

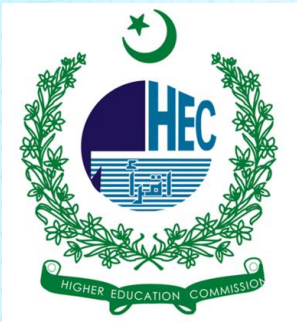
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**Integrating Narrative and Transgenerational Traumas: A Critical
Analysis of Kochai's Short Stories**



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Abstract

Trauma narratives offer valuable insights into historical events by exploring the psychological turmoil experienced by the victims as well as the long-term effects. However, trauma research has focused mainly on Western views, often overlooking the diverse experiences of people and communities outside dominant narratives. A more inclusive approach is necessary to better understand the multifaceted impact of trauma on marginalized populations. Kochai's (2022) work presents a fresh, non-Western perspective on trauma narratives. This study explores the narration of non-Western trauma literature and illuminates the intergenerational transfer of trauma. Furthermore, it understands that trauma can have an impact that is not only severe and prolonged but also intergenerational, which contradicts the Western-centric perspective of trauma as an individual experience. This recognition develops more successful approaches to trauma recovery and healing. By addressing this gap, the study aims at contributing to the development of the field of literary trauma studies and to provide important insights into the inherited and shared dimensions of trauma. A close reading of Kochai's (2022) text allows us to analyze how trauma is experienced, interpreted and passed down from generation to generation, and how it is further expressed through forms of various narrative and literary techniques in literature. This approach supports a dynamic relationship between narrative approaches and the intergenerational trauma in literature, which will facilitate the intersection of literary analysis and psychological inquiry and enrich our understanding of human condition.

Keywords: Narrative Analysis, Transgenerational Trauma Theory.

Introduction

Trauma fiction evokes a deep sense of individual or collective grief, despair or fear; psychological approaches investigate the situational and social factors that influence the experiences of trauma survivors (Visser, 2011). Despite the euro-centric nature of most of the frameworks, trauma scholars mobilize the inclusion of post-colonial and post-9/11 literature and trauma narratives in trauma studies (Kurtz, 2018). Examining trauma can help us question dominant narratives and prioritize the perspectives of

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marginalized groups for a fairer understanding of historical events (Craps, 2013). Furthermore, understanding how trauma is passed down through generations is essential for addressing the lasting impacts of historical injustices as they influence the identities and resilience of marginalized groups (Craps & Buelens, 2008). Trauma narratives have risen as personal accounts that respond to increased recognition of the devastating effects of wars, poverty and colonization on individual psychological well-being. They contextualize trauma by embedding it within relevant social and historical backgrounds (Vickroy, 2015). Conceptualizing trauma can provide significant value in the scholarly examination of history and narratives more broadly (Berger, 1997).

Trauma theory often emphasizes melancholia, immobility and memory limitations; however, themes like resilience, agency and cultural revitalization are also important in postcolonial and indigenous stories. New approaches suggest going beyond Western ideas by including local knowledge, spiritual beliefs and cultural practices to understand trauma in these settings (Visser, 2011). Narratives in postcolonial contexts illustrate how trauma is experienced, represented and negotiated by challenging established histories. Similarly, diasporic perspectives emphasize the memory and identity's intermediate spaces where trauma is frequently fragmented and reconfigured across generations and borders (Parui, 2024). Scholars examine how cultural and historical factors influence the narratives surrounding trauma. This foregrounds the recognition of transgenerational trauma where the damaging effects of trauma are transmitted across generations and shape the identities of those descended from trauma survivors (LaCapra, 2016). Integrating the concept of transgenerational trauma into theoretical frameworks of trauma challenges the conventional, incident-focused models and promotes a more inclusive and culturally attuned (Craps, 2013). Jamil Jan Kochai's narratives explore the lives of the Afghan diaspora and highlight themes of trauma, exile and identity. He focuses on everyday life to highlight absences, losses and trauma within Afghan families in diaspora. Moreover, the vivid portrayal of multi-layered hauntings in his stories reflect memories of war, violence, displacement and loss. Ultimately, these hauntings appear as collective trauma and are central to understanding identity; they show how the past violence influences present experiences (Farooq, 2014).

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Trauma literature centered around non-western characters and communities is focused on less despite the fact that these communities face higher occurrences of traumatic experiences than western communities. By neglecting the viewpoints and experiences of individuals and communities who fall outside dominant Western social and political discourses, research on trauma literature often struggles to properly account for the diverse and interconnected nature of trauma. Kochai's (2022) work challenges simplified portrayals of Afghan lives in the media and presents the narratives of Afghan trauma victims within American discourse. His works character-driven and place an emphasis on the complexities of transgenerational trauma. By centralizing marginalized voices, this study contributes to a more inclusive and culturally informed understanding of trauma in literature. This research will examine how trauma and identity are expressed in *The Haunting of Hajji Hotak and Other Stories*. This study will engage with Kochai's (2022) anthology to highlight acts of resistance, resilience and cultural continuity as his narratives describe deep psychological as well as cultural wounds carried across generations.

1.2. Research Objectives

The objectives of the current research study are to:

1. Analyze how integration of narrative and trauma theories provides a comprehensive understanding of trauma representation, resilience, and identity in *The Haunting of Hajji Hotak and Other Stories*,
2. Assess how trauma is passed down through generations in marginalized communities, through the characters in *The Haunting of Hajji Hotak and Other Stories*,
3. Explore the narrative strategies employed in *The Haunting of Hajji Hotak and Other Stories* to construct trauma, traumatic experiences, and characters' identities and experiences.

1.3. Research Questions

The current study will be structured around the following research questions:

1. What valuable perspectives on trauma representation, resilience, and identity, does the author offer by utilizing narrative trauma theories in *The Haunting of Hajji Hotak and Other Stories*?

2. How do the characters in *The Haunting of Hajji Hotak and Other Stories* depict transgenerational trauma and haunting in marginalized communities?
3. What narrative structures does the author employ in *The Haunting of Hajji Hotak and Other Stories* and how do they contribute to understanding characters' identities and interactions, and their traumatic experiences?

1.4. Significance of the Study

The current study is important as it challenges the Eurocentric biases in trauma literature by focusing on Afghan diasporic experiences which will lead to a more scholarly attention towards a region and population that is often overlooked in discussions of trauma and literature. In addition, this study analyzes how trauma is portrayed and passed down in literature. This is crucial as it encourages the analysis of broader social issues such as long-term consequences of war, colonization and systematic oppression. This study is significant because of its interdisciplinary approach as it connects literature, psychology and cultural studies. Furthermore, it contributes to the growing body of research which promotes comprehensive, cross-disciplinary methods for analysing trauma. Additionally, by highlighting these narratives of resilience and survival, this study fosters a more inclusive as well as globally attuned understanding while challenging dominant Western perspectives.

Literature Review

During the late 20th century, trauma studies emerged as a distinct academic discipline influenced by poststructuralist literary frameworks. Prominent scholars such as Cathy Caruth and Dominick LaCapra investigated how traumatic experiences can disrupt and challenge conventional modes of storytelling (Kurtz, 2018). Early trauma theorists believed that the absence of details in texts reflected the unspeakable nature of trauma. However, Richard McNally (2003, as cited in Pederson, 2014) substantiates that traumatic memories can be vivid and accessible which prompts a reevaluated understanding of narrative trauma theory. The application of Western trauma theory may not be effective when representing communal or inherited trauma in non-Western contexts (Kurtz, 2014). Creating inclusive frameworks that consider global, cultural and historical trauma enables researchers to study trauma in a way that respects local situations. It recognizes different expressions and supports healing (Balaev, 2014).

