



INHERITED WOUNDS AND TRANSGENERATIONAL TRAUMA: ANALYZING MICHAELIDES'S *THE SILENT PATIENT* USING POSTMEMORY THEORY

Umm-e-Hasnat

uzikhan268@gmail.com

Government Graduate College, Gojra Road, Jhang (Pakistan).

Rida Muzaffar

ridamuzaffar586@gmail.com

Government Graduate College, Gojra Road, Jhang (Pakistan).

Abstract

The Silent Patient is a psychological thriller novel written by Alex Michaelides. The story revolves around Alicia Berenson, a famous painter who is both a victim and a villain of the story. She shoots several times at her husband, Gabriel, and then stays silent. She never speaks again, even to defend herself. She refused to speak, and it became a mystery. Theo Faber, a psychotherapist, takes an interest in her silence and starts to treat her. The story is also narrated by Theo. As the novel progresses, her diary and paintings reveal Alicia's psychological and past experiences, which she had in her childhood. The novel reveals that silence is also a defense mechanism. *The silent patient* emphasizes that healing is only possible when we share our feelings with others. As the novel ends, it makes a twist that Theo himself is deeply connected to Alicia's crime. This research focuses on how silence is a result of inherited trauma, and shows how art is an expression of thoughts and how the rejection in childhood makes the villainous psyches. Other researchers focus on crime stories or a feminist perspective, but this research focuses on Marianne Hirsch's postmemory theory, which states that trauma is transferred from one generation to the next and also affects those who never experienced it directly.

Keywords: *Betrayal, Murder, Psychological Thriller, Silence, Therapy, Trauma, Twist Ending*

Corresponding Author: Ume-e-Hasnat (Government Graduate College, Gojra Road, Jhang (Pakistan).)

Email: uzikhan268@gmail.com

1. Introduction

The Silent Patient (2019) is a novel by Alex Michaelides, a Cypriot British author. Alex studied psychotherapy, so his work is full of crime, suspense, murder and psychology behind these things. Similarly, this novel illustrates the treatment of women in society. Women are labelled with names like "pure evil" and "a monster" which shows how they are blamed without anyone knowing their stories. The novel also tells about the reality of life, how couples are judged through outside appearance, as after the murder of Gabriel, his brother said in the trial that Gabriel was in love with Alicia. The novel also depicts the strong side of women; Alicia never cried and stayed unemotional. Alcestis and Alicia Berenson are the same, as Alcestis sacrificed her life for her husband, and Alicia sacrificed her voice. The act of sacrificing for a husband is universal and timeless.

The novel highlights art as a modern form of expression; art is more powerful than words, as Alicia Berenson uses art to resist and escape from the world. The novel doesn't repeat the old style of mystery suspense novel it's main focus is to show the psyche of humans instead to find the killer of the story that who killed Gabriel it's main focus on the psyche of Alicia Berenson who bears traumas from childhood and then also bears the trauma of her husband as the trauma of her husband betrayal. Theo Faber was a psychotherapist who took an interest in Alicia's and Gabriel's case and then came to know that his wife also cheated on him and was in an affair with Gabriel. Husbands marginalize women but have affairs with other women, exposing the double standard in relationships.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Alex Michaelides novel *The Silent Patient* is read as a psychological thriller or a story of crime and mystery. From classical to modern writers, they showed it how trauma can't be seen but transfer from one generation to the next. Modern theorists focus on how unresolved trauma, silently transferred and affects the lives of those who never experienced it. This research uses Marianne Hirsch's postmemory theory to show how trauma transferred from one generation to another through silence, storytelling, family myths, and inherited memories. In the novel, Alicia Berenson's silence is seen as madness or resistance, but it is due to her childhood trauma and inherited pain. This study highlights how inherited trauma shapes the human psyche and affects mental health.

1.2. Research Objectives

The aims and objectives of this research are;

- To explore how the novel presents silence as a result of inherited trauma.
- To expose how the novel uses Modern art as an expression of thoughts.
- To find out how childhood trauma and rejection shape villainous psyches.

1.3. Research Questions

- How does the novel present silence as a result of inherited trauma?

- How does the novel use modern art as an expression of thoughts?
- How does the childhood trauma and rejection shape villainous psyches?

