich family. He tried to get the potion of oblivion, which was in the div's story which their father used to tell them at bed time, to forget his pain that Pari's absence has caused to him. Hosseini says "He had heard stories about the magic potion given by div which would make one forget about one's pain" (169). In vain "he would long for a swing of the magic potion the div had given Baba Ayub so he could forget" (48). Yet, what Abdullah actually forgets is that to stop interacting with those thoughts and accepting what happened since it cannot be changed is what he should have done since they cannot be washed away as they are part of his childhood experience. This leads to another

level of Abdullah's struggle, which is the rejection of his past events that led to his sister's loss.

Abdullah's pain for losing the beloved ones makes him devastated. He cannot go on in his life without Pari. He cannot think of his life without her, too. Pari was the jewel of his eyes and the sole happiness in his life. Yet, cutting the finger in order to save the hand, as Hosseini describes it "finger had to be cut in order to save the hand" (27), was the only solution at that time for Saboor's family and others because of poverty and hunger. No one realizes that by deciding to cut that finger, the whole body of Abdullah will be affected. This level of Abdullah's struggle is a rejection and denial whereby Abdullah could not accept what his father has done to the family and how his life without his sister worsened his life and negatively affected his health. Hosseini follows "Abdullah would find himself on a spot where Pari had once stood, her absence like a smell pushing up from the earth beneath his feet, and his legs would buckle, and his heart would collapse in on itself" (48). Although Mr. Wahdati and Nila, the childless rich couple, promise to take care of Pari, Abdullah does not accept that his sister will be taken care of by the hands of others. Consequently, Abdullah could not fight those memories but rather keeps on revolving them in his mind in search for himself, sister and their life together in those old lost memories instead of making a new stronger version of himself.

It is worth mentioning that the controlling power of the unconscious over human beings' behavior, personality and life is not restricted only to the unpleasant memories. Pleasant memories have their own share, however. To clarify this point, it is worth noting that Abdullah's true unconditioned love for his baby sister has never declined, at least on his part, only because Abdullah, the three year-old child, programmed his unconscious not to forget his jewel even when the siblings got separated for over half a century living on the hope of meeting her again. Hosseini comments "He had no home here. He would wait until winter passed and the spring now sets in, and he would rise on morning before dawn and he would step out the

door” (34). Abdullah does this only because of his father who, after Abdullah’s mother’s death, gets married again to a woman called Parwana who was cruel to Abdullah. This makes Abdullah escape to the part of his mind where he still keeps the shadow of his baby sister’s memory, for he feels that he has no one in this life except Pari and that he is the mother of his sister and not only a brother. Abdullah spent sleepless nights with the crying baby, raising her and doing things for her while he himself is a child who needs someone to take care of. Hosseini says “He was the one raising her. It was true even though he was still a child himself” (28). Yet, Abdullah is deprived from this maternal-like relationship that connects him to his sister whom he lost due to their forced separation. Thus, he is deprived from rising up with his sister from infancy to adulthood which makes this relation so emotional for him as he tries to indemnify this loss and huge temporal gap of separation by escaping to her memory that lies deep down in his unconscious.

In his middle age, as he has grown older and wiser, Abdullah tries to forget Pari by escaping to Pakistan and finally settling in California, but all of his attempts were in vain. This is because he is trying to escape from the physical things that could remind him of his sister. But what he forgets is the basic thing that keeps on knocking the door of his mind which is the memories he engraved in his unconscious that haunts him since Abdullah in his deep self is afraid to let go of Pari and refuses to forget her. Abdullah does not actually have the intention to struggle against his past memories; otherwise, he could have succeeded in accepting what happened and going on living a normal life. This is obvious as he tried to seek his lost pure love for his sister in his wife and for most in his daughter. Yet, he failed in doing that because he could not forget her, which was basically reflected in naming his daughter after his sister “Pari.”

