

Trauma and Literature

الأدب وأثر الفاجعة فيه

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Abstract:

This thesis presents a psychoanalytic study of selected war fiction, with special reference to *Hiroshima Mon Amour* (1959) by Marguerite Duras and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) by Khaled El-Hosseini as exemplary of war novels reflecting two distinctive historical, political, and cultural experiences. The novels are studied under the umbrella of Sigmund Freud's trauma theory adopting qualitative, analytical, and comparative methodology. *Hiroshima Mon Amour* is written by the French novelist Marguerite, Duras, in which she portrays World War II and the destructive impact of the atomic bomb handling major themes revolving around the effect of trauma collectively and individually to reflect her desire to reveal how wars can destroy countries and subsequently induce psychic issues upon the individuals experiencing them. On the other hand, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) is written by the Afghan American author Khaled El-Hosseini, illustrating the challenges and struggles of the Afghan People at the time of war and invasion from the Soviet invasion till the Taliban occupation through using his two female protagonists to depict different individual traumas experienced by the Afghan people. Thus, the novels selected are examined as representatives of the work of two authors belonging to different cultural and political backgrounds striving to trace the effect of the collective trauma induced by wars on the communal memory as well as the individual psyche of their witnesses.

Keywords: Trauma, psychoanalysis, war fiction, Marguerite Duras, Khaled El-Hosseini, Japan, Afghanistan.

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الملخص:

تقدم هذه الرسالة قراءة من منظور تحليلي نفسي لمجموعة مختارة من روايات الحرب، مع إشارة خاصة إلى الحب في هيروشيما (1959) لمارجريت دوراس وألف شمس ساطعة (2007) لخالد الحسيني كنموذج لروايات الحرب التي تعكس خبرتين مختلفتين تاريخياً وسياسياً وثقافياً. تتبنى الدراسة نظرية "الفاجعة" لسيغموند فرويد باستخدام منهج متنوع؛ نوعي، تحليلي، مقارنة. تصور مارجريت دوراس في روايتها الحب في هيروشيما، الحرب العالمية الثانية، والتأثير المدمر للقنبلة الذرية، وتتناول موضوعات رئيسية تدور حول تأثير الحروب علي حث الفواجع بشكل جماعي وفردى، مما يعكس رغبتها في الكشف عن تأثير الحروب علي تدمير الدول، وبالتالي إحداث مشكلات نفسية للمجتمعات والأفراد الذين يشهدونها. من ناحية أخرى، يوضح خالد الحسيني في روايته ألف شمس ساطعة (2007) التحديات والصراعات التي واجهها الشعب الأفغانى في زمن الحرب والغزو بدءاً من الغزو السوفيتى حتى احتلال طالبان عن طريق توظيف بطلي الرواية لتصوير الفواجع الفردية المختلفة التي تعرض لها الشعب الأفغانى. وهكذا، تتم دراسة الروايات المختارة كمثالين لأعمال مؤلفين ينتميان إلى خلفيات ثقافية وسياسية مختلفة، ويسعى كلاهما لتتبع أثر الفاجعة الجماعية التي تسببها الحروب على الذاكرة الجماعية، وكذلك على الأفراد الشاهدة لها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الفاجعة؛ التحليل النفسى؛ رواية الحرب؛ مارجريت دوراس؛ خالد الحسينى؛ اليابان؛ أفغانستان.

This research provides a psychoanalytic study of selected war fiction, focusing on *Hiroshima Mon Amour* (1959) by Marguerite Duras and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) by Khaled El-Hosseini as examples of war novels representing two different historical, political, and cultural experiences. War has occurred repeatedly throughout human history, and it has caused a lot of physical and mental damage. War stress affects not only people but also whole groups, leaving a deep and lasting impact on the common mind. In recent years, there has been a greater direction towards writing, especially to learn about how war affects people's minds. In their texts, Marguerite Duras and Khaled El-Hosseini have both written about war and its consequences. What Marguerite Duras has experienced during World War II and the French colonial wars in Indochina had a big effect on her. Similarly, El-Hosseini, who is Afghan American, has written a lot about how the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have affected the people of the Middle East. This thesis strives to trace, from a psychoanalytic perspective, the individual and collective traumas haunting the witnesses of these unique experiences.