1.4. Research Significance

This research focuses on the Alex Michaelides novel *The Silent Patient*, which is a psychological thriller that explores silence, trauma and betrayal. This research uses Marianne Hirsch's postmemory theory. She explained that trauma is not only suffered by one person, but it is passed from generation to the next, and trauma is transferred through silence, storytelling, art, and family myths and affecting people who never lived through trauma themselves. After the murder of Gabriel, Alicia Berenson's silence is not only due to her husband's betrayal, but also because she suffered from her childhood, and her silence is inherited. Due to her father's emotional rejection after her mother's death, it shaped her reaction to the betrayal of her husband. Many readers and previous critics studied the novel as a mystery or as a feminist work, but this research focuses on the memory, silence and trauma and art as a modern form of communication which helps other literature to discuss trauma theory. This research also focuses on how childhood trauma shapes our lives, and it focuses on it that we must pay attention to women and their mental health.

2. Literature Review

The literature review introduces those writers and researchers who already said on this topic. It tells which things have already discussed and ideas shared about this topic. This study focuses on the silence in literature, which becomes an important point of the research. Many writers talk about mental illness, memory, and trauma, but no one talks about the silence. They discuss how the past silently suffers or affects the present life, but they didn't focus on the silence of how silence is a powerful way of expressing pain. Therefore literature review highlights the previous research and shows the gap that this research aims to fill.

Hossain (2021) uses Bion's concept of containment and Winnicott's idea of the holding environment. Alicia's silence can be explained through these theories. when a caretaker does not provide emotional support, the child grows unbalanced. Bion, Winnicott and Freud's concepts show how Alicia's father's rejection, her mother's suicide and betrayal of her husband all damaged her sense of containment. Alicia's muteness can be seen through a psycholinguistic view that if anyone feels unsafe and has a lack of containment, they mute themselves, as Alicia does; it is not due to mental instability, but they refuse to speak. Alicia shows her innerself through painting as she paint ALCESTIS, it is a nonverbal communication. Firstly, Alicia feels safe with Gabriel, and he is her comfort, but later, his betrayal breaks her containment. This article shows how Alicia's trauma broke her containment, and betrayal explains her silence (Hossain, 2021).

Rana & Khan (2023) applied the theory of Narrative Medicine by Rita Charon. This approach highlights that healing does not come only through words but also through

listening. In the novel, Alicia's silence is not due to emotionlessness, but it is due to suppressed feelings, and those who are silent express their feelings through actions, as Alicia expresses them through art and diary. These hidden foam of expression are described as "Narrative Medicine" because it helps to release her pain. *The Silent Patient* says that silence is a tool of expression, emotion and desires. Alicia Berenson uses the myth of ALCESTIS, which shows her own suffering and pain. Theo Faber believes that healing comes from listening carefully and paying attention to silence, not only through talking. It focuses on the idea that storytelling in all forms brings healing, even when words are absent (Rana & Khan, 2023).

Basumatary (2025) uses the idea of Marianne Hirsch's postmemory theory to explain how trauma is passed from one generation to the next. It explains how children inherit painful memories from their parents even if they did not experience by themselves. In this novel, trauma and silence play a major role in shaping lives. This article not only focuses on Amir's guilt, but it also discusses the main issues of war, political violence and exile in Afghanistan that shape the lives of every character, and they create collective trauma for society. Basumatary argues that silence and hidden memories shape the lives of Amir and Sohrab, showing how trauma is transferred into the next generation. Amir's betrayal of Hassan in his childhood and later when he rescued Sohrab shows how silence affects the next generation. He does not explain this theory well and does not add other scholars' points. It is also a very short analysis and does not have a depth analysis (Basumatary, 2025).

The article by Fadilah and Marcaida (2024) looks at *Namaku Alam* by Leila Salikha Chudori using Marianne Hirsch's idea of postmemory, which is about how trauma is transferred from one generation to the next through stories, myths and objects, even when children didn't experience it. The novel deals with the trauma of the 1965 Indonesian tragedy. The writer explained that even the protagonist of the novel Segara Alam was born in 1965 and does not have the consciousness to understand that event, but this trauma was in his family, and it transferred to him. He has intergenerational trauma as he is torn between where he belongs and has identity issues. Old photos and letters, which are unspoken stories, remind him of the past. These are not just things but carriers of history and transfer pain from the past to the present. It is important work because it shows how literature keeps alive trauma and how objects and stories help to connect past and present trauma (Fadilah and Marcaida, 2024).