It must be noted that, since the unconscious affects human being’s personality, behavior and self, it definitely affects others who surround the one of concern. This is because those surrounding people are in direct contact with the

affected human's personality and behavior let alone the truth that social behavior is contagious when other people are concerned. Not only this, but also the people surrounding a disturbed soul are considered to be the mirror of its doings and self. This is observed in this novel as the unconscious repressed memories of Pari do not only affect Abdullah, but have also been bequeathed to Pari II the junior, Abdullah's daughter. The strength and effect of such true, pure siblings' love and relation on the life of the siblings is portrayed in the novel whereby Pari II became totally obsessed with the ghost of meeting her aunt as she witnessed the great love her father had for her. Abdullah has passed his passion towards his baby sister to his daughter who inherited this love and the disturbed soul of Abdullah who was longing for meeting Pari, the sister, so she wrote many letters to her lost aunt and tried to give them to her but in vain.

It can be noticed that Abdullah has suffered a lot. The number of memories stored in his unconscious, which reminds him of his lost beloved, is huge and difficult to be neglected or passed by, especially when his sister was the only thing left from his mother's fragrance. This could make him feel that a part of his mother is still with him taking care of him, on one way or another. It is difficult for Abdullah to forget his baby sister whom his mother would sacrifice herself for the baby's sake rather than giving the baby up if the ghost of poverty would force her to let go of her little piece of heart. This actually turns his life upside down. Pari herself admits at the end that life really hurts Abdullah for her absence more than her (Hosseini 225).

Coming to old age, memories of the loved ones could not be forgotten. This is because Abdullah gave the bridle of his life to his unconscious so it guides him the way it desires since it faced no resistance on the part of Abdullah who gave himself up to his thoughts and submitted himself to its will. It is true that Abdullah now has his own life and his own family, exactly like his sister Pari. Yet, his inner self is still trapped in the three year- old self with all its memories. The essential difference between the two characters is that when Abdullah was a child, he pinned such

memories to his inner mind and kept on revolving and moving them around his mind every single moment even when he becomes old. Unlike her brother, Pari was young and did not bear any responsibility to keep such memories inside, not only for this reason but also because Pari could set herself free from the shackles of the past that she did not even try to figure how it really was; she rather worked on herself to become a better being as much as she could. This is traced in the novel as that her new parents' separation and her new mother's suicide did not set her back from achieving her goals. Thus, she lived a new happy life forgetting all her ex-family.

Coming to the end of the novel, readers think that Abdullah does not love or care about Pari any longer, but when one meets him at the end of the novel, one can discover that he has collected colored feather's in order to keep memories of his sister. "He tossed the yellow feather into the box. One day, he thought" (Hosseini 34). He used to give Pari very beautiful and colorful bird feathers even if that forced him to sell his shoes to buy one. Hosseini writes "Abdullah found the boy and asked him for a feather from the bird. Negotiation ensued at the end of which Abdullah agreed to trade his shoes for the feather" (38). Yet, this happened because Abdullah does not want to accept what happened in the past and wants to live on his sister's memory and does not even try to overcome his hardship. He rather prefers being stuck in his past. Based on that, it is Abdullah who gives his unconscious the opportunity to overcome him as he does not even try to resist its effect on him. This point is further traced in the novel as Abdullah describes his sister as a thief and a liar in their meeting at the end, his unconscious is the one that utters those words but figuratively means that she is the thief of his life, his happiness and beautiful things in his life. She is a liar because she doesn't have the same love for Abdullah, if so; she wouldn't leave him even though she was still young. Pari says "only that when we lost each other, Abdullah and I, it hurt him much more than me. I was the lucky one because I was protected by my youth. I still had the luxury of forgetting. He did not" (Hosseini 225).