Throughout the course of human history, war has emerged as a greatly destructive and psychologically distressing phenomenon, inflicting profound and lasting impacts on both peoples and societies. The ramifications of armed conflict ranged much beyond mere material devastation, exerting a profound influence on the collective consciousness, and causing psychological trauma. Gaining insight into the sophisticated nature of collective and individual trauma within the framework of warfare is crucial to fully grasp the deep psychological and social consequences resulting from it. Through a comprehensive analysis of the thematic elements, narrative strategies, and psychological aspects pertaining to trauma within the literary works under scrutiny, the main aim is to shed the light on the various manifestations and repercussions of trauma resulting from experiences of war. This exploration integrates both the collective impact on societies, as well as the individual ramifications experienced by those directly affected. In addition, conducting comparative research emphasized on both the shared elements and unique characteristics found in the writers' depictions of trauma. This examination will provide insight into the interconnectedness of collective, and individual trauma, as well as its significance in comprehending the extensive psychological and social consequences of warfare. Through the

psychoanalytic research of the two selected novels, the research contributes to increase the literature on trauma studies and enhance the comprehension of the sophisticated psychological sceneries shaped by war. Through the examination of both collective and individual trauma, this research's objective is to provide insights that contributed to the increase of therapeutic approaches, facilitate the process of healing and resilience, and stimulate additional scholarly investigations within this domain.

Historical and Theoretical Background

The Notion of Trauma

The field of trauma studies emerged throughout the 1990s, drawing heavily on Freudian theory provided a conceptual framework for understanding trauma. This framework conceptualized trauma as a remarkably intense experience that pushes the boundaries of language and disrupts the very foundations of meaning. According to this trauma paradigm, it is posited that the experience of suffering is inherently incapable of being adequately represented or expressed. The subsequent occurrence of a pluralistic model of trauma arisen promptly after the conventional model, positing that the widely held belief in the inexpressibility of trauma is only one of many reactions to an intense incident, rather than its defining characteristic. The proposition that a traumatic encounter poses a challenge to the boundaries of linguistic expression, disrupts the integrity of the psyche, and potentially undermines the very essence of significance established the original framework for this area of research. Furthermore, this concept continues to exert influence on the ongoing critical discourse, despite the emergence of competing perspectives that seek to supplant it.

Sigmund Freud's ideas concerning traumatic experiences and memory delineate the psychological notions that serve as guiding principles within the discipline. The emergence of psychoanalytic ideas regarding the causes and consequences of trauma may be traced back to the nineteenth-century investigation of shock and hysteria. Notable scholars in this field, apart from Sigmund Freud, include Joseph Breuer, Pierre Janet, Jean-Martin Charcot, Hermann Oppenheim, Abram Kardiner, and Morton Prince. The ideas put out by Freud in his collaborative work with Joseph Breuer, *Studies on Hysteria* (1895), as well as his later modified views in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*

(1920), have significant influence on the conceptual understanding and application of trauma by contemporary trauma critics.

Freud explained in his early writings that the manifestation of traumatic hysteria might be attributed to the repression of a prior encounter with sexual assault. Freud and Breuer assert in their seminal work, *Studies in Hysteria* (1895) that the primary source of trauma lies not in the essential nature of the initial incident, but rather in its subsequent memory. The use of the talking remedy or abreaction is necessary to comprehend the enduring consequences of the first occurrence and ultimately liberate oneself from its detrimental influence on symptoms. Significantly, it is crucial to note that the comprehension of a traumatic incident occurs only after a time of latency, known as postponed action or *Nachträglichkeit*, which rearranges the impact and significance of prior experiences (Breuer and Freud 1955: 192). The revelation of a past event in the process of remembering is contingent upon a current occurrence that triggers the recollection of the previously suppressed event. Freud and Breuer states that:

“We may reverse the dictum “*cessante causa cessat effectus*” (when the cause ceases the effect ceases) and conclude from these observations that the determining process (that is, the recollection of it) continues to operate for years—not indirectly, through a chain of intermediate causal links, but as a directly releasing cause—just as psychical pain that is remembered in waking consciousness still provokes a lachrymal secretion long after the event. *Hysterics suffer mainly from reminiscences.*” (1955: 7)

Freud illuminates that such occurrences are more prevalent among women who have endured sexual abuse during their formative years. The author proceeds to elaborate on the notion that women of this nature undergo genuine psychological distress during their adolescence. It is further asserted that this distress can be divided into two distinct phases: an initial phase during childhood characterized by sexual content but lacking significance, and a subsequent phase during puberty devoid of sexual content but imbued with sexual meaning (as cited in Caruth, 1995). The author posits that women experience the true magnitude of the incident because of this hindered emotional response. Freud refers to this temporal lag as 'belatedness'. In regard to the notion of temporal delay, Codde (2009) emphasizes the applicability of Freud's hypothesis on the delay in addressing the trauma related to child abuse to other forms of trauma as well.