Trauma narratives play a crucial role in uncovering hidden histories and empowering marginalized groups. They challenge the dominant colonial and imperial accounts that diminish local perspectives. Through narrative, survivors and authors assert their right to remembrance and historical representation (Ullah, 2020). Banerjee (2020) believes that Western ideas about trauma often focus on individual events and generalise the experience. He analyses Mahasweta Devi's stories to show how her work challenges mainstream trauma ideas that often emphasize silence, passivity and victimhood. According to Valančiūnas (2020), the legacies of colonialism perpetuate violence and trauma across generations, even among those who did not directly experience the conflict.

1.5. Transgenerational Trauma Theory

The transmission of trauma across generations significantly complicates the formation of cohesive identity as young people in diasporic communities struggle to balance life between the traumatic histories of their ancestors and the demands of present surroundings (Bahmanpour, 2020). Emotional and psychological effects can pass down through families and later generations can feel the impact of their ancestors' unresolved emotions. Children of trauma survivors may carry that impact in their emotional and psychological states (Schwab, 2010). Transgenerational transmission of trauma shapes the collective memory of communities and reflects unresolved historical traumas. The resulting narratives can either acknowledge or conceal these traumatic histories and ultimately impact the community's identity. The collective trauma experienced by a community can, in turn, influence how individuals process their traumatic experiences (Caruth, 2012). Storytelling serves as a medium through which trauma is passed down through generations, as victims and survivors share personal accounts, memoirs and cultural tales to remember trauma (Schwab, 2006). Consequently, the narratives of second-generation Afghan writers often reflect the inherited memories of violence and displacement. This inheritance of trauma emerges in their work through themes like haunting, displacement, loss and identity exploration (Farooq, 2014).

1.6. Narrative Trauma Theory

Trauma can disrupt typical memory processes which can result in dissociative states and fragmented memories. Consequently, narratives tend to re-represent traumatic

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memories in dynamic and adaptable ways to fulfill specific psychological or cultural needs. Trauma narratives often highlight a broken or shattered identity and illustrate how traumatic events can lead to a disunity of memory and identity. This compels individuals to create coping narratives shaped by cultural, psychological and biological factors, that ultimately affect or complicate the healing process (Staniloiu & Markowitsch, 2012). Trauma is conveyed through textual features that foreground what is missing (absence), what is indirectly expressed (indirection), and what recurs (repetition). These elements create a detailed understanding of how trauma is represented by using subtle narrative methods (Kurtz, 2018). Trauma narratives may focus on the absence of events rather than their occurrence (LaCapra, 1999). As traumatic events disrupt the brain's normal recording of memory; our experiences and recollections of them are characterized by substantial disruptions and gaps (Caruth, 1996). Additionally, the silences in trauma narratives may not solely come from the brain's reaction but also from political and historical factors (Kurtz, 2018). These gaps can be conveyed through metaphorical, allegorical or fragmented modes of storytelling (Berger, 1997). Moreover, trauma narratives often exhibit thematic patterns of repetition and return (LaCapra, 1999). The recurring patterns imply an unresolved traumatic experience: a rhythmic or temporal hesitation that keeps the narrator anticipating for the next traumatic event (Kurtz, 2018).

Fragmented or non-linear structures mirror the disarray of traumatic memory. Recurring motifs or cyclical patterns can illustrate trauma's resistance to resolution. The emotional effect of trauma can profoundly affect a text and produce a powerful response using intense language or textual aspects. Trauma frequently makes texts difficult to understand so they cannot be easily interpreted or resolved. This characteristic preserves the unresolved, obstructed or incomplete essence of traumatic memory, which reshapes reader's engagement with traumatic content. The structural components are not only a result of stylistic choices but a representation of trauma (Forster, 2007). Abdelmoneim (2025) uses the common tropes suggested by Pederson as a model for the analysis of his thesis to capture the presence of trauma in literature. It highlights that these techniques mirror the non-linear, often indirect way trauma is experienced and articulated. However, Pederson's *Speak Trauma* methodology shifts the focus from identifying textual omissions to examining the text. *Wyld All the Birds*,

Singing uses two intertwining and alternating storylines, one that goes forward in time and the other one backwards. This structural complexity supports a broader view as it illustrates how formal textual elements can embody the ongoing experience of trauma (Buechel, 2018). Conrad (2022) analyses Scego's *Adua* with the help of Pederson's ideas. The book includes events, dreams and visions that describe difficult experiences. The book also has broken memories and moments of feeling disconnected which shows how trauma affects reality. These writing choices show Pederson's idea that trauma appears through experiences that are broken and change how we see things, but can still be expressed and studied.

1.7. Afghan-American Literature and Kochai's Narrative Contribution

After the September 11 attacks, the American-led war on terrorism spread a discourse that painted Muslims as enemies. Afghan writers have documented traumatic experiences and highlight the ongoing mental health challenges faced by these victims. Their trauma is not confined to personal experience but has a significant effect on national identities, social cohesion and cultural conceptions. Fiction and other literature has become an essential platform for portraying and processing these collective wounds (Khan et al., 2021). The history of Afghanistan, marked by colonization, conflict and resistance, is often superficially understood in the U.S., which results in a misrepresented historical narrative. These experiences highlight the conflicting aspects of their dual identities and their dissatisfaction with the portrayal of Afghan stories (Cvetkovich, 2011). Immigrants from Afghanistan often struggle with identity conflicts when they move to America because of cultural difference. This may result in loss of their original culture and alienation from their homeland. In Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*, characters' past experiences and cultural values impact their current lives and identity. Their internal struggle comes from contrasting their Afghan background and American reality (Adhikary, 2021). In Aslam's novel, *The Wasted Vigil*, the palimpsest serves as a metaphor for the multiple layers of history, culture and memory. These layers undermine the Western perceptions of terrorism and war; they insist on the acknowledgement of the diversified cultural and historical identity of Afghanistan. The novel also critiques the oversimplification and exoticism of Afghanistan in international discussions (Shoib & Akhtar, 2025).

Jamil Jan Kochai, born to Afghan parents in a refugee camp in Peshawar, grew up in

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California. His personal background significantly influences his work. He immerses readers in the Afghan diaspora while exploring themes of war, family, displacement and hope. He employs innovative structural techniques and transitions between micro and macro perspectives. His incorporation of youthful jargon challenges readers to learn the rules of his world through untranslated terms (Badkhen, 2022). Kochai's writings powerfully capture the experience of death and destruction during wartime. They show traumatic memories by recalling places of loss. The stories combine sounds and storytelling by using digressions and whispers to represent surveillance and sonic violence. This approach examines spectrality both as a story element and as a character trait in Afghan American fiction. Kochai's work combines memory studies and postcolonial writing, explores complex spaces, subjects and identities (Parui, 2024).