It must be reflected at this point that the unconscious has its own group of bias. The one that Abdullah suffers from is definitely *the sleeping information bias* whereby the unconscious makes a person remember something, a feeling or some information, but forget its source. This is traced in the novel whereby although Abdullah is diagnosed with dementia, he still remembers his sister in some way but does not know how. That is to say, Abdullah forgets who that woman really is and definitely he forgets the source of the feeling of attraction and acquaintance towards her that he experienced to some extent as soon as he sees despite that he does not know her as he thinks. Yet, it is his unconscious *sleeping effect bias* that makes him recall some information or some feeling that he does not know from where he gained it in the first place. That is to say, it is true that reunion with his sister never ends happily. Now Abdullah's body is totally damaged and he cannot remember anything because he suffers from dementia. Despite the fact that Abdullah forgets everything in his life, his unconscious is still at work. He can even remember the song that he used to sing to his sister Pari. It is still curved there in his unconscious by the effect of his unconscious sleeping information bias. He started to recall it when Pari meets him at the end of the novel and sang it to her. Although Abdullah did not recognize who that woman is, once he heard the song, they both start to sing it.

I found a sad little fairy

Beneath the shade of a paper tree.

I know a sad little family

Who was blown away by the wind one night (230)

This strong interconnectedness can rule over (disease such as dementia, age and even time), which unfortunately comes to destroy everything in life. This song further proves that Pari has some past memories which she did not allow to take over her life reflecting how a person can be stronger than the rule of his/her unconscious

that could destroy him/her. Pari is that strong person in charge, unlike Abdullah who submitted himself with his free will to the rule of his unconscious.

It is worth mentioning that when Abdullah firstly meets Pari, he asked her about her name and she answered (Pari). He tries his best to search in his inner mind for the echo of this name, although he now cannot remember anything, and says “so your name is Pari. So there you have it” (Hosseini 248). This indicates that he may definitely find it in the box of memories stored in his unconscious mind.

Neglecting the fact that the unconscious mind is strong enough to remind him of those beloved ones as Pari, Abdullah believes that one day he will be an old man and has no ability to remember anything. He wrote, the year when he was diagnosed of a mental disorder in 2007 as Hosseini states, a letter to Pari which she reads and knows how much love Abdullah’s small heart carries and how her loss affects him and totally changes his life upside down. He writes “To my sister Pari” “I must wade into waters, where I will soon drown. Before I march in, I leave this on shore for you. I pray you find it, sister, so you will know what was in my heart as I went under” (Hosseini 258). Here once again Abdullah proofs that it is the human being who puts his/her unconscious at work and gives it the permission to toy with him/her all life long as Abdullah does not allow himself to accept what happened and keeps on reminding himself of every detail of his past life and finally tells his sister how he lost himself in her absence. Yet this constant mental struggle between oblivion and remembering has finally led him to forced oblivion, DEMENTIA.

6. Conclusion

The unconscious, that vague part of human mind, does not distinguish between children or elders, oppressive or oppressed, unrighteous or wronged. It only responds to what it receives as an experience during human’s conscious state and translates it into inner thoughts that haunts human’s life throughout their life span.

It is actually the human being who can set him/herself free from the shackles of the unconscious with all its unpleasant memories and thoughts and programming it to expect and accept all the hardships a person may go through in life. This could not be the situation in case of Abdullah. This is not only because of his human weakness that all human beings are born with, but it is because of his disability, as a very little child, to program his three years old mind to accept a hardship that an elderly person could not easily accept, putting aside that childhood memories and personality are shaped by the kind of life the child lives and the kind of things his /her mind receives. This point makes the whole picture clear to everyone why Abdullah could not fight his old painful memories and is still locked up in his three-year-old self.

Moreover, forming child's memories and experiences is just like teaching a child his/ her own mother tongue, whereby no one can make the child forget or change his/ her own language unless the child tries with huge effort to do so by his /her own self when s/he becomes older and wiser in order to succeed in making only some changes, at the end of the day. This point of view is well presented in Abdullah's character. That is to say, what makes it difficult for Abdullah to accept his new life after the separation and to get over his past is that Abdullah could not realize that one day he will not live without Pari who was the breath that he lives with. This is at least what he programmed his mind to do since his father did not even try to convince him of what he did and why, regardless of being right or wrong. He could have told Abdullah that he will meet his sister once again and what he did is a temporary thing he was forced to do, which could make Abdullah live on the hope of meeting Pari instead of living on the painful memories as he realized that he will never see her again. The father could have, at least, helped his son overcome this hardship that haunted him all his lifelong by seeding the hope of meeting Pari once again.