Brewster (2019) uses the theory of Marianne Hirsch. Postmemory is a theory which focuses on how trauma is transferred from one generation to the next, even when they don't experience it directly. Alice Pung's book *Her Father's Daughter* is about her father's painful past, which he spent in Cambodia during the Khmer Rouge violence. Brewster (2019) explains that Pung's memoir comes from her father; it is not just her story but her

Father's story. That's what Brewster (2019) called it postmemoir because it comes after and about their memories. This article shows Pung's writing, which is about silence and in fragments which passed from her father. The word Diasporisation refers to the migrants which carry inherited memories and stories with them, and then these stories become a part of that place. Pung's writing shows that trauma is not personal but collective, and her writing is a bridge between family trauma and wider history (Brewster, 2019).

Christina Howes's (2016) article using Marianne Hirsch's postmemory to show how stories carry the pain of WW2 in later generations. The idea of Michael Rothberg's traumatic realism is also used to show how writing is used to express trauma; writers show it through ordinary life scenes, not through the big events. Bragg shows the life of families after the war, as in the novel, fathers return from war and try to live a normal life and how their families also suffered and live silently and keep distance from each other; they live together physically, but emotionally have distance. As Hirsch's postmemory states that trauma is transferred through silence so here Bragg also used silence in their characters to show the pain and trauma (Christina Howes, 2016).

Dana Bădulescu's (2012) article using the idea of postmemory by Marianne Hirsch, which is the idea about how trauma transfers from one generation to the next through stories and silence. Vosganian's novel is about the Armenian genocide and other violent events that happened in the 20th century. He wrote this book through hearing the stories and seeing the objects and living with the silence who suffered that event because he himself never experienced it directly. His book is a collective memory for the whole century, and this is not only about Armenians but also about Jews and Romanians who suffered during the war. It becomes a national trauma, not just a personal trauma. This article shows that postmemory alive the past alive in the present and shows that trauma is not finished but transferred to the next generations. This article also shows that Vosganian play an important role as he is also a writer and witness for those and speaks for those who were silenced. It shows that literature keeps the memories alive (Dana Bădulescu, 2012).

Yuliya Kazanova's (2022) article uses the postmemory theory by Marianne Hirsch, which focuses on the trauma that was inherited, as in "*The Museum of Abandoned Secrets*," which focuses on how the past still shapes Ukrainian life. Kazanova (2022) explains that Zabuzhko's novels tell the story of the Ukrainian people through family and national history. The main character of the novel did not experience those events, but still feels the pain and sadness which is inherited from their parents or grandparents. Old pictures, stories and memories shape the new generation. This book is about the whole country's struggle, not just one family's struggle as Ukraine suffers as a nation. Kazanova (2022) points out that Ukrainians have an "instinct to resist evil". People fought for their identity against oppression (Yuliya Kazanova, 2022).

3. Theoretical Framework

This study is based on Alex Michaelides' novel *The Silent Patient* and uses the Marianne Hirsch's postmemory Theory. This research focuses on how trauma and silence transfer from one generation to the next through stories, silence and myths. It shows how trauma affects the next generation, even if they didn't directly experience it. *The Silent Patient* is a psychological novel, and this research explores how inherited trauma shapes Alicia Berenson's life. When she murdered her husband, why did she stay silent, and her art and silence show her past trauma. The objectives of this research are: to explore how the novel presents silence as a result of inherited trauma Means Alicia's silence is not just a refusal to talk, but an emotional trauma which she carries from her past. The second objective of the research is to expose how the novel uses modern art as an expression of thoughts. Alicia does paintings to express her inner self through art. And third objective is to find out how childhood trauma and rejection shape villainous psyches, as Alicia emotionally rejects her father, and it affects her psyche, which shows that the childhood trauma made her a psychologically ill and imbalanced person. This research is using qualitative research because it focuses on the interpretation, meaning of the novel and does not focus on the data or numbers. It analyzes the novel characters, symbols and events through the postmemory theory by Hirsch. The primary source is Alex Michaelides novel *The Silent Patient*, and secondary sources are articles related to trauma and postmemory.

This research is using postmemory theory by Marianne Hirsch to study Alex Michaelides's novel *The Silent Patient*. The word "Postmemory" literally means memory after memory. The word Postmemory helps to understand how trauma, silence and pain transfer from one generation to the next generation, even when the second generation didn't directly experience it. Hirsch defines it as:

"The relationship that the generation after bears to the personal, collective and cultural trauma of those who came before." (Hirsch, 1997). It means that the second generation forms an emotional bond with their parents' painful past, but they feel it and imagine it, and are emotionally affected by it. Their lives are shaped by those memories and pasts which they never lived. This theory explains how trauma, silence and memory transfer from one generation to the next, even when the second generation didn't experience it directly. Postmemory focuses on how trauma is transferred from stories, family myths and even from silence from one generation to the next. As in the novel, it can be seen how the main character, Alicia Berenson, is silent, and art shows her trauma.