Akram and Naseer (2024) have explored Kochai's stories by focusing on ideas like delayed impact and trauma witnessing. They have examined how trauma appears in storytelling through narrative structure, symbols and character psychology. This emphasizes Kochai's style and techniques in depicting trauma's effects. They have also used psychological, cultural and social viewpoints to place trauma within Afghan society and history. Naqvi et al. (2024) have used the Caruth's trauma theory to study the short stories by Kochai and focused on how these narratives depict traumatic experiences, alongside the psychological and social effects on characters. This research highlights the non-linear cyclical pattern of traumatic memory and depicts trauma as a disjointed phenomenon that is interpreted late. It also looks at how storytelling reflects trauma, facilitate healing and communal memory in Afghan society. Furthermore, Farooq (2024) has analyzed Kochai's works by placing emphasis on themes such as hauntings, spectrality and memory. His analysis uses Derrida's idea of hauntology that characterizes the characters' and writers' lives as haunted by past events, shared memories and missing people. He looks at how spectrality shows absence and uncovers unspoken or hidden parts of family and cultural stories. Furthermore, with the help of Marianne Hirsch's postmemory concept, he studies how people of the second generation connect to painful memories they didn't experience but learned about through family tales, pictures and cultural items.

Research Methodology

2.1. Research Design

This research uses an interdisciplinary lens for examining trauma, resilience, and identity among diasporic and marginalized communities by focusing on *The Haunting of Hajji Hotak and Other Stories*. It analyzes the trauma in text with a synthesis of different narrative theories tropes (Pederson, 2014, Kurtz, 2018). In addition, it employs Schwab's Transgenerational Trauma Theory (2010). This study employs a qualitative research methodology and uses an interpretive approach to closely analyze the text. The main aspect of qualitative research includes a variety of philosophical assumptions and methods of interpretation (Fossey et al., 2002).

2.2. Research Method

This research will employ close reading techniques to analyse the text. Close reading involves understanding of the text, its organization and its content. This method focuses on the importance of getting engaged with the language, form and content of the text to understand the layers and themes (Ohrvik, 2024). Each story of this study has been analysed with attention. The findings from the close reading techniques support the theoretical framework.

2.3. Theoretical Framework

Narrative Trauma Theory is the theoretical framework for this study. This study analyses three key literary tropes of trauma portyal in literature: absence, indirection, and repetition (Pederson, as cited in Kurtz, 2018). For a more compreshensive and holistic approach, this research will also engage three key principles for analyzing trauma in literature put forward in Pederson's (2014) article "Speak Trauma: Toward a Revised Understanding of Literary Trauma Theory". The first principle prioritizes the text by recognizing that traumatic memories are often expressible and memorable. Second principle looks for augmented narrative detail because traumatic events can make memories more vivid. The final principle looks for representations of experiences that are skewed ontologically, physically, or temporally.

Traumatic experiences from the past can be transmitted across generations, affecting individuals who did not directly experience the initial trauma. In narrative trauma theory, transgenerational trauma examination focuses on how traumatic experiences are passed down through storytelling and family narratives across

generations (Schwab, 2010). The analysis of this study uses Transgenerational Trauma theory to examine the psychological and emotional impacts of historical violence on characters in the short stories across generations.

2.4. Selected Text

Jamil Jan Kochai's collection of short stories, *The Haunting of Hajji Hotak and Other Stories* (2022), serves as the primary text for this study.

Discussion and Analysis

This chapter offers a detailed analysis of Kochai's short story anthology, *The Haunting of Hajji Hotak and Other Stories* (2022).

2.5. Playing Metal Gear Solid V: The Phantom Pain

This story depicts a young man navigating and experiencing familial and cultural war trauma through his engagement with the video game titled 'Metal Gear Solid 5', which serves as a storytelling device. The protagonist of the story interacts with a video game and blends a digital aspect with traditional narrative to reveal the pervasive impact of historical trauma. The narrative examines the trauma that Mirwais accumulated through his father's transference. The title of the story itself suggests a sense of haunting through "phantom pain", which reveals how the undisclosed traumas and histories of previous generations can affect their descendants. The transgenerational trauma transference (Schwab, 2010) is directly addressed: "during the times of severe emotional or physical distress ... tell you a story that is either upsetting or horrifying" (p. 4).

This creates a gap in the relationship between the father and son, which impacts the protagonist's identity. The narrator also admits, "though you cannot be sure that your father and his brother are still alive" (p.16) to highlight the gap in knowledge and absence of conclusive memory. There are also indirect references that allude to trauma. For example, "the horse slaughtered in gunfire" and the "orchard surrounded" can be interpreted as the allegories of chaos, loss and violence. Kochai (2022) describes the protagonist leaping into the shadows with "his uncle on one shoulder and his father on the other" (p.14) to showcase burden associated with family trauma. The narrative also reveals trauma through repetitive actions and themes like suffering and resilience. For example, the story is fragmented as it fluctuates between reality and the video game. The protagonist's traumatic immersion is

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repeatedly disrupted by his family who call out and knock on his door. The protagonist's ongoing efforts to rescue or protect loved ones involves alternating between taking action and facing setbacks. This embodies an ongoing cycle of helplessness and desire for control. The above analysis characterises trauma through Pederson's narrative techniques which includes absence, indirection and repetition (as mentioned in Kurtz, 2018).

However, Pederson (2014) calls to prioritize the text's capacities for expression for a more holistic view. This is evident in the detailed depiction of familial and cultural suffering within the game. Scenes such as the protagonist's memory of his father and uncle trudging into darkness amidst dying gunfire symbolize vivid and remembered trauma. Additionally, protagonist's journey through a war-torn Afghan landscape is described with details and reaffirm the premise that traumatic memories are often vividly retrievable. Furthermore, the game's narrative brims with augmented details like excessive, multi-sensory recordings of trauma that reflect the heightened, sometimes overwhelming, nature of traumatic recall as Pederson (2014) describes. The protagonist's stealth movements across village rooftops and through compounds are depicted with an almost obsessive attention to detail, including "climbing walls," "crawling atop roofs," and the use of tranquilizers and weapons—each act steeped in sensory engagement. In addition, the game vividly employs distortions in temporality, physicality, and even ontological perception. This is mainly shown through Mirwais's drug induced state through which he blurs the lines between reality and the video game: "You extract the kush from the trash" (p.10). The story uses fragmented storytelling, flashbacks and emotional scenes to show the trauma caused by violence and displacement. This complexity highlights persistence of trauma and the importance of resilience through collective memory. It encourages consideration of how marginalized identities are shaped by and resist the effects of systemic violence. For instance, when the main character tries to save people and interacts with Russian soldiers, it highlights the long-term effects of the ongoing violence that shapes identities. The story situates the experience of trauma within a cultural landscape through the incorporation of precise allusions and contextual elements like Ramadan occurring shortly before Watak's death, portrayals of Afghan spaces, and family dynamics. The narrative moves beyond generalized representations

of trauma which aligns with Craps' (2013) demand of narrative approaches that utilise local social and political realities. In addition, the violence, displacement and loss of family in the game echoes the trauma landscape. The protagonist's passage through Afghan villages, such as Wagh Jan and Naw'e Kaleh, amidst militarized conflict, highlights the lasting impact of borderland conflicts.

