

## Interconnectedness in Khaled Hosseini's *And the Mountains Echoed*

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### Abstract

*And the Mountains Echoed* is a novel about the interconnectedness of all human beings - it is no surprise that compassion is among the most important themes. At times, the characters make choices aiming to benefit only themselves, but at many other points they choose to help other people. Hosseini poses some complicated questions related to this theme: for which people do the most compassion for how long are we obligated to help these people and at what point does compassion become a kind of selfishness a way to fight one's own sense of guilt.

**Keywords:** interconnectedness, hearkening, Taliban, Soviet-Afghan.

Oxford Dictionary gives meaning of the word 'interconnectedness' "talk about have small actions huge consequences" (281). The characters in *And the Mountains Echoed* make decisions that they only see as affecting themselves or the people around them, yet their decisions have huge effects on other people and even affect future generations to come. Saboor is a perspective, Afghan labourer. He has two children, Abdullah and Pari. He wanted to sell his daughter because of her future life. Pari is three years old only. She and her brother very much bond of love with one another. Abdullah has good knowledge about Pari. Saboor's decision makes such interconnectedness with huge turning point of this novel. This small decision makes such huge problems in human relationships and their feelings. Pari has good lifestyle and studies with a decision by her father. It would affect whole family in dozen years later.

The way human activities interconnect with the environment. PariII is the daughter of Abdullah this character reflects some interconnectedness in between Pari and PariII. Within memory of his sister only he selected his daughter name as PariII. This information shows the bond of love in between the siblings. It is reflected his daughter's name also. Abdullah and Pari had the habit of bedtime story. In each day, Saboor says fairytale with angel and princess. But that day Saboor reveals the real story about one poor farmer and his son. Words are historically unfit in this situation. But that words interconnectedness comes after in following incidents. Abdullah and Pari think about these and all. Saboor begins his story about former named Baba Ayub He lived in a village called Maidan Sabz and he worked extremely hard to feed his large family. He loved his family, especially his youngest child whose name was Qais. He had a critical situation to sacrifice his child.

Your son does not remember you, the div continued. This is his life now, and you saw for yourself his happiness. He is provided here with the finest food and cloths, with friendship and affection. He receives tutoring in the arts and languages and in the sciences, and in the ways of wisdom and charity. He wants for nothing. Someday, when he is a man, he may choose to leave, and he shall be free to do so. I suspect he will touch many lives with his kindness and bring happiness to those trapped in sorrow. (KH,12)

Hosseini begins in an uncertain mode, without revealing the identity of his narrator at all. Hosseini will continue to structure with a new point of view and different characters. Thus, part of the experience of reading the novel is situating the many different characters life experience. As the opening story fairytale is suggested that the narrator's story will be important and symbolic, and will set the tone

for the novel to follow. It establishes the idea of a strong bond between a father and his child. The strength of the parent-child relationship will motivate many of the characters' key actions.

There is some big event that led to Parwana's permanent injury. It also gives the vastness of Hosseini's project in the novel. It seems to be told from a different character's perspective all of them interconnected in various ways. Hosseini begins by not only disguising the narrator but also mentioning totally new related characters. It is also noteworthy that it does not correspond to any particular year. It will cover a far longer period of time, signaling the escalating scope and ambition of this novel. Mrs. Wahdati is the first familiar name in this letter. The introduction of new, non-Afghan characters continues to widen the scope of the novel. Nabi is the narrator, but he talks about himself very little. He is an observer first and foremost, and comments about him usually arrive as asides, as they do in this case. Nabi is sexually inexperienced, but certainly heterosexual a fact that will become important later on. His motifs only separate the siblings as his narration,

But all these years later, I still feel my heart clench when the memory of it forces its way to the fore. How could it not? I took those two helpless children, in whom love of the simplest and purest kind had found expression, and I tore one from the other. I will never forget the sudden emotional mayhem. Pari slung over my shoulder, panic-stricken, kicking her legs, shrieking, *Abollah! Abollah!* as I whisked her away. Abdullah, screaming his sister's name, trying to fight past his father. Nila, wide-eyed, her mouth covered with both hands, perhaps to silence her own scream. It weighs on me. All this time has passed, Mr. Markos, and it still weighs on me. (KH, 117)

It is important that Nabi and Nila first interact as friends through storytelling. While this is not exactly surprising Nila is a writer herself, and would naturally want to hear stories from other people. It is warmth keeping in mind that the other characters in the novel also use art stories, photographs, etc. to share their feelings with each other. It is a constant mystery in *And the Mountains Echoed* why certain characters feel connected with one another. Sometimes, the characters are related by blood like Abdullah and Pari, and sometimes they are strangers. Surprisingly, Nabi's for whatever reason is as much explanation there is just no way to explain why certain people feel such an intimate bond from such a young age. The theme of forgetting returns powerfully, again hearkening back to the *div* story.