Marianne Hirsch is a Romanian born American scholar and literary critic born in 1949, known for her work in memory studies, feminist Theory, and visual culture. She is a professor at Columbia University and has written many influential books on trauma and generational trauma. Hirsch's Jewish background and her family's experience during the Holocaust deeply shaped her research interests. She grew up among the survivors of war and displacement, and she became interested in how stories, photos and silence pass

emotional experience in the next generation. She introduced the idea of postmemory in her essay " *Family Pictures: Maus, Mourning, and Postmemory* in 1992 and later expanded it in her book *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory* (1997), *The Generation of Postmemory* (2012), (*Family Pictures: Maus, Mourning, and Postmemory* (1992); *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory* (1997); *The Generation of Postmemory* (2012).

Through her work, Hirsch explored how children of Holocaust survivors inherit their parents' experience emotionally through stories, pictures and silence even when they never lived through those events. From this, she explained that trauma is passed through emotionally, not from the direct experience, but through memories, silence and imagination. These children of survivors carry this pain without realizing it. Hirsch says that postmemory depends on imagination and emotional connection. The second generation feels guilty, and they emotionally attach to their parents' trauma. Their past shapes their present life. The main concept of Marianne Hirsch's theory is: Trauma does not end in one generation, but it transfers from one generation to the next. The second generation remembers the trauma through emotions, not through experience. Trauma is transferred through storytelling, family myths, art and diaries or even through silence. Sometimes parents share their past trauma with their children, or even some stay silent, but their silence also has a message, and they create emotional distance. Hirsch shows that silence speaks louder than words. Hirsch also shows the difference between memory and postmemory. Memory have those who directly experience the events, while postmemory belongs to those who didn't directly experience the events but transfer from their parents. Hirsch's theory also overlaps with the other theories. Caruth, in *Unclaimed Experience* (1996), explains that trauma is not experienced at the time when it happens, but later it appears through dreams and memories. Hirsch's theory also shows how trauma returns in the next generation; this generation didn't experience it directly, but trauma returns as an inherited emotion (Caruth 1996). Derrida's concept of Hauntology, in which the past haunts the person also similar to Hirsch's postmemory theory, in which the past haunts the present (Spectres de Marx 1993).

Freud's idea explains how people unconsciously repeat the traumatic experience because they didn't fully process it. Hirsch extend it and shows that trauma didn't repeat in the same person but across the generations.

In Alex Michaelides' *The Silent Patient*, the main character, Alicia Berenson, reflects Hirsch's idea of postmemory. When she murdered her husband, and then she stayed silent, it can be seen through the inherited trauma and her childhood emotional rejection by her father. Her father's silence and blame for her mother's death leave emotional wounds that shape her identity. Alicia expresses her feelings through art and doesn't speak; her art becomes a way of expressing her trauma, which is a key idea of postmemory. Postmemory

helps to understand that Alicia Berenson's silence is not due to her mental instability, but it is due to the burden she carries from her past.

4. Analysis and Discussion

This chapter focuses on the analysis and discussion of the data collected for this research. In the earlier chapters of this research, is discussed the background and introduction of *The Silent Patient* and Marianne Hirsch's postmemory theory is used. This research focuses on how childhood trauma shapes our lives, and rejection in childhood shapes our villainous psyche, and how modern art is used as an expression of thoughts. Trauma is transferred from one generation to the next silently.

The first research question of this study talks about *The silent patient*, Alicia's silence is a mysterious act in the novel. Many characters think she is mentally unstable or interpret according to their own interpretation, but her silence is also a powerful form of communication, which reveals her past psychological wounds that shape her behaviour. As Alex Michaelides says; "The truth is, if Alicia weren't mad - that is, if her silence were merely an act, a performance for the benefit of the jury - then it had worked." (Michaelides, 2019, p.14). This quotation shows that Alicia's silence reflects her past trauma, and her silence is also an act of communication which she cannot speak into words.

Alicia survived physically, but her family problems and emotional neglect affected her inner self. This novel emphasizes that emotional and psychological damage is more severe than physical harm. As Michaelides says;

No, Alicia didn't die... not physically.' He left the word hanging. Physically, on the other hand...? You mean something happened - to kill her spirit... to kill her sense of being alive (Michaelides, 2019, p.178).