2.6. Return to Sender

Set in postwar Kabul, *Return to Sender* tells the tragic story of Amina and her family as they navigate the continuing violence and personal losses. A central theme is Amina's relentless efforts to piece together her son Ismael from the remains recovered after his death. The story links personal trauma to larger issue of postcolonialism and politics. The imagery of severed human body parts is a recurring theme symbolizing the ongoing disruption of individual and collective psychological well-being. Moreover, the recurring pattern of knocking on the door coupled with the delivery of dismembered body parts indicates repetition of violence and loss. The concept of absence also manifests prominently in silences and gaps. Amina's silent waiting and the persistent absence of her son Ismael exemplify this void. The author (2022) does not explicitly detail the circumstances of Ismael's death which leaves a textual space. These gaps underscore the incomplete, fragmentary nature of trauma: for example, Amna's "muddled" memory of her son's features and forgetting of his name, "her only child, whose name ... she suddenly forgot" (p. 22). This story also uses metaphors and allusions to express the widespread impact of trauma. For instance, Yusuf's desperate search for his lost son subtly alludes to violence and disorder. Amina's experience of collecting body parts serves as a metaphor for the accumulation of unresolved grief. It results in the creation of the image of a fragile and divided personality.

The above analysis aligns with Pederson's model of analysing trauma in literature through techniques like absence, indirection, and repetition (as mentioned in Kurtz, 2018). However, the narrative can be examined with the help of three key principles by Pederson (2014). The amalgamation of both models provides a well rounded analysis of the story. First principle focuses on the expressible and memorable aspects of trauma. For example, Amina's painstaking efforts to reconstruct Ismael's dismembered body. Her detailed collection and assembly of body parts are

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filled with multi-sensory detail aligns with the second principle. She closely examines the “curling, wriggling, pulsing” flesh. Her detailed attention emphasises the heightened sensory experience linked to traumatic memory. Finally, The narrative’s depiction of Amina’s psychological state features distortions. Her sense of reality becomes fragile as she observes her surroundings and her own body intensified by trauma. For example, she perceives herself “untethered from her body”. Her sense of time also changed: “twenty-third thump of her heart aligned perfectly with the sound of the knocks” (p. 31).

This story emphasizes bodily fragments, personal memories and tangible scenes of violence that are rooted in Afghan social realities. For example, the narrative’s detailed examination of physical remains and their placement enables a more genuine portrayal of grief and recovery. The narrative’s fragmented structure and visceral language work to forge a culturally resonant narrative. Following the tragic loss of her son Ismael to violence, Amina’s obsessive act of collecting and reassembling of her son Ismael’s body parts symbolize not only her personal grief but also the transmission of trauma across generations. This act of rebuilding her son from fragmented remains reflects the idea of “replacement children,” which describes children born after a significant loss. These children grapple with questions of identity and belonging (Schwab, 2010). The transmission of trauma is clearly shown through the narration of Ismael’s secret acts, his recordings and preservation of his remains. The images of Ismael roaming Kabul, sneaking out at night, and being recorded in grainy videos also function as a form of storytelling. Though fragmented, these glimpses into his life convey a profound sense of trauma and unexpressed yearning.

2.7. Enough

This story centers on Rangeena, an elderly Afghan woman. Her distress stems from ongoing family conflicts, her deteriorating mental and physical health, feelings of betrayal and misunderstanding from her children. In her final act of defiance and her longing for peace, she shouts “Enough!” and fantasizes about returning to her homeland. Rangeena’s family carries the burden of violence, guilt, and loss; her reflections reveal how these psychological effects fill up their collective consciousness. Her lament that she is “supposed to just sit and suffer her entire family rising up against her” (p.48) exemplifies an internalization of familial and societal

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expectations rooted in trauma. Rangeena's narratives function as acts of remembrance and resistance because they preserve her family's history. In doing so, she helps create a collective memory that supports their cultural identity and resilience. Her memories function as mnemonic devices that align with Schwab's (2010) idea of storytelling as a tool for transgenerational transmission of trauma.

Furthermore, Pederson (2014) puts forward a framework for analyzing trauma in literature with three key principles. He emphasizes the importance of engaging with the text. Rangeena's stream-of-consciousness highlights the clarity of her memories. Her access to the memories of the deaths and her homeland serves as an act of resistance against erasure. Multi-sensory storytelling is also clear through textual overflow and striking portrayals of trauma. This aligns with the second principle. Rangeena recalls the "ash leaking out of her nose and ears and lips" (p.46). The description of Watak's death by the stream showcases her memory which is etched with sensory detail. The recurring motif of snowflakes, deserts and ashes functions metaphorically and also perceptually. These images trigger memories that shift between reality and memory, past and present. This connects to the third principle. Rangeena's recollection of Kabul and her blending of past pain with her current state evoke a sense of dislocation. Additionally, phrases such as "the water, rushing water, so heavy, so light," reflect an ontological fluidity and portray the distorted nature of her understanding.

However, one prominent feature of the story is the presence of absences. The line, "the stream where Watak once died," refers to trauma without explicitly detailing the event. Similarly, Rangeena's memories are fragmented and contain silences. The ash leaking from her body represents the physical remnants of trauma and emphasizes the gaps in her memory. In addition, the story employs indirection by using metaphorical language and indirect references to convey suffering. The theme of snowflakes is used as a metaphor for innocence and destruction. Repetition further highlights the unresolved and cyclical nature of trauma. The "ashes," the "family rising up against her" and Watak's death are echoed multiple times, which emphasizes her ongoing grief. Additionally, the phrase "enough" also appears repeatedly in her internal monologue and symbolizes her desire to end the cycle of suffering. The identification of absence, employment of indirection and presence of repetition in the story aligns with Pederson's notion of common techniques to identify trauma in

literature (as mentioned in Kurtz, 2018). Moreover, the narrative's refusal to depict trauma in terms of clinical or Western aesthetic paradigms allows for an alternative, as suggested by Craps (2013). Instead, it embraces storytelling as an act of resistance, memory and cultural affirmation. The use of religious phrases, storytelling about ancestral tragedies and metaphorical relations serve as modes of resistance. The references to Allah in the form of "all Praise Be To Him" and the references to Afghan landscapes, war and displacement indicate how recovery and memory are entangled with the cultural and religious structures. Furthermore, the inclusion of soldiers, bombs and Afghan conflict through the mention of "Operation Enduring Freedom" as well as the mention of "Taliban," "Massouds," and "puppet presidents," places personal trauma in the context of broader political and imperial histories.

2.8. Bakhtawara and Miriam

The plot of this story revolves around the character of a young Afghan girl named Bakhtawara. She is shown facing family honor and societal pressures against a background of war and political upheaval. Her older sister, Zarghoona, abandons her American fiancé. Hence, Bakhtawara volunteers to marry Atal in an effort to protect and restore her family's honor. The narrative explores Bakhtawara's internal struggles and significant relationships, particularly with her mother, Gul Sanga, and her friend Miriam. The narrative strategies in *Bakhtawara and Miriam* exemplify a textured approach. They highlight cultural forms, resistance and alternative aesthetic methods to communicate trauma authentically and ethically within Afghan society. For example, Bakhtawara's secret talks with Miriam show a form of resistance that goes beyond obvious storytelling and creates a safe space of resilience amid violence and repression. Furthermore, the tactile descriptions of Bakhtawara's wedding preparations, such as her elaborate dress and the layering of her hair, symbolize cultural identity and resilience. The narrative's detailed imagery of prayers, traditional attire and family rituals are woven into the story.