It is worth noting that the unconscious can affect not only the behavior of human beings but also the mind and body. Past memories controlled the mind of Abdullah

and destroyed his life at the end. Abdullah, due to his unbelievable love that no one can feel, had this disease and forgot everything. It is not only because of that greater loss, but also because of the belief that Abdullah has stored in his unconscious mind having a potion to forget things. Exactly like what Baba Ayub had when he gave his son Qais to the div and had drunk that potion, and as the story of that singer in (3.2), Abdullah orders his unconscious to forget everything because there is no more beauty in life after he lost Pari.

In addition to that, memories stored in the unconscious can still affect Abdullah despite his old age. He remembered his sister's name when he repeats it again in their meeting, the song that he sang with her, and the adjectives he used to describe her were only to admonish his sister of leaving him all that long period without even a note. Abdullah was afraid that one day his unconscious will normally dysfunction, so he wrote a letter to his sister Pari and kept that yellow feather to keep reminding him of her forever.

The unconscious has infinite abilities that we human beings do not realize. As to say, it has the ability to remain strong enough to recall memories of beloved ones as Pari and Abdullah. They both amaze readers of such interconnectedness, and that Abdullah has planted a garden of love in his unconscious to remain unchanged forever. In addition, the unconscious is a means of self-destruction, especially when a person gives up fighting his own weakness that makes him interact with what brings him/her no good, but rather leads him to nowhere, to an unending round of misery. This can only happen when human beings let go of the bridle of their life to be ruled over by their own thoughts, particularly negative or painful ones, which are the greatest enemy to human beings, especially without putting limits to such interaction. The credit to such a result goes to the reality that mind, with all its parts, is just like a milestone, no matter what you may put into it, you will get out from it. As to say, when you put wheat into the mill stone, you will get flour. Contrary to that, if you put tiny stones into it, you will get nothing but stones. This is traced in

Abdullah's failure in dealing with his harmful memories as he kept himself locked up inside the past, so that he couldn't even live a normal life with his new family. He gained nothing from this except that he had only exhausted and consumed his mind in remembering things that only bring him harm and solve out nothing, but only dissolving his rationality and consciousness and finally losing himself. An accessory feature of the unconscious is that it is simply as a mountain that echoes back what you say to, as implied in the title of the novel. In other words, what a person witnesses through her\ his life span whether good or bad will be reflected in her/his life according to what s/he chooses to recall. This is exactly what happened to Abdullah from the beginning of his suffering to the end of the novel. He chose to recall what he has witnessed as a child, which was stealing his happiness, life, security and stability by giving his sister to some rich family, which made his life unstable and pathetic as he forced himself not to forget and keep remembering his little sister's good memories. However, he could not stop forcing himself to remember her loss on the background of his fear of sending his sister's memory to oblivion as he believed, and thus losing his ability to continue living without her memory. Thus, he could not live his life as a normal human being although he could overcome this difficulty and search for his sister and build his life up at the same time. He lived on remembering her loss instead of trying to hold himself up together to be able to find her. Another evidence for such reality is that Abdullah's suffering from dementia. This happened exactly because he kept feeding his unconscious with the potion of oblivion as he describes it for he could not stand his sister's loss and finally this feeding was paid off as dementia.

To conclude, the unconscious is the echo of human's experience, emotions, thoughts, desires and others. A human being throughout her/his life stages, especially little beings whose mind is a container which shapes the child's identity with whatever it is filled since the child is a sponge that absorbs whatever is witnessed in life whether good or bad, as it has not the ability to distinguish between what should be forgotten and what should be remembered.

Yet, despite all that gloomy conclusions and facts stated about the unconscious, there is still hope and goodness that can be gained from such apparently bad feature of the unconscious. Such hope has been traced in the novel as Abdullah did not forget his love for his sister that unconsciously passed to the unconscious of his daughter towards her anonymous aunt. That is to say, despite all the difficulties of life, sickness, and oblivion, the unconscious mind will keep copies of stored memories even if not the whole memories but at least the true love of siblings.

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