

Abscission of Familial Bonding in Khaled Hosseini's *And the Mountains Echoed*

OPEN ACCESS

Manuscript ID:
ENG-2020-08033197

Volume: 8

Issue: 3

Month: June

Year: 2020

P-ISSN: 2320-2645

E-ISSN: 2582-3531

Received: 01.05.2020

Accepted: 20.05.2020

Published: 02.06.2020

Citation:

Hepzibah, Joy, C.
"Abscission of Familial Bonding in Khaled Hosseini's *And the Mountains Echoed*." *Shanlax International Journal of English*, vol. 8, no. 3, 2020, pp. 54–56.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.34293/english.v8i3.3197>




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C. Joy Hepzibah

Research Scholar, Department of English

CSI Bishop Appasamy College of Arts and Science, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6978-1288>

Abstract

*Adoption is a beautiful thing in the world when it comes to giving life to abandon children. But as said often, "The only guarantee if a child is adopted is trauma," the same adoption is so brutal when the child has been separated from the living family members and given for adoption. There is no worse pain than the pain of the children being separated from their birth family. This research throws light on abscission from the familial cohesion because of the critical situations in the family. Here, in this study, a young child is abscised from her own family by adoption. The permanent separation from her biological parents creates the feeling of separation and longingness in the novel, *And the Mountains Echoed*, written by Khaled Hosseini. Pari, is the adopted child, and the protagonist of the novel was in her immature age when she had been separated from her family. The importance of familial relationships is shown very deeply in this novel through the plight of the protagonist, Pari. After the years of separation, the same child who became a mature woman gets reunited with her brother. But the traumatic experience that she had undergone can never be undone.*

Keywords: Adoption, Abscission, Familial Cohesion, Trauma, Depression, Separation, Longingness, Reunion, etc.

Abscission from the Familial Bonding

Khaled Hosseini, is an Afghan-American writer who had thrown light on familial separation, and he has plotted a story that gained more importance of the family and its bonding. The protagonist of the novel *Pari*, was born in a united family and had the second birth order. Saboor, the father of *Pari* and *Abdullah*, left *Abdullah* and went in search of a job taking *Pari* with him.

Saboor left *Abdullah* to take care of his step mother and step brother. Even at a very early age, *Abdullah* had a huge love for his sister *Pari* and so unable to be alone without her, he follows them. When Saboor came to know this, he got very angry about his deed, and he hit on *Abdullah*'s ears hardly. "From the small red wagon up a head, *Pari* cried out his name, her voice high, shaking with apprehension 'Abollah'" (20)

Abdullah follows them even after bullying. Only Saboor knows in his mind that he is going to Kabul, not in search of a job, but to leave *Pari* to a wealthy family for adoption. Their poor state was the root cause of his decision. *Pari* always had the habit of hearing stories from her father. During the journey, she always asked her father to narrate the story for her. But when thinking that she will soon leave for the richest family, Saboor was broken, and he could not sleep overnight.

Saboor, at last, narrated the story of a good monster to *Pari* and *Abdullah*. Though the story was supernatural in construction, only Saboor knew the hidden meaning of the story in which 'abscission' was the plot which is similar to their life. In the story narrated by Saboor, there was a superstitious belief

among the community that a monster kills whoever it sees. Meanwhile, Baba Ayub likes his son Quias. As feared by Baba, the monster took his fourth son, Quias, and kept with him. Baba always searched for his son and finally found him. He was shocked to see that his child was given a good education by the monster and took good care of his son Quias more than Baba. Baba left his child because of his bright future.

Similarly, though Saboor knows that Pari will leave the family, for Pari's future, he decided to sell his daughter to the Whadatis family. The separation in her life happened when she left Abdullah, her loving brother, for the rest of her life. He took good care of her from the childhood days after their mother's death.

Mrs. Whadati came across many people and children, and she was desperately longing to adopt a child in their life. Saboor, thinking about Pari's future, he gave his daughter to whadatis family. After the arrival of Pari to their house, there was a turning point that the atmosphere of the house entirely changed. Happiness had spread among the family members.