The recollections of Bakhtawara about her family background and her elder brother, Rahman, highlight the lasting impact of trauma passed down through generations. She describes her brother as "Quick-tempered, constantly aching, and slowly being eaten alive by the dust of the bricks with which he fed his father's family" (p.55). Additionally, Bakhtawara's decision to marry Atal to restore her family's honor

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highlights the role of familial shame and cultural expectations. This act supports the idea that traumatic histories are often maintained through familial storytelling and cultural practices (Schwab, 2010). Miriam's scars serve as physical reminders of enduring trauma. This trauma originates from gender-based violence, social repression and political unrest. In addition, Bakhtawara's secret observation of Miriam through a hole in the wall shows how trauma can be passed on within families and society. This exemplifies the idea that trauma can persist in silence, in shared spaces and through storytelling. These strategies facilitate a sensitive representation of trauma through metaphor, repetition and silence (Pederson, as cited in Kurtz, 2018).

The use of silences and gaps in the story exemplify how trauma interferes with memory and recording of events. For instance, Miriam's self-imposed confinement shows a gap in interaction with the outside world. This story also employs indirection through the use of metaphor, allegory and subtle references. Bakhtawara's wedding gown, layered with mirrored tassels serves as a symbol of the fragmented self struggling to cope with trauma. The heavy and intricate dress along the "green veil" represents the concealment of trauma as well as its complex nature. Finally, Repetition is a key element in the story which highlights the lasting and unresolved impact of trauma. Bakhtawara's emotions surrounding her sister Zarghoona's abandonment, coupled with her personal isolation, consistently emerge as central motifs in the narrative. This is shown through her focus on the hole in the wall, her prayers, her thoughts about Nabi, and her worries about what will happen. The addition of Pederson's (2014) principles to this analysis provides a more holistic view of this story. The story actively records this trauma through detailed descriptions which assert that traumatic memories are often expressible. Secondly, Pederson (2014) focuses on the need to find the augmented narrative detail. The textual overflow is evident in Bakhtawara's detailed account of her wedding preparations and her elaborate attire, such as her red and green Kochi dress, layered and mirrored, and the architectural updo of her hair. These descriptions create strong sensory images, which represent a burden of tradition and trauma together. The narrative also focuses on experiences that are skewed temporally and ontologically by addressing how Bakhtawara feels her fragmented identity, how she is dissolving into the image of her sister and how she experiences a pervasive sense of loneliness.

2.9. Hungry Ricky Daddy

This story portrays the intense and emotional journey of a group of friends, focusing on Ricky Daddy (Abubakr Salem) who becomes a strong supporter of Palestinian resistance to pursue Nabeela and ultimately goes on a hunger strike. His friends decide to document his resilience on social media which gives rise to a greater movement. This narrative is a brilliant illustration of how trauma can be structured with the help of narrative strategies focusing on absence, indirection and repetition (Pederson, as cited in Kurtz, 2018). These devices are used to encode trauma in a manner that adheres to the demand of cultural sensitivity and non-Eurocentrism in the representation of trauma (Craps, 2013; Craps & Buelens, 2008). The story uses silences and gaps to imply the presence of trauma. For example, Nabeela's disappearance creates a silence that emphasizes her sudden absence from the story. The unspoken presence of her grief, fears and suffering makes her the embodiment of trauma. The unspoken longing for wholeness which has been disrupted by death and decay, emphasizes gaps that are symptomatic of trauma's disruption. Additionally, the account of Ricky's death reveals a silence. Instead of clearly expressing his death, the narrative centers on ritualistic cleansing.

Indirection is also used to express trauma and resistance indirectly. Ricky's act of learning the Palestinian history serves as an indirect way of dealing with trauma. The thoroughness with which he recalls the atrocities of the past serves as a metaphorical bridge between the past violence and present suffering. Similarly, the story's depiction of Nabeela's marriage and smuggling of sperm out of prison serves as an allegory for resilience amid trauma. The covert act, performed in silence and secrecy, symbolizes the persistence of life and hope within oppressive contexts, using indirect reference to trauma's ongoing impact. This metaphor highlights the fact that trauma subjects tend to occupy the spaces of silence as they resist and rebuild the identity despite the systemic violence. Ricky's descriptions of "the borders of the apartheid wall" and the "separation" of Gaza and the West Bank exemplify figurative language. These spatial metaphors communicate trauma by symbolizing the fragmentation of land and identity. The narrative also subtly alludes to the concept of "replacement children" through Nabeela and Yusuf's daughter. Her during Nabeela's activism in Palestine highlights trauma-driven circumstances which symbolises the

continued transmission of trauma and the intricate identity development shaped by violence and displacement (Schwab, 2010). The repetition of images and themes further emphasizes the ongoing effect of trauma in the story. Ricky's hunger strike, which is mentioned repeatedly in the text, turns into a strong symbol of resistance and suffering. Furthermore, the repeated depiction of Ricky's physical decline emphasizes the persistent repercussions of physical and psychological trauma.

Apart from the analysis above, Pederson's (2014) principles offer additional insights into how the narrative portrays trauma. The first principle encourages focus on the text to recognize traumatic memories. This is exemplified through Ricky's ongoing engagement with memories of Palestine and historical atrocities such as "the Deir Yassin massacre". The second principle highlights the need to explore enhanced narrative elements. In the narrative, trauma is evident through the use of intensely detailed physical descriptions of Ricky's suffering. "He was getting weaker by the day. Light-headed and slow, he couldn't stand up so easily anymore. When I rubbed his arms or his chest with a washcloth, I thought his skin would tear free" (p. 90). The abundance of detail in the above passage deepens the reader's connection to his physical deterioration and represent the intense physical sensations associated with trauma. Finally, the third principle identifies depictions that change perception and leads to feelings of unreality. For example, Ricky's character experiences a distortion of his reality as he loses his memory and health as he goes through his hunger strike. The depiction of Ricky's "light-headed and slow" state, coupled with "soft splatters of blood" in his stools, convey a fragmented, altered perception of his body.

2.10. Saba's Story

In *Saba's Story*, Agha, his family and ancestry are intricately woven together. This story begins with Agha attempting to persuade his son, Marwand, to invest in a metal detector by recounting the story of his ancestor Nikeh's underground treasure hunt during the British invasion. The narrative progresses through different timelines, interweaving Nikeh's dramatic escape as well as snippets into the story of Saba shaheed. Familial relationships are also central to the story. Agha's wife, Mor, his mother, Athai and his children are shown as figures of resilience and resourcefulness. The narrative also introduces a young girl from Logar, Saba, with whom Marwand becomes affiliated. Her character is introduced through recollections which emphasize

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the critical role of storytelling in maintaining historical accuracy and cultural heritage. The narrative subtly explores how legacies of violence intertwine with family identity and individual psyche, which aligns with the concept of transgenerational trauma (Schwab, 2010). Agha's return to Logar and the secretive planning to reclaim this land by searching for the treasure, inspired by the ancestral story, serves as a metaphor for the desire to reconnect with his roots. In addition, the narrative's reference to Saba and her connection to Saba Shaheed embodies the recurring motif of inherited trauma and unresolved histories. Moreover, the traumatic loss of her parents in an American bombing, which left her brother Zalmay mute, shows how violence has fractured family relationships and individual minds.