However, Freud adopts additional modifications to his beliefs, particularly in response to the emergence of war anxiety among troops upon their return home from World War I. This phenomenon has been seen among a certain group of troops who had not previously experienced war situations. This observation has provided Freud with the indication that the occurrence of trauma-related flashbacks does not necessarily need the survivor possessing directly experienced the traumatic event. The above-mentioned circumstance occurred throughout World War II; nonetheless, it was only until the Vietnam War that this condition was officially acknowledged. The significant occurrence, which had been disregarded for an extensive duration, gathered acknowledgment from the American Psychiatric Association in 1980, when it was officially designated as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) has supplanted previously used designations, including traumatic neurosis, war stress, shell shock, and delayed stress syndrome. According to Caruth (1995), it has been previously referred to as a "reaction to both human and natural calamities". Caruth's extensive works in (1995) and (2016), offered comprehensive insights into the effects of traumatic incidents on the human mind and the mechanisms through which these incidents resurface in the mind to replay the experiences recently undergone.

According to Caruth (2016), trauma can be considered an experience that is extremely distressing and is typically associated with a sudden or tragic event. Caruth also clarifies that individuals who experience trauma often exhibit a delayed and uncontrollable

recurrence of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena (p.11). Caruth adds that the victim's perception of the situation as unbearable indicates a lack of awareness within the victim's cognitive context for such an unusual encounter. Briefly, the individual who experiences the distressing sensation was not adequately equipped to confront the subsequent distress. This occurrence, as identified by La Capra (2014), is referred to by Freud as *Angstbereitschaft*. Then, Caruth clarifies that due to the extraordinary nature of the traumatic event, it eludes the victim's immediate comprehension, necessitating a period of time for the victim to process and subsequently articulate the seen occurrence. The phenomenon of experiencing recurrent and distressing memories of a traumatic event, often referred to as flashbacks, is consistent with the diagnostic criteria for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), as previously indicated.

Caruth provides a comprehensive understanding of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). She states that a concise definition of PTSD is elusive, yet there exists a consensus that individuals who have experienced a traumatic event typically exhibit a delayed response. This response manifests in various forms such as dreams, hallucinations, intrusive thoughts related to the event, a tendency to approach or avoid stimuli associated with the event, and a general emotional detachment during or following the recollection of the traumatic experience (Caruth, 1995, p. 4).

Earlier to Caruth, Freud (1950) has provided a definition of unconsciousness in which he has speculated that it may manifest in an individual who had passed through the experience of seeing a train crash but emerged physically unharmed. According to Freud, those who have experienced a traumatic event may get significant symptoms within a few weeks, which may be attributed to the witnessing experience. According to Freud, during this phase, the individual has already shown symptoms of "traumatic neurosis." Freud provided more explanation into the interval between the occurrence of the accident and the first manifestation of symptoms, which he refers to as the 'incubation period'. Remarkably, this period exhibits similarities to the typical course seen in infectious disorders.

He also observed that certain soldiers experienced war phobia upon their reintegration into society after serving on the battlefield. He identified a deeply unsettling connection between trauma and the ability to adapt to post-war life, positing that this was the primary factor

contributing to the soldiers' dissatisfaction with being labeled as mere "survivors." This is mostly because the traumatic event they encountered was not only distressing, but the very act of its occurrence unsettles them, as "the act of surviving itself may be a source of turmoil" (Caruth, 2016). This declaration has some validity since few experiences may be as psychologically distressing for an individual as the realization that they have survived a tragic event that appealed the lives of their loved ones or a significant number of others similar to themselves. The above-mentioned paradox mostly arose from the survivor being confronted with a very demanding circumstance. The individual revealed a limited capacity to grasp the profound magnitude of the tragic loss of many lives and lacks the ability to perceive their own existence among the surrounding occurrences of death.