This adoption by satisfied everyone to some extent, a storm had burst out in Abdullah's life because he loves Pari more than anyone else in his family. None in the village bothered to ask about Pari. "And there hadn't been any. No one in the village asked after Pari. No one even spoke her name. It astonished Abdullah how thoroughly she had vanished from their lives"(53)

Like Quias, who vanished from Baba's family. Pari also had vanished from their lives. Abdullah was longing for his sister and only had the heap of feathers as a memory of his sister. The village people, including the family members, forgot her. Pari was only four at the time when she got separated. She was very much scared about her new life and new family members at first. She missed her brother always. She forced herself to change and adopt the new life that she has got. It was the toughest situation for her upholding all the memories of the past and her family life especially, the memory that she had got from her brother. She had to change herself and adapt to the new life and new parents.

She learned to be affectionate towards them and grows along with them. On the other hand, Abdullah was also so desperate longing for his sister Pari. "The only good I took from that time was a measure of vindication about little Pari who by now must grow into a young woman. It eased my conscience that she was safe, from all this killing" (138)

Pari's life was not so smooth. As life goes on, Nila married Julien. Pari was not happy with her mother's decision. Soon Pari also was vindicated to a situation that Pari comes to contact with Julien. She longed for true love that she got only from her brother Abdullah. Life moved on like that with all the unhappiness. In the past life, Abdullah always narrated about Pari to his daughter. He always feels happy explaining about her and their childhood memories. Abdullah used to take his sister to school, and there they used to play in the playground. The bond between them is revealed in his memories. It was a heart-melting incident when Abdullah describes,

After school when I sat at the kitchen table sketching, she doodled patiently nearby or stood to look out the window until I finished, and we land outside to jump rope, are twin shadow hopping up and down on the concrete. No one knew about my games with Pari. Not even my father. She was my secret (399)

Years passed when Pari reached America when she met her brother, she did not have words to speak. Pari recollected all her childhood days, and she was very happy to see her brother after many years. By seeing her brother after many years, she could not control her emotions on him, and she burst into tears. Even after the reunion, they lost all the years of togetherness. After the reunion of many years, Pari was shocked that her brother was mentally affected, and by that time, he did not remember anything about Pari. By knowing that, she was grief-stricken. He also had the feathers which were given by Pari at the time of the separation, but he completely forgot their childhood memories, which shook her completely.

But something else to at the age of it all, at the rim of her vision and this is what draws her most- an elusive shadow. A figure, at once soft and hard. The soft hand is holding hers. The hardness of knees where she'd once rested her cheek. She searches for his face, but it evades her, slip

somewhere each time she turns it. Pari feels a whole opening up in her. There has been life, all her life, a great absence. From now, she has always unknown. “Brother, she says, unaware she is speaking unaware she is weeping.” (271)

In Saboor’s perspective, though Pari being liked by him so much, he gave her for adoption because they did not have any other option being a middle-class family. Saboor couldn’t meet even their daily needs. Instead of keeping his child and making her suffer from poverty, it was for the goodness of Pari that he gave her for adoption, hoping she would get a good education and wealthy life. But Pari missed her brother so much throughout her life and was longing for his love. Pari was also not happy with her marital life. Her husband died of a stroke, and she faced all the tragic experiences. At last, when she got a chance to meet her brother after many years, she could not be able to express the love that she had for him because; when she met him, he was out of his consciousness.

Being adopted children like Pari, they face many traumas throughout their life time. The previous life experiences of children, especially abandonment and loss of their family members, would be imprinted as the deep wounds in the minds of those children. Those adopted children have been permanently marked by traumatic experiences that create risks of chronic health conditions, depression, frustrations, and even early death in adulthood.

Author Details

C. Joy Hepzibah, Research Scholar, Department of English, CSI Bishop Appasamy College of Arts and Science, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India, **Email ID:** hepzibahjoy11@gmail.com.

The trauma that she had can never be undone. Pari longed to reunite with her family, especially with her brother. Even the reunification with the birth family was not so consoling in her life because Abdullah lost his consciousness. Her lost life never comes back. As well known, the month of June is considered to be the National Reunification Month. Instead of reuniting the separated family, these concerns should find ways to prevent the separations from occurring in the first place because even after the reunion, their life would not be normal because of the traumatic experiences that they had faced.

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