The non-linear and fragmented approach resonates with support for alternative aesthetic strategies that are culturally sensitive (Craps, 2013). The analysis of this story uses the tropes suggested by Pederson to identify trauma (as mentioned in Kurtz, 2018). The repeated theme of stories being twisted or idealized is captured at the end of the story with the question, "Why must we always ruin what is beautiful with what is true" (p.115). This emphasizes the conflict between factual truth and narrative embellishment within personal and communal histories. In addition, the recurrent references to family disputes, such as the land struggle and the story of Nikeh's exile, form thematic echoes that reinforce the narrative's hesitant return to trauma. This story also uses metaphors to symbolise collective memories and buried histories. The tale of Nikeh wandering underground tunnels to find a "secret city within the mountains" functions as a powerful allegory for trauma that is hidden, complex and layered beneath surface narratives. This metaphor of lost land and hidden treasure represents collective trauma that is conveyed subtly through storytelling. Furthermore, absence is significantly highlighted through characters who are reluctant to discuss their past. For example, when Marwand asks his wife about what had actually happened in Afghanistan but she evades the question. This indicates a hesitation to confront or disclose the full traumatic truth. This is also exemplified when "Mor and Athai" watch the Marwand in silence.

Incorporating Pederson's (2014) principles further deepens the analysis of this story. The first principle highlights memorable nature of traumatic memories. For example, Agha focuses on details such as the gold, jewels, and the underground

environment when narrating Nikeh's journey. The second principle focuses on detailed narratives that showcase the ability of trauma to create overwhelming memories. Nikeh's escape from the colonizers, through the underground tunnels includes vivid descriptions of the caves and his discovery of the "secret city of gold and jewels." The depiction of the "treasure" buried amid violence serves as markers of trauma's hyper-sensitivity which emphasizes the physical environment along with the spiritual and emotional weight. The third principle centers on the impact of trauma on perception which includes alterations in time, space and reality. The imagery of the dark tunnels and the elusive treasure in Nikeh's underground journey serves as an allegory for distorted perception. The fragmented narration alternates between Nikeh's expedition that took place seventy years ago and the present-day situation. This fragmentation in the text as well as the story line blurs temporal boundaries.

2.11. Occupational Hazards

Occupational Hazards narrates the life story of an Afghan individual from their childhood in the 1960s to their adulthood. The narrative vividly captures personal sacrifices, cultural traditions, and the impact of historical events on personal and community life. The author presents trauma through the use of diverse and culturally relevant methods (Craps, 2013). A salient example of this approach is the narrative's use of silence as it emphasizes "digging graves" and "collecting limbs", however, it omits explicit emotional responses. References to "lightning bolts," "lightning in neck and shoulders," and "rapacious ghosts" are implied through the violent history and serve as indirect symbols for the unpredictable and pervasive nature of trauma. Similarly, the description of the Captain's land in Logar becoming "unreachable" and the old memories becoming "unclear and meaningless" indirectly refers to lost homeland and disintegration of culture. Moreover, the recurring theme of waiting serves as a temporal silence that signifies unfulfilled aspirations and unresolved grief: "waiting for sons to begin their careers," "waiting for daughters," "waiting for weddings, funerals and graduations". In addition, the Kochai's (2022) fragmented descriptions of "seeking blood; seeking death; seeking the solitude of gunfire", function as repetitions that evoke trauma's persistent nature and traps characters in a limbo of unresolved violence.

The narrative methods used for the above analysis, absence, indirection and repetition,

are identified in the text to recognize trauma (Pederson, as cited in Kurtz, 2018). However, the detailed recollections in the text dispel the myth of trauma's silence by presenting densely textured narratives. This aligns with Pederson's (2014) first principle as the narrator catalogs life events. All these events illustrate ongoing life processes intertwined with traumatic suffering. The second principle stresses the importance of seeking augmented narrative detail. The depiction of Watak's execution and the subsequent escape is rich with sensory details: "spending the entire night digging graves and collecting limbs; seeking blood; seeking death; seeking the solitude of gunfire" (p. 126). The text also reveals how trauma can distort perceptions of time and space which is in line with the third principle. The story seamlessly weaves together the childhood duties of the main character, his tragic experiences during the war and his migration experience. This structure reflects the disorienting reality, sense of disconnection and time shifts which are typical of people who experienced trauma. The depiction of wartime experiences, such as heading to fields "in the dark of predawn" and hiding while spending "their entire night digging graves", symbolizes a time-distorted reality where days merge into nights. The narrator, after witnessing explosions also demonstrates sensory overload: "returning home and sniffing wheat, flowers, dirt, leaves, shit, wood, gunpowder" (p. 125).

Occupational Hazards uses layered narrative voices which shift between personal reflections, collective memories and cultural storytelling. This helps to show how trauma can be passed down through generations (Schwab, 2010). The emphasis of this narrative on family stories, such as Hajji Alo's haggling techniques and the Captain's military training, functions both as cultural preservation and as a means of transmitting collective memory. The recounting of Watak's execution serves as a traumatic ancestral memory. The narrator's act of bringing his sons to Afghanistan and visiting the grave of Watak underscores the role of familial communication in passing down trauma. He asks his sons to "pray for their souls" and "to remember". This embeds collective grief and remembrance into family identity and continues to impact individuals who may not have directly experienced the original atrocities but bear the burden of that trauma. The account the sons working part-time jobs, the daughter graduating and barely making ends meet on a low income shows strength in the face of generational trauma. The protagonist's reflections on the King's

death and the Iraqi-Afghan conflicts show ongoing engagement with traumatic memories that transcend geographical and generational boundaries. By leading the janaza prayer and participating in community mourning, he engages in communal acts of remembrance that keep trauma alive in family and community stories.

2.12. A Premonition; Recollected

In this story Mor narrates how she vividly remembers the haunting vision that she had regarding the deaths of her brothers. This story focuses on the cruelty and tragedy that is inherent in war. For example, her brothers became the victims of the war. She also dies in an American bombing leaving sons in the war-ridden society. In addition, the emphasis of this narrative of themes of violence, loss and lingering memories also resonate with the transgenerational concept of trauma (Schwab, 2010). The statement, “made to conceive to sons she could never wholly love,” illustrates that the characters are not only victims of past violence but are also haunted by it. Moreover, the image of the long-forgotten mother, who “sewed” an old blanket, subtly points to the loss of culture and the erasure of past histories. It suggests that narratives need to be culturally informed to acknowledge these legacies. Kochai (2022) presents complex narratives by portraying the setting and themes related to the postcolonial Afghanistan with the help of textual strategies.

The story’s use of fragmented memory, indirect imagery and recurrent motifs (Pederson, as cited in Kurtz, 2018) elucidate the themes of violence, loss and lingering memories. This story presents absences thorough silences and gaps which help to reflect the disrupted nature of traumatic memory. Mor’s recollection of her vision is presented to be fragmented and elusive. She recalls seeing “the gunmen in the night” (p. 139), but the identities and motifs of these figures remain ambiguous. The narrative refrains from offering a straightforward account of violence but rather emphasizes indirect references. The gunmen mentioned above serve as allegory for spirits or twin souls whose identities are intentionally blurred. Their hidden identities highlight the shared and anonymous nature of victims and perpetrators in violence. The phrase “orbs like spirits, like twin souls” is used as a metaphor to hint at spiritual or existential aspects of their pain. Apart from absence and indirection, repetition is another structural device that reflects the ongoing and unresolved nature of trauma. Repetitive images of snow, frost and cold suggests a state of emotional numbness. The

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“Corolla tumbling down upon clay and ice and shadow” symbolizes an inevitable slide into violence and disorder. These recurring themes trap victims and leave them feeling stuck with unresolved experiences. This narrative approach reflects the fragmented, cyclical and non-linear nature of trauma which helps readers see the character’s mind as a complex entity.