When considering the demise of these individuals, the survivor ponders why he himself was spared when others perished. Consequently, the survivor perceives suicide as the one recourse to navigate this predicament, a course of action seen in several instances. According to Caruth (1995), the survivor's most distressing experience is not the occurrence of a flashback related to the traumatic incident, but rather the moment when the survivor turns fully aware of the actual events that took place in their surroundings. Caruth further suggests that when the survivor dreams about the incident or experiences spatial flashbacks of the trauma, their unconscious mind is engaged. However, the true influence of the trauma is felt by the survivor in its entirety when they awaken and regain complete consciousness.

The two selected novels revolve around a shared sense of double trauma, which serves as a central theme. The dilemma that arises from the survivor's guilt, which stems from the paradoxical character of being alive or escaping the trauma, is whether the trauma lies in contact with death itself or in the continued feeling of having survived it.

Individual and Collective Trauma

The phenomenon of individual and collective trauma has been a subject of academic inquiry. It included the examination of traumatic experiences that occurred on an individual level, as well as those that impacted society. Trauma has two distinct forms: personal trauma, which is confined to an individual and remains private in nature, and social trauma, which extends beyond the individual and has a broader

impact on the whole society. Child abuse and sexual harassment are instances of personal trauma, while the Holocaust, the September 11 attacks, and the war in Afghanistan were events that had an impact both collective and individuals. According to Erikson (1994), a scholar who examined the consequences of social catastrophes such as the genocide in Yugoslavia, it is argued that the repercussions of a traumatic event might extend to a communal level. Furthermore, Erikson suggested that individual and collective trauma could manifest concurrently.

Erikson (1994) incorporated Caruth's theoretical framework on trauma and clarified that trauma represents a psychological impact, asserting that it exerts control over the individual's psyche. The author believes that the remembrance of the victim could persistently present the events they have seen until they reconcile with them. The author elaborates on the notion that individuals who have experienced trauma could continue to be plagued by the memories of such events until their cognitive abilities are capable of effectively managing and processing the associated experiences. This conveys the previous discourse, namely highlighting that individuals who have experienced trauma often get flashbacks of the event during the acting-out phase. According to Erikson (1994), individuals who have experienced trauma exhibit a spectrum of emotional responses, including restlessness, agitation, numbness, and a sense of blankness.

According to Erikson, those who have experienced trauma often exhibit a pervasive sense of skepticism towards the world, harboring a lack of optimism towards positive outcomes. Furthermore, they see the potential for harm and destruction inherent in human interactions. Erikson's conceptualization of trauma diverges from other perspectives in that it does not frame trauma as a singular force that inflicts wounds alone upon the human psyche. Instead, Erikson places emphasis on the broader impact of trauma, highlighting its injurious effects on the collective community. The author explains that although individual minds could tolerate the wounds of trauma, these traumas when combined, could give rise to a collective mood or ethos, which the author refers to as group culture. The author clarifies that the collective culture of this group, which is founded upon the individual traumas experienced by its members, has a much greater level of intensity compared to the cumulative intensity of the individual traumas. Hence, according to him, the influence and magnitude of collective trauma are significant. He suggests that collective trauma could have the

probability to foster strong connections and a sense of solidarity among those affected. Erikson states that these bonds are equally as effective and crucial as those formed through shared language and cultural heritage. This phenomenon could occur when individuals who have experienced a collective trauma tend to establish a sense of identification with one another, so distinguishing themselves as a collective entity from others who have not undergone that trauma. Consequently, individuals could look at others who have experienced similar traumas as belonging to a distinct group, establishing a sense of ownership, and fostering a collective identity.

The primary distinction between individual and collective trauma lies in the nature of the impact on the individual's psyche. Individual trauma involved a sudden and overwhelming blow to the individual's mind, which occurs without sufficient time for the mind to respond appropriately or develop defense mechanisms. Furthermore, collective trauma may be likened to a significant disruption to the fundamental fabric of social existence. He further claims that it undermines the interpersonal connections that bind individuals together and negatively impacts their shared sense of community.

Therefore, on one side, this phenomenon fosters the formation of a cohesive collective trauma that experiences a shared sense of bereavement, therefore establishing strong interpersonal connections. However, on the other hand, it also engenders hostility against those who contributed to the infliction of the traumatic experience onto the affected parties. Collective trauma has the potential to negatively impact the social structure, resulting in societal divisions where people are no longer seen as unique and distinct entities, but rather as simply components of various groupings. Erikson's theoretical framework of collective trauma has particular significance in the analysis of societal traumas, such as the Holocaust, natural catastrophes, and genocides.