Gholam is obviously living in poverty, like the old man who takes care of him. Extreme economic inequality is a hallmark of a corrupt government and two extremes of Afghan society but represented by children, who naturally feel a sense of equality and companionship, despite the deep divides between their economic states. Gholam is Abdullah's nephew, and so at least have a better reference point for novel. At the moments reminded that Hosseini has set himself the enormous, ambitious project of telling a story that unfolds across six decades and many continents. The Taliban figure is prominently mentioned by Hosseini's novels. They are not mentioned by name, The Commander, who fought in rebel groups during the Soviet-Afghan War, is a member of the Taliban, the terrorist group that wreaked havoc on Afghanistan during the 2000s. Gholam does not have the luxury of having Adel's childhood innocence he is all too aware of violence, poverty, and war crimes.

Iqbal learned how to make bricks from Saboor who, as the novel was beginning, was preparing to do work on the Wahdatis' mansion. It is not immediately clear why Gholam waited to tell Adel this important information. Perhaps Gholam was looking for a friend in Adel, and did not want to spoil their friendship before it even began. It is also possible that Gholam himself is just learning about his family's property situation, and tells Adel as soon as he realizes the truth. In this heartbreaking, Adel 'comes of age' he realizes that his father is not the idol he had thought he was. As a result of this, he comes to pity his stepmother, recognizing that she is a sad, lonely woman who has to lie to herself to keep her sanity. Hosseini leaves Adel to an uncertain fate do not know if he will grow up to emulate his father half-heartedly, or if he will break away from his father's dangerous influence. Either way, this is a depressing conclusion for a child to reach.

In the novel *And the Mountains Echoed*, Hosseini gets to the point right away, rather than drawing out our introductions to the characters Abdullah and his daughter precisely the people it seemed

the novel ought to finish with as long as the original Pari shows up too. It is instructive to compare the two Paris, Pari and her niece. Pari II seems utterly devoted to Abdullah, much as Pari herself was as a child. Pari II is also intelligent and perceptive enough to recognize that her father still misses his sister enormously, despite having been separated from her for decades. Pari II's mother, as many of the characters in the novel, is 'dead on arrival'.

By remembering their nursery rhyme, the siblings not only confirm who they are in a literal, straightforward way, but they also 'unlock' other memories of each other, of which they had previously been only dimly aware. Art is a powerful force for uniting strangers partly because it can summon such unexpected memories and emotions. Instead of lingering on the encounter between Abdullah and Pari, Hosseini cuts away from it, leaving it up to our imaginations what they say to each other. The new problem becomes how Pari II will take care of her family. The implicit message here is that the universe knows no happy endings there are long-awaited, tearful reunions, but no story ever ends without a new one beginning.

It is clear in this moment that Abdullah is suffering from dementia brought on by old age. This is heartbreaking for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that Abdullah has always been able to remember Pari, his little sister, no matter how many decades elapsed. Now, he forgets Pari, not because he does not care about her. Because his body and mind simply are not strong enough. By agreeing to take care of Abdullah year after year, Pari II has structured her entire life around her father, to the point where she feels aimless unless she is sacrificing her own happiness and creativity for his sake.

Hosseini throws another wrench into the neatness of Pari and Abdullah's reunion, with the fact that for the majority of her life, Pari did not remember Abdullah at all. Only recently has there been a tragically ironic reversal of roles, so that Pari remembers Abdullah and Abdullah forgets Pari. Hosseini steers the reader toward a frustrating, moving, but ultimately peaceful conclusion. Pari and Abdullah cannot ever know each other perfectly there will always be things separating them age, time, distance, etc.. But the image of Abdullah and Pari pressed close together implies that perhaps it is enough that they were together for a short time perhaps it should not expect a 'happily ever after'. Hosseini brings his book to an end, and yet he is also attacking the very concept of an ending.

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