This research also uses the principles of narrative analysis given by Pederson (2014) to make this analysis more well rounded. The story gives the reader a detailed and sensory portayal of Mor’s vision which highlights that traumatic memories can be expressed and remembered despite their emotional weight. The story also shows enhanced narrative detail, which aligns with the second principle. The detailed sensory descriptions such as “the cold mist of their breaths,” “frost collecting at the tips of the strands of their black beards,” and “tips of their fingers, already bitten by frost,” pull the reader deeper into the experience and reflect the heightened awareness often found in trauma memories. Furthermore, this story story aligns with the third principle through the use of complex imagery that showcases an altered sense of time and space. The scene describing “waiting for two orbs of light, orbs like spirits, like twin souls, floating through dark and snow” (p. 139) suggests that the boundaries between the real world and the spiritual or spectral worlds are becoming unclear. This shows how the usual boundaries of reality and existence are weakened and shows how trauma can warp one’s sense of time and space.

2.13. Waiting for Gulbuddin

This story, set in rural Afghanistan, follows a group of children which includes the narrator Marwand, along with Gora and Mirwais. They are waiting fo their uncle Gulbuddin to guide them to their destination after Malang leaves them halfway. They spend their time waiting for their uncle on a road in Logar where Watak had been killed near the Mulberry tree, beside the steam. This location serves as the setting for the story and emphasizes how trauma is closely linked to the feelings of loss and displacement. This narrative articulates trauma through the use of literary devices like absence, indirection and repetition (Pederson, as cited in Kurtz, 2018). In this story, there is absence of detailed violence. The injuries of the donkey are described vividly but the text does not talk about the violence that caused the wounds. Furthermore, indirection is also presented in the form of metaphor and symbolic references that hint

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towards trauma. The most prominent metaphor is the gunfire represented through the word “blat”. In addition, references to the absence of scars on Watak’s tree or bark indicates that trauma may not be visible; a metaphor of how traumas are frequently etched underneath the surface. Repetition also underpins the narrative’s structure to reflect the ongoing influence of trauma. This is exemplified through the echo of loud gunfire, visits to Watak’s marker and the cyclical nature of role-playing games. All of these instances from the story contribute to a rhythmic repetition that reflects the constant nature of trauma and its inescapability.

This story also fulfills Pederson’s (2014) principles for narrative analysis. The characters repeatedly pray for Watak and continuously engage with his memory. This suggests that trauma is actively remembered and articulated. Additionally, the characters’ pretending to be soldiers or victims demonstrates that trauma can be commonly reached through speech, memory and symbolic action. The second principle focuses on increased sensory and descriptive details which contain the intensity of traumatic memory. The description of donkey’s injury, “blood of the donkey is all over his hands and his clothes” (p. 152), does not only increase the sensory richness but also acts as an overflow of traumatic memory. Similarly, the detailed description of Watak’s unscarred tree highlights how the physical surroundings can hold onto trauma. Lastly, the characters acting out roles and the idea that they are “playing pretend,” demonstrates how trauma can alter perception and reality. The constant “waiting for Gulbuddin,” throughout the story and the scene where Watak’s body might have fallen into water suggests a feeling of being out of time where the past, present and memories blend together.

The narrative devices discussed above do not simply act as stylistic choices but as means to convey social, political, cultural and historical contexts. This story shows how symbols like repeated gunfire, cultural practice of praying and the act of role-playing are as used as means to remember and resist. For example, when the characters get ready to pray to Allah, it highlights how deeply ingrained these practices are and reinforces their identity. Praying for Watak’s soul brings in spiritual practices important to the community’s healing. This act foregrounds the practices that are culturally unique and resist being shaped by broad, European standards. The story also highlights how storytelling and cultural practices serve as way to pass down

trauma through generations and affect those who did not directly face the trauma (Schwab, 2010). This can be witnessed in the story when Kochai (2022) writes, “We lay our scarves out on the dirt and pray for our families and our friends and for the martyred soul of Watak Shaheed. Back in West Sacramento, a photo of Watak hangs in our prayer room” (p.144). In addition, the imaginative scenario game in which the children try to recreate the instance of Watak’s death shows how their ideas about violence, loss and resistance are shaped by familial stories.

2.14. The Parable of Goats

The Parable of Goats centers around Merzagul and Billy Casteel. It is set against the backdrop of war, suffering and spiritual reflection. Merzagul portrayed as a giant man with a tiny heart who suffered greatly because of war; he lost his only son and witnessed the destruction of his homeland. Despite his tough exterior and fiery temper, he is a renowned chef and his kindness is shown through connection with his goats. Furthermore, his relationship with Second Leutenant Billy Casteel emphasises themes of suffering and empathy. Casteel’s time on the battlefield, where he carried out bombings, is juxtaposed with instances of guilt and vulnerability. His character reflects the damaging effects of war alongside the possibility of remorse and change. The analysis of this story shows how trauma can be represented through writing techniques like absence, indirection and repetition (Peserson, as cited in Kurtz, 2018). The structure of this story highlights absence and silence which portray fragmented and incomplete memories. For example, the wound of the Second Leutenant being plugged with “hair or fur” and his inability to recall basic details like the “names of his commanding officers,” serves as example of memory lapses. These silences reflect psychological repression but along with the political and cultural silencing that often accompany trauma. Secondly, indirection also helps to convey trauma through metaphor and allegory. Bubugul’s age and ghostly appearance allude to a spiritual witness or a silent guardian of shared memory. Moreover, the constant repopulation of the goats and their efforts to expand their territory in the pit shows how trauma continues to resurface and resist resolution. Repeated return of the goats even after being thrown out shows their resilience. The non-linear narrative jumps across different moments and perspectives and aligns with Craps’ (2013) call for aesthetic approaches. This story merges the past and the present while incorporating mythic

elements as well as cultural expressions. Subtle allusions, like the hidden tunnels, the slaughter of Merzagul and Casteel's memory loss symbolize the societal and cultural wounds.

In addition to the narrative devices used above, Pederson's (2014) principles add further analytical depth. The journey of the goats through tunnels and caves as well as their eventual slaughter builds a collective memory, which aligns with the first principle. The second principle focuses on how trauma can be shown through an excess of sensory details which is illustrated by descriptions like "clawing at mud" and "swallowing mouthfuls of dirt". The third principle can be used to recognise distortion in time, space and reality. This is portrayed through the journey of goats who multiply, dig tunnels and travel through caves. Their duplication can lead to a shaky sense of self, with people's identities blurring or splitting. The soldier's injuries which are suddenly filled with "hair or fur" and his memory loss further illustrate this disturbed state of being. Furthermore, this narrative shows how the trauma of violence and loss is passed down (Schwab, 2010): "Passed it was – from mouth the ear to soul" (p. 155). Furthermore, the concept of replacement children which refers to individuals born after a traumatic loss who struggle with their identity and parental expectations (Schwab, 2010) is also present in the narrative. After learning about his son's murder, Merzagul hurls his father's "scimitar, which had once chopped down three hundred British colonizers" (p.156). This act foregrounds the historical violence and postcolonial legacies that impact the subsequent generations. By looking deeper into the above phrase, this research establishes a generational pattern. Merzagul's father fought against the British colonisers. Merzagul himself went on jihad against the soviets and these stories lead Saladin to join a group of "melancholic militants".