Erikson's discourse on communal trauma mostly pertains to natural catastrophes, however its applicability extends to technological calamities as well. Collective tragedies serve as a catalyst for questioning the shared identity among individuals, so prompting a reaction that is commensurate in magnitude. An example of such reactions may be found in the literary work *11 Septembre Mon Amour* (2003) by French author Luc Lang, in which he asserts that "it is possible that, for the first time in the annals of human history, we were all contemporaries" (as cited in Versluys, 2009). It is also clear that

those who have experienced a traumatic event tend to form a shared sense of identity that is closely linked to the same trauma. In this scenario, not only do the victims see themselves as interconnected with one another, but the broader community also acknowledges and regards the victims as integral elements within a collective experience of trauma. Consequently, the traumatic experience assumes a central role in shaping the individuals' sense of self, ultimately leading to their identification with the collective pain.

According to Miller (2003), the formation of a collective identity among the individuals who went missing was facilitated after the events of 9/11. This occurred when the New York Times released a publication named *Portraits*, which included biographical information on the 1910 missing people (p. 19). The act of publishing the book serves to acknowledge and honor the shared experience of the trauma. For him, the establishment of monuments is a common practice in commemorating collective trauma. Additionally, Miller notes that the release of this book illustrated how communal trauma is composed of individual traumas. The book, *Portraits*, explores the concept of collective trauma experienced by missing persons. Concurrently, the book incorporated individual narratives, emphasizing the correlation between collective trauma and individual experiences. It also highlights the collective nature of this trauma indicating that all individuals affected by trauma were considered equivalent, regardless of their gender, class, or social status. Thus, Miller asserts that the magnitude and extent of loss experienced in a communal trauma necessitates its fragmentation in order to facilitate comprehension.

Historical Context of Collective Trauma in War

The concept of collective trauma could affect the psychological responses experienced by a whole society in the aftermath of a traumatic occurrence. It incorporates more than a basic factual account or recall of a distressing incident that occurs to a specific set of individuals. Tragedy is symbolically presented in the collective recollections of the community, and like to all types of memory, it involves not only a replication of the occurrences, but also an ongoing process of reconstructing the distress in an endeavor to comprehend it. The distinction between collective memory and individual memory lies in the enduring nature of collective memory, which extends beyond the lifetimes of immediate survivors and is retained by group members

who could be geographically and temporally far from the traumatic events (Hirschberger, 2018).

The descendants of trauma survivors who have not directly experience the events in question may recall these experiences in a manner distinct from the firsthand survivors. Consequently, the interpretation and portrayal of these historical events may undergo modifications as they are passed down from one generation to the next. The existence of a collective recollection of a historical catastrophe experienced by a particular group's forebears might potentially generate a selected trauma dynamic that establishes a link between trauma, memory, and ontological security (Volkan, 1997).

The genesis and continuation of collective trauma are substantially influenced by the socio-political environment in which conflicts take place. The exacerbation of conflicts and protraction of wars may be attributed to political ideology, power struggles, and nationalism, resulting in an increased level of pain suffered by civilizations. Moreover, the presence of socioeconomic disparities and unequal distribution of power could increase the impact of collective trauma, since some segments of the population may experience a disproportionate burden of violence and oppression resulting from armed conflict (Seoighe, 2017). The topic of collective structures and institutions is of great significance in academic discourse. During periods of armed conflict, society structures and institutions often experience collapse or substantial upheavals. The disintegration of societal norms, governance structures, and support networks could play a significant role in the emergence and persistence of collective trauma. The increase of collective trauma is also influenced by displacement and refugee crises, which appear as a consequence of forced migration and the disruption of communities (Sztompka, 2004).

Trauma Theories in Literature

The significance of psychoanalytic approaches in comprehending war trauma in literature is noteworthy. Their capacity to offer valuable insights into the psychological repercussions of war experiences on individuals. Moreover, these approaches provide a framework for analyzing and interpreting the portrayal of trauma in literary works (Stocks, 2007). Psychoanalytic theories place significant emphasis on the influence of the unconscious mind and the mechanism of

suppression as means of coping with traumatic situations. The experience of war trauma often encompasses very upsetting situations that people may have difficulties in actively processing. In literature, the use of symbols, dreams, and metaphors in literature facilitates the examination of the unconscious mind, so offering an avenue to unveil suppressed memories and emotions linked to the traumatic experiences of war (Kaplan, 2005). Characters depicted in war literature often serve as representations of various psychological defense mechanisms, such as denial or dissociation, which have significant importance within the realm of psychoanalytic theory (Baiduri, 2015).