This shows that trauma affects the inner self; a person is alive but dead spiritually. Alicia died from inner self, and she struggles to communicate with others, which shows her trauma in her psyche.

Alicia Berenson's emotional struggle is due to her childhood trauma and due to her emotional rejection because she never experienced healthy ways of communication and sharing her trauma. She expresses her trauma through her actions. Her madness or self-harm attempts are not due to madness but emotional suffering that cannot be expressed through words. As Michaelides says;

It was suicidal behaviour, but I don't believe she intended to die. She was too narcissistic to ever really want to hurt herself. She took an overdose, more for show than anything else. She was communicating her distress to Gabriel - she was always trying to get his attention, poor bastard. If I hadn't had to respect her confidentiality, I'd have warned him to get the hell out (Michaelides, 2019, p.251).

This shows that Alicia self-harm attempts are not for death, but it's for help because she has no healthy ways to express her pain and trauma, but she uses actions to communicate. She was misunderstood as she was labelled as "narcissistic". In her childhood, she was emotionally rejected, and in her adulthood, she was also ignored as no one listened to her emotionally; she always communicated through silence and dramatic actions. Her silence shows her psychological trauma.

Alicia's silence is not her personality but due to her environment in which she grew up. Her family's lack of emotional communication, her Father's emotional rejection after her mother's death, left a lasting impact on her personality. Due to her family's lack of communication, she never learned to express her emotions. As Michaelides says;

She was always pretty silent. We all were, as a family... We never talked. Apart from my mum, giving orders.' 'And what about Alicia's father? Vernon? What was he like?' 'Vernon didn't really talk much. He wasn't right in the head, not after Eva died. He was never the same after that... Neither was Alicia, come to that (Michaelides, 2019, p.267).

This shows that Alicia's silence is due to her family environment. Silence is normal in her house, and she also faces a lack of emotional expression, which makes her isolated. Alicia's silence and trauma are due to her family relationships. Her silence is not random but shows her personal trauma.

In *The Silent Patient*, Alicia cannot speak, but she expresses herself through painting. She cannot speak, but unconsciously she expresses her feelings through her paintings. Her suppressed feelings can be seen through art. As Michaelides says;

Incredible that I didn't see it before. Somehow, without intending to, I've put Gabriel up there instead. It's his face I've painted, his body. Isn't that insane? So I must surrender to that and do what the painting demands of me. I know now that when I have an agenda for a picture, a predetermined idea of how it should turn out, it never works (Michaelides, 2019, p.65).

This quotation shows that Alicia's art reveals her true thoughts even when she is not aware of it as she unconsciously makes a picture of Gabriel, which shows her subconscious feelings. As words show, "I must surrender to that and do what the painting demands of me" shows that art guides her and is a source through which her buried emotions came out.

Alicia's painting does not simply tell the events but shows her inner turmoil. She uses painting to express memories which she cannot talk about, especially her childhood trauma. Through painting, she expresses fear or unresolved trauma which she cannot speak about. As Michaelides says;

I looked at it. The painting had the same photo-realistic quality as the rest of Alicia's work. It was an almost photographic representation of the car

accident that killed her mother. A woman's body was sitting in the wreck, slumped at the wheel. She was bloodied and obviously dead. Her spirit, her soul, was rising from the corpse, like a large bird with yellow wings, soaring to the heavens (Michaelides, 2019, p.159).

This quotation shows that Alicia uses art to express her inner self, as she never talks about the incident of her mother but she paints the scene of her mother's death. This shows that she has trauma in her mind. She cannot speak, but through painting she communicate and express her inner self.

When Theo gave her space to paint and express those feelings which she could not speak, when she completed the painting, it was a symbolic picture which gave a message. Her art became the only way to express her emotions. As Michaelides says;

Alicia had painted a red-brick building, a hospital, unmistakably The Grove. It was on fire, burning to the ground. Two figures were discernible on the fire escape. A man and woman escaping the fire. The woman was unmistakably Alicia, her red hair the same colour as the flames. I recognized the man as myself. I was carrying Alicia in my arms, holding her aloft while the fire licked at my ankles. I couldn't tell if I were depicted in the act of rescuing Alicia - or about to throw her in the flames (Michaelides, 2019, pp.194-195).

This quotation shows that Alicia didn't speak, but she communicated through painting and burning the hospital building of hospital shows her inner self that she is trapped in the hospital, The Grove. Fire represents fear and trauma. In painting, it can be seen that Theo carries her, which have mixed feelings; it is not clear that is Theo is saving her or harming her.