2.15. The Tale of Dully's Reversion

The Tale of Dully's Reversion revolves around Shakako Jani and her son Abdullah, also known as Dully. In the opening, Shakako is shown praying when her son transforms into a monkey. His family gets concerned and call an Imam who says that Dully's lack of faith is the cause behind his transformation and suggests a pilgrimage to a shrine in Logar. Despite her husband's objection, Shakako takes Dully to Afghanistan. Their journey is a mix of physical travel and inner exploration as they seek safety, a sense of belonging and understanding amidst ongoing conflict

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and personal losses. This story uses narrative disruptions, silence, repetition and to show how complex and unresolved trauma can be (Pederson, as cited in Kurtz, 2018). For instance, Shakako senses Dully's change but the transformation is not described which highlights silence in the text. Furthermore, Shakako's realization that gunshots represent the transformation creates an absence of clear narrative and emphasizes the gap between traumatic events and how they are portrayed. The story also uses indirection through metaphor and allegory. Dully's transformation into a monkey is a metaphor for how trauma can alter identity. Similarly, Shakako's recollection of fleeing Logar for the first time alludes to ongoing violence and exile. Repetition in text and themes also foregrounds trauma. Dully constantly researching massacres highlights the cyclical nature of trauma. He is stuck in a loop of reading, recalling and reliving these awful events, which highlights his unresolved trauma.

In addition to the narrative techniques mentioned above, applying Pederson's (2014) three principles allows for a well rounded analysis. The first principle focuses on the text to highlight the expressibility and memorability of trauma. For example, Dully writing the perfect email after his transformation challenges the idea that trauma leads to silence. This is also highlighted through characters' reflections of traumatic experiences like the Imam recounting Hajji Hotak's story and Shakako fleeing Logar for the first time. The second principle emphasizes that trauma often results in excessive narrative detail (Pederson, 2014). This is seen through Dully's research about the violent histories which offers a multisensory impression and amplifies the impact of trauma. Dully's physical change into a monkey also represents a kind of narrative overflow, driven by bodily feelings and perceptions. The third principle highlights how trauma disrupts sense of time, space and self. Shakako hearing the sounds of gunfire from Logar while praying in West Sacramento shows a change in perception and a gap between the sound and the location. Moreover, Dully's change into a monkey represents the confusion on this identity.

The narrative uses culture, memory and defiance to present trauma. The story uses surreal and symbolic elements such as Dully's transformation to illustrate how violence and ongoing conflicts dehumanize people and strip away their identities. This aligns with Craps' (2013) advocacy for a variety of artistic expressions. The story shows Dully's fascination with killings and horrific events as a way to resist the

forgetting of trauma which can be depicted from the title of the book he plans to publish: “The violence of erasure is perpetuated onto infinity in each instance of its denial” (p. 214). Dully’s personal struggles, like withdrawing into research, finding it hard to pray and feeling disconnected from religious traditions, shows how trauma can lead to identity crisis. The story also critiques Western scholarly approaches through the character of Professor Rabbani who is looking into propaganda materials on Afghan war. This story also highlights trauma as a collective memory that is persistent across time and generations (Schwab, 2010). Shakako’s story about escaping Logar shows how trauma is passed down through personal and shared histories. Furthermore, Dully’s focus on massacres and awful events, including his efforts to find unrecorded violence in Logar, shows how the effects of past violence enter his studies and everyday life: “Dully’s parents’ stories of forgotten massacres had served him well in the past” (p.195).

2.16. The Haunting of Hajji Hotak

The final story revolves around the lives of an Afghan family settled in West Sacramento, shown through the perspective of an outside observer. The protagonist, code named Hajji, is haunted by his past as a mujahid in Afghanistan. His family members are also shown dealing with personal struggles and cultural burdens. This story engages with the themes of trauma through narrative tropes suggested by Pederson (as cited in Kurtz, 2018). Silence is a narrative feature that helps portray the disruptive nature of trauma. This is showcased through in Hajji’s search for “you” which is filled with unspoken grief and loss. Similarly, Habibi suddenly leaving after discovering that her mother is ill highlights the unspoken impact of trauma such as sudden loss. This story also uses indirection through metaphors and allegories to suggest trauma. Lily becomes a vegetarian after she sees a duck get hit by a car which shows her inner pain and moral struggle after witnessing violence. Hajji’s habit of muttering Quranic verses during times of physical discomfort alludes to spiritual distress and a search for comfort amidst hardship. Habibi’s efforts to manage her family and their social events as well as their communal interactions further symbolize a form of resistance against her trauma of loss, displacement and migration. Repetition is another narrative technique used in the text. The repeated reference to Hajji’s injuries like his broken leg and old wounds from his time as a jihadi highlights

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the persistence of trauma in his life.

In addition to the above narrative techniques, applying Perderon's (2013) key principles for trauma analysis in literature shows the multifaceted reflection of trauma in narrative form. The first principle foregrounds the text and recognizes traumatic memories as memorable and expressive. Hajji's fall from the stairs is not understated and knowledge of his past leg injury counters the notion that trauma is suppressed. Similarly, Lily adopting vegetarianism and sketching ducks and ducklings "crying" and "dying" refers back to her trauma of witnessing a duck being maimed. In addition, this story portrays trauma through sensory and physical detail, which aligns with the second principle. Hajji's broken leg and injuries symbolize the lasting scars of war and displacement. His fall and inability to move, lying "on the floor, on his back," powerfully conveys the helplessness that trauma causes. The pooling of blood and water dripping from the attic trapdoor represents the overwhelming and detailed nature of traumatic memories. The third principle highlights how traumatic experiences can distort perceptions of time, space and reality. For example, after Hajji's fall the time continues despite him remaining "unmoving" which reflects a dislocation in temporality and bodily perception. In addition, Hajji's persistent search further underscores how trauma fragments reality and creates a non-linear experience. The narrative techniques and stylistic choices in this story align with Crap's (2013) call for culturally attuned storytelling. For example, Hajji muttering Quranic verses during his moments of pain or his act of performing an abulation subtly invokes spiritual resilience. The recitation of these verses reflects a form of resistance and coping that diverges from Western notions of trauma expression. Furthermore, the narrative has recurring themes of loss, injury, displacement and silence, which shows how trauma is passed down through generations (Schwab, 2010). Hajji's act of keeping up with the news of his homeland and involving the children in the process showcases generational transmission of trauma. This can be seen when Mo asks for an update after returning home from work. Another example includes the description of news that Hajji is watching while Marry oils his beard. This transgenerational transmission is further foregrounded when Mo immerses himself in the footage of global conflicts while wearing the same shawl that his father wore during his jihad days. These details underscore the value of stories rooted in culture that focus on

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resilience, resistance and the intricate nature of trauma.

Conclusion

The current study has extensively examined the narrative strategies employed by Kochai (2012) to depict individual and collective traumas. The research challenges the simplified portrayals of Afghan American life and identity in Western literary discourse; it reveals how narrative practices showcase resistance, resilience and cultural continuity in literature of marginalized communities. In addition, the analysis of this research reveals how deep psychological and cultural trauma experiences are passed down through generations. It examines these issues using narrative theories of trauma, inherited suffering within a combined theoretical framework. As a result, this research helps us understand trauma in literature better by centralizing marginalised voices.

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