Psychoanalysis admits the significance of symbolism and metaphor as a means of describing and conveying traumatic events. The use of symbolic language and metaphors is a common practice in war literature, serving as a vehicle to effectively communicate the indescribable atrocities of war and the profound psychological consequences experienced by people (Newirth, 2018). Using a psychoanalytic framework, readers are given the opportunity to explore layers of war trauma by closely examining the symbols and metaphors employed within the text. This analytical approach enables a more profound comprehension of the emotional and psychological aspects inherent in the experience of war trauma (Balaev, 2008).

Psychoanalytic theories provide valuable insights into the characteristics of traumatic memory and the occurrence of flashbacks. War literature often depicts fractured memories, persistent thoughts, and vivid recollections of tragic occurrences. The literary portrayals presented in this thesis exhibit a notable congruence with psychoanalytic principles, particularly Freud's notion of repetition compulsion (Jelaca, 2016). This theory posits that individuals subconsciously reenact traumatic events as a means of grappling with unresolved psychological conflicts. The analysis of war trauma's portrayal in literature allows for the application of psychoanalytic concepts, enabling readers to comprehend the fragmented and haunting characteristics of traumatic memories. In addition, psychoanalytic theories, namely those influenced by object relations and attachment theory, investigate the effect of traumatic events on an individual's internal psychological landscape and their interpersonal connections. War literature often explores the psychological metamorphosis experienced by characters, their challenges in defining their own identity, and the erosion of a cohesive self-perception.

Using psychoanalytic frameworks, individuals could have the ability to critically examine the portrayals of identity fragmentation, the internal assimilation of trauma, and the consequential effects on interpersonal connection (Clarke et al., 2018). Psychoanalytic theories provide valuable perspectives on the possibilities for catharsis and therapeutic recovery in the context of war-related trauma. Literature may function as a conduit for the articulation and contemplation of distressing encounters, including the experiences of both fictional personas and the individuals engaging with the text. By delving into the psychological odysseys of the characters and their endeavors to reconcile with their traumatic experiences, readers are afforded the opportunity to see the capacity for psychological recovery and the reestablishment of a cohesive state of being (Bonikowski, 2016; Earle, 2017). Consequently, war novels have historically functioned as a means of examining and portraying collective psychological distress. Narrative approaches are used by authors to effectively depict the psychological and emotional aspects of war experiences, so offering valuable insights into the collective trauma undergone by communities (Meek, 2011; Gibbs, 2014). Literary works such as "*All Quiet on the Western Front*" by Erich Maria Remarque and "*Slaughterhouse-Five*" by Kurt Vonnegut have attained a status as emblematic depictions of the shared psychological distress experienced in times of armed conflict (Wright, 2021).

Wars and Collective Memory

The formulation of historical narratives and the significance of communal memory play a crucial role in developing social comprehension of collective pain. The way in which societies remember and understand historical conflicts significantly influenced their ability to address the associated trauma, extract lessons from the past, and mitigate the likelihood of recurrence. Recognizing and faithfully depicting collective pain within historical narratives facilitates societal reconciliation with past events and fosters a more thorough understanding of the ramifications of armed conflict (Hirschberger, 2018).

The processes of healing and reconciliation have significant importance in cultures that have experienced the aftermath of war. Truth commissions, reparations, and transitional justice mechanisms have the potential to play a significant role in addressing the collective

trauma experienced by societies. These mechanisms offer victims a platform to share their experiences, pursue justice, and contribute to the healing process of society as a whole. Recognizing and acknowledging the existence of collective trauma, as well as implementing measures to support those affected, are crucial elements in the process of rebuilding trust and establishing a sustainable peace (Fischer, 2011).