The novel shows that no baby is born evil; their environment makes them villainous. As the character of Alicia is emotionally disturbed because she has childhood trauma and psychological wounds due to their parents' emotional neglect. She shot Gabriel because she had unresolved childhood trauma. As Michaelides says;

Winnicott put it: A baby cannot hate the mother, without the mother first hating the baby... But something goes wrong, depending on the circumstances into which we are born, and the house in which we grow up. A tormented, abused child can never take revenge in reality, as she is powerless and defenceless, but she can and must- harbour vengeful fantasies in her imagination... Something bad happened to Alicia, probably early in her childhood, to provoke the murderous impulses that emerged all those years later... That Alicia did so points to something disordered in her internal world. That's why it was crucial for me to understand what life had been like for her in this house; to find out what happened to shape her, make her into

the person she became - a person capable of murder (Michaelides, 2019, p.141).

This quotation shows that no baby is born a villain; their environment makes them villainous. Childhood trauma shaped their adult psyche. Alicia's act of shooting Gabriel is not just a random thing, but she has unresolved childhood trauma due to she took this action. In her childhood, she was powerless, so she has anger inside her which unconsciously shows in her adulthood.

Alicia shattered from inside after the death of her mother. She was also blamed for her mother's death, and her father wished that Alicia had died instead of her mother. It left a wound on Alicia's personality. As Michaelides says;

Vernon was going on about how much he loved Eva - how he couldn't live without her. My girl, he kept saying, my poor girl, my Eva... Why did she have to die? Why did it have to be her? Why didn't Alicia die instead? (Michaelides, 2019, p.271).

This quotation shows it. Children always want love and affection from their parents, but when they listened to these types of things for, they shattered their souls. This incident is the most important incident in her life, which shattered her soul. Parents' comments and appreciation makes a good personality in Children, but when Alicia had hatred for her father, her psyche was damaged. Her psyche is not evil, but in childhood, emotional rejection made this type of psyche.

Alicia's character shows how a child's psyche is affected when parents reject their children. After her mother's death, her father does not support her emotionally and also blames her for her mother's death. Alicia lost her mother as well as her father. Alicia's childhood trauma also does not heal, and it shows later in her life. Their repressed trauma shows in later life. As Michaelides says;

Imagine it hearing your father, the very person you depend upon for your survival, wishing you dead...Over time, you would lose contact with the origins of your trauma, dissociate the roots of its cause, and forget. But one day, all the hurt and anger would burst forth, and you'd pick up a gun. You'd visit that rage not upon your father, who was dead and forgotten and out of reach, but upon your husband, the man who had taken his place in your life... You'd shoot him five times in the head, without possibly even knowing why (Michaelides, 2019, pp. 272-273).

This quotation shows that Alicia has a villainous psyche due to her father's rejection. When children hear words that they should die, it destroys their personality. Children didn't express their trauma and buried it, which shows later in their lives. Alicia shot her husband, which is not random, but it was a repressed and unresolved trauma.

This research shows that Alicia's silence is not because she doesn't feel anything, but it shows her past trauma in her childhood. Previous researchers found that Alicia's father's rejection and her mother's suicide left her emotionally hurt, and when her husband betrayed her, she shot her husband and stayed silent because her old pains came back. This proves that past trauma hurt the person and left a long-term effect. Some other researchers also said that silence can be a way to express feelings, as Alicia shares her inner self through her paintings and diary, which means even if people can't talk but they still can share their feelings through art or actions. Other researchers focus on a crime feminism perspective, but this research uses Marianne Hirsch's postmemory theory, which explains that trauma stays in the human mind even when they don't directly experience it.

5. Conclusion

The overall discussion of *The Silent Patient* shows how the novel explores the long-term trauma from childhood to adulthood. Alicia Berenson's emotional rejection by her father after the death of her mother made her a villainous psychopath; she stayed silent due to their family relationships. She expresses their feelings through paintings and a diary. The story also tells that the process of healing can happen when we face the truth and share our feelings with others; if we stay silent, we become alone. *The silent patient* is not just a story about crime but about the pain that people carry inside and won't be able to share it with others. Alicia's silence after murdering her husband shows her inner pain. Her paintings show her inner self, which words cannot show. Theo's character shows that healing someone is not as easy as he tries to read the Alicia mind and wants to heal her but he faces difficulties. The story also shows that the past shapes our lives. Silence and pain do not just affect one person but also affects the other people around them. Alicia bears the pains in her childhood, and it was her repressed memories that lately unconsciously show in her later life.

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