Education and awareness are crucial components in addressing many societal issues. Education has a crucial and indispensable function in fostering a heightened understanding of collective trauma resulting from armed conflict, as well as cultivating empathy among forthcoming cohorts. The incorporation of insights derived from collective trauma into educational curriculum contributes to the development of a societal environment characterized by peaceful coexistence and enhanced comprehension. Educational institutions have the potential to play a significant role in the prevention of future conflicts and the promotion of social cohesion by imparting knowledge about the historical backdrop of wars and its societal ramifications (Saul, 2022).

Hiroshima as a Site of Collective Trauma and Communal Memory

Hiroshima Mon Amour takes place within the context of a fleeting romantic involvement between a French actress and a Japanese architect in the aftermath of World War II in Hiroshima. At its core, the novel portrays a passionate but passing love affair between the anonymous main characters. Nevertheless, beneath this superficial account is a more profound examination of trauma and memory. Both protagonists in the narrative are burdened by distressing historical experiences. The female lead is tormented by the memory of a romantic relationship she lost in her town during the period of wartime conflict in France. Conversely, the male lead, an architect, carries the psychological weight of having survived the devastating atomic attack of Hiroshima. By engaging in deep dialogues and establishing physical closeness, they attempt to comprehend one other's traumatic experiences and seek comfort. Duras effectively presents Hiroshima as a setting characterized by its tragic historical events and the shared recollection of the atomic attack. The designation "Hiroshima" has significant symbolic significance due to its historical association as the

location where the first deployment of an atomic bomb occurred, targeting a civilian population. In the story, the city of Hiroshima is always denoted as "here" to underscore its profound association with the tragic incident that has been deeply ingrained in the collective worldwide consciousness.

Duras engages with the subject of the Hiroshima trauma, as seen by the French actress's first dialogue: "You see, I've come to Hiroshima. Why Hiroshima? Why not elsewhere? Because of the bomb, of course" (Duras 3). Through the deliberate mention of the explosion and its consequential impacts, Duras effectively places the historical occurrence as not only integral to the city's collective identity, but also as a crucial framework for understanding the dynamics between the two primary protagonists. Hiroshima represents more than a mere geographical location; it has a significant symbolic value as a spot imbued with the communal anguish resulting from the atomic attack. As the individuals engage in a leisurely stroll within the reconstructed urban environment, the French actress is persistently faced with disconcerting stimuli that serve as poignant memories of the deeply ingrained trauma present within the physical surroundings. She observes that "the trees are just small plants at the time of the bomb" and "the houses too are new" (Duras 16). The above-mentioned particulars underscore the profound impact of the communal trauma experienced in Hiroshima, which has resulted into significant modifications to the physical landscape and the disruption of conventional perceptions of temporal progression. Hiroshima may be described as a palimpsest, whereby the enduring impact of its tragic history continually permeates and alters the current physical and psychological environment inside the collective consciousness.

Duras effectively depicts Hiroshima as a city whose sense of self is deeply intertwined with a shared traumatic experience that persists in its contemporary existence. The atomic bombing is not only a singular historical occurrence limited to a certain time period, but rather a deeply ingrained trauma that has profoundly influenced the physical environment and shared recollections of the affected region. Hence, Hiroshima functions as a poignant symbol of the profound impact that a collective historical trauma could have, since it clearly summarizes the devastating energy associated with such an event.

War and Violence in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*

Following the remarkable success of his first book, El-Hosseini embarked on the composition of his second literary work, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007), assuming the role of a dedicated author and resigning from his position as a medical practitioner. Jonathan Yardley, a reviewer from The Washington Post, states that if one is inquisitive or inquiring about the comparative quality of a certain work in relation to *The Kite Runner*, the response is negative. According to Yardley (2007), there is an improvement in the situation. El-Hosseini shows the representation of women's experiences within a collective framework that remarks them primarily as instruments for reproduction. In the concluding section of the novel, the author sheds the light on the significance of overcoming the Taliban insurgency, as seen by the gradual restoration of normalcy in the lives of the populace (Walter, 2007). Like the preceding literary work, the central theme of violence is shown in many occurrences. The legal standing of an individual named Maryam, who was born out of wedlock. The mother is employed as a domestic worker at the residence of prosperous individual who is already married to two women. When the disclosure of the sexual affair and subsequent pregnancy occurs, he attributes responsibility to her for initiating the encounter. As a result, the mother is sent to a rural community with her daughter born out of wedlock. Due to a lack of assistance throughout her adolescence after her mother's demise, Maryam is compelled to get into a marriage with a much older individual before reaching the legal age for marriage. Rasheed's illegitimate status continues to be a distressing occurrence in her life until she is subjected to capital punishment by means of stoning, because of her act of killing her spouse. Due to her illegitimate status, she lacks the substantial family support that has significance within a patriarchal culture. The governmental system of the Taliban exhibits a preference for masculinity, whereby there is a lack of recognition and assistance for illegitimate offspring. These children are stigmatized as "Haramis," denoting their illegitimate status resulting from a wicked sexual conduct beyond the bounds of marriage, as per the beliefs and rules upheld by the Taliban.

The work prominently explores the issue of violence. The matter is shown, and several aspects of the matter that are mostly recognized within Afghan culture are described. Nevertheless, it is important to

note that the depiction of violence in the novel extends beyond the confines of Afghan culture. The prevalence of violence shown in the narrative increases concerns in several nations and cultures where human rights are inadequately safeguarded, particularly in societies that adhere to patriarchal norms. The occurrence of this kind of violence is a recurring theme in El-Hosseini's narrative, serving as an initial catalyst for understanding the subsequent two forms of violence. The primary focal point of Khaled El-Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* has been the collective mindset of the novel's protagonists, particularly in relation to gender, which serves as the fundamental element contributing to the prevalence of violence. The first words of the novel serve as an obvious hint of the presence of structural violence, as they pertain to the categorization of a child as harami, meaning illegitimate: "Mariam was five years old the first time she heard the word harami" (El-Hosseini 2007).

Mariam is the offspring of a rich individual named Jalil and his domestic worker, Nana, without the legal recognition of their marriage. In light of the revelation of the servant's pregnancy, Jalil's wife compels him to move Nana, who is pregnant, to a secluded rural region outside of town, in order to prevent any more controversy from arising. Subsequently, Nana proceeds to designate her own offspring as illegitimate, particularly during instances of anger. The stigmatization of Mariam continues throughout her lifetime, as she is often subjected to derogatory remarks and referred to as harami, even inside the confines of her husband's home. In El-Hosseini's literary work, the protagonist Mariam first dismisses the notion of a discriminating label as a mere figment of her mother Nana's mind upon her arrival in Herat. The book elucidates this perspective in the following manner:

Nana was wrong about Herat too. No one pointed. No one laughed. Mariam walked along noisy, crowded, cypress lined boulevards, amid a steady stream of pedestrians, bicycle riders, and mule drawn garis, and no one threw a rock at her. No one called her a harami. Hardly anyone even looked at her. She was, unexpectedly, marvelously, an ordinary person here. (El-Hosseini, 28)

This novel presents an opportunity for a feminist analysis, since the author addresses the key theme of equality. Maryam and other girls suffer from the lack of human rights and equality, as reflected through the experiences of another prominent character, Layla. The lack of the

essential human rights influences not just female, but also male characters, as shown by Layla's boyfriend.

Thus, in his war book *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Khaled El-Hosseini examines both collective and individual pain in the context of war-torn Afghanistan. This narrative chronicles the experiences of Mariam and Laila, two female individuals who get interconnected due to the adverse circumstances prevailing in their nation, which has been severely impacted by the ravages of war. El-Hosseini effectively depicts the deep ramifications of war on both a social and personal scale, using his characters' experiences as a means of realistic portrayal.

To Sum up, this research undertakes a thorough investigation of trauma and mourning in literature, with a specific emphasis on analyzing *Hiroshima Mon Amour* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. Psychoanalytic theory has provided us with vital insights into the psychological aspects of war and its long-lasting effects on people and society. Both Duras and El-Hosseini adeptly used metaphors and symbols to elicit the complex emotions linked to sorrow, providing readers with a deep comprehension of the human condition during a period of strife. Our investigation has shown that stress caused by conflict extends beyond human limits, impacting whole communities and lasting over several generations. The concept of transgenerational transfer has become essential in understanding how stress and trauma are passed on from one generation to another. Through the analysis of these literary works, we have enhanced our comprehension of how historical events mold collective memory and impact the psychological welfare of people. The juxtaposition of *Hiroshima Mon Amour* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* has highlighted the distinct expressions of sorrow and psychological distress. Although both works explore the severe psychic effects of war, they do so in different cultural and historical settings. This contrast has enhanced our comprehension of the intricate complexity of trauma, emphasizing the significance of considering personal experiences in conjunction with wider societal and political forces.

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