# TRAUMATIZED VICTIMS: RAPE TRAUMA IN EMMA DONOGHUE'S *ROOM* AND Ö. ZÜLFÜ LİVANELİ'S *BLISS*

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**MASTER OF ARTS**
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***ROOM* AND Ö. ZÜLFÜ LİVANELİ'S *BLISS***


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# THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that in my opinion the thesis submitted by SELMA PARLAKAY TOPBAŞ titled "TRAUMATIZED VICTIMS: RAPE TRAUMA IN EMMA DONOGHUE'S *ROOM* AND O. LIVANELI's *BLISS*" is fully adequate in scope and in quality as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

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# DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own work and all information included has been obtained and expounded in accordance with the academic rules and ethical policy specified by the institute. Besides, I declare that all the statements, results, materials, not original to this thesis have been cited and referenced literally.

Without being bound by a particular time, I accept all moral and legal consequences of any detection contrary to the aforementioned statement.

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# FOREWORD

Firstly, I would like to express my special thanks to my supervisor Associate Professor Dr Harith Ismael TURKI for his kind, supportive and stimulating demeanour before and during the writing process of this thesis.

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# ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to analyse Emma Donoghue's *Room* and Ö. Zülfü Livaneli's *Bliss* from the point of trauma theory. The novels portray raped victims and rape-induced trauma that controls the lives of the victims for a long time. Literary trauma theory presents an alternative understanding of traumatized victims and regards their distress, silence, and resilience as a manifestation of their traumatic state of mind. Feminist criticism of trauma theory redefines the trauma to include everyday atrocities like rape and regards the social context in the analysis of traumatized rape victims. Both novels analysed in this thesis portray different aspects of trauma theory. *Room* by Emma Donoghue presents a traumatic representation of rape trauma and traumatic motherhood while *Bliss* by Ö. Zülfü Livaneli portrays a realistic representation of rape trauma and a criticism of patriarchal society. A comparative approach to the novels indicates the main individual and cultural similarities and differences in trauma representation. The result of this thesis is that representation of rape trauma in fictional works from different cultural backgrounds illustrate the underlying causes of rape and possible outcomes of rape trauma by putting the reader either in a victimized or in a participating role.


**Keywords:** Rape, trauma, traumatized victims, traumatic narration, traumatic motherhood, patriarchal society.

# ÖZ

Bu tezin amacı Emma Donoghue tarafından yazılan *Room* (*Oda*) ve Ö. Zülfü Livaneli tarafından yazılan *Bliss* (*Mutluluk*) adlı eserleri travma teorisine göre incelemektir. Her iki roman da tecavüz kurbanı olup sonrasında uzun bir süre tecavüz travması yaşayan karakterlere yer vermektedir. Edebiyatta travma teorisi travma kurbanlarının sergiledikleri stres bozukluğu, sessiz kalma ve dirayet gösterme gibi semptomların travma sonrası stres bozukluğu ile bağlantısını anlama konusunda alternatif bir yaklaşım sunmaktadır. Travma teorisine feminist yaklaşım ise travma kavramını yeniden tanımlayarak tecavüz gibi bazı toplumlarda sık karşılaşılan fakat normalleştirilen sıradan travmaların tanıma dahil edilmesine olanak sağlamıştır. Bu sayede toplumsal yapının da travma teorisinde önemli bir yeri olduğu ortaya konulmuştur. Bu tezde incelenen iki roman travma teorisinin farklı taraflarına odaklanmaktadır. Emma Donoghue'nin *Room* adlı romanı tecavüz travmasının travmatik bir aktarımına ve ayrıca travmatik annelik kavramına odaklanırken Türk yazar Ö. Zülfü Livaneli'nin *Mutluluk* adlı romanı tecavüz travmasının gerçekçi bir aktarımına odaklanarak ataerkil toplumun tecavüz ve tecavüz travması noktasında temel sebep olabileceğinin altını çizmektedir. Bu romanların karşılaştırmalı analizi travmanın edebi eserlerde aktarımının bireysel ve kültürel farklılıklara göre değişiklik gösterebileceğini vurgular. Bu tezin sonucunda ise tecavüz ve tecavüz travmasının sebepleri ve olası sonuçları hakkında hem bireysel hem de toplumsal etkenlerin etkili olduğu ve travmanın edebi eserlerde aktarımında bu etkenlerin yazarın bakış açısını etkilediği anlaşılmaktadır.


**Anahtar Kelimeler (Keywords in Turkish):** Tecavüz, travma, travma mağdurları, travmatik anlatım, travmatik annelik, ataerkil toplum.

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# ABBREVIATIONS

PTSD: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (Travma Sonrası Stres Bozukluğu)

CPTSD: Complex-PTSD (Travma Sonrası Kompleks Stres Bozukluğu)

Etc. : Ve benzeri gibi

ed. : Baskı

Ed. by : Editör

p./pp. : Sayfa/sayfalar

Vol. : Sayı

Vs. : Karşı

## SUBJECT OF THE RESEARCH

This thesis undertakes the aim of analysing two novels from different countries in the context of trauma theory. Emma Donoghue's *Room* and Ö. Zülfü Livaneli's *Bliss* depict traumatized victims and enable the analysis of rape trauma pursuant to trauma theory.

## PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH

The purpose of this thesis is to display the traumatic symptoms of two characters in Emma Donoghue's *Room* and Ö. Zülfü Livaneli's *Bliss*. Another aim of this thesis is to reveal the causes and effects of rape trauma on an individual and cultural level in the novels. Both novelists demonstrate different aspects of rape trauma which are highly dominant in the cultures they were written in.

## METHOD OF THE RESEARCH

The terms trauma and rape will be defined, and the historical background of trauma theory will be scrutinized by referring to significant trauma theorists and their distinctive opinions on trauma theory. The novels in this study are analysed according to specific aspects of trauma theory in relation to post-traumatic symptoms of rape, the victims' traumatized state of mind, main cultural roots of rape culture and possible outcomes of rape trauma. The analysis of these novels according to trauma theory illustrates an alternative understanding of the representation of trauma in literary texts and highlights specific cultural motives of rape and attitudes towards traumatized victims of rape.

## HYPOTHESIS OF THE RESEARCH / RESEARCH PROBLEM

Rape trauma, both in society and in fiction, has not been regarded as a serious stress disorder following a rape event, however, trauma theory has been proven to show the traumatized state of victims and the cultural motives behind rape. *Room* and *Bliss* portray raped victims in different cultures and their traumatic state of mind is either denied or normalized and these raped victims are silenced by either patriarchal culture or lack of sympathy. Different representations of rape trauma highlight the main distinctive attitudes towards traumatized victims.

## SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS / DIFFICULTIES

Trauma is difficult to identify in traumatized victims since their state of mind is not amenable for a testimony. Their testimonial credibility is also controlled by the cultural norms. Representations of trauma in fictional works reflect this difficulty in the narration and complicate the relation between trauma and testimony.

# INTRODUCTION

*"The past is never dead. It's not even past."*

William Faulkner, Requiem for a Nun

In our daily language, the word "trauma" has gained a popular place to refer to trivial and everyday stress. No matter how stressful life we have, this usage of the word can be completely misleading since all stressful events are not traumatic. The century we are living in has witnessed such a great number of developments and innovations in terms of technology, information, communication, and psychological transformation that most traumatic events are normalized or are not regarded as serious as other health problems. Moreover, some atrocities are established in the social codes of some societies and thus difficult to change. One of the long-established atrocities is rape and it can be easily located in most cultures throughout history. Literary texts that portray rape as their subject matter can display the changing attitudes towards rape and rape victims, yet with the introduction of trauma fiction in literature, rape was started to be discussed as a disorder of health that displays similar symptoms to other traumatic disorders like shellshock or battle fatigue that disturb many soldiers. In short, after the introduction of trauma theory in literature, rape trauma has been considered a part of serious disorders that follow a traumatic experience.

Traumatic disorders have been at the centre of attention since the psychoanalytical studies of Sigmund Freud. Even before him, his fellow colleagues identified traumatic disorders in their patients and referred to the disorder in various ways. Charcot, Janet, and Breuer highlighted the catastrophic nature of a traumatic event that could shatter the personality of the victim and could cause a wide range of symptoms from simple distress to the suicidal crisis. Regarded as a female disorder for a long time, trauma was associated with hysteria and physical weakness until the studies of Charcot in the nineteenth century. Charcot emphasized the role of unconscious in the hysterical disorders and focused on the psychological causes of traumatic symptoms. In this regard, studying male victims of trauma in industrial and railway accidents separated the relation between trauma and female hysteria and grounded trauma as a psychological disorder.

Freud's studies on hysteria contributed to trauma studies on several counts. He worked with Breuer on the external causes of hysteria in women in *Studies on Hysteria*

(1895) and interpreted the traumatized psyche as a dissociated subsystem due to a traumatic event and thus vulnerable to shuttering effects of the mind. This dissociation concept was also recognized by Charcot and Janet with some differences. Freud also underlined the belated return of the repressed first in his seduction theory and then as a universal aspect of infantile development. According to the seduction theory, repressed sexual experiences in childhood are triggered by a traumatic event and thus cause a belated return. Freud's later focus was to regard the belated return of trauma as a manifestation of libidinal desires and latent fantasies. With this move, he broke up the line between psychological trauma and the physical reasons behind it. Freud's later work *Moses and Monotheism* (1939) connected the individual experience of trauma to the collective trauma in the regard of the history of Jewish people. Freud's studies on trauma helped to establish literary trauma theory in 1980s.

In literary trauma theory, Cathy Caruth, along with Hartman and Shoshana Felman, combined Freud's ideas on trauma with a deconstructive approach and emphasised the repressed and haunting nature of trauma that never leaves the victim or returns to claim the unresolved experience. Caruth's two main works *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* (1996) and *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1996) framed trauma studies in relation to trauma's ungraspable and inaccessible nature in the unconscious. In this regard, Caruth's idea of trauma turned into a paradox as she envisioned trauma as a wound that cries out to be acknowledged and also a distortion of truth since she mistrusted traumatic memory of the traumatized psyche.

Between the paradoxical and cathartic essence of trauma fiction lies the referentiality in the narration for Caruth; the same concept of trauma is mentioned as the contradiction between "a mimetic and an anti-mimetic model" by Ruth Leys in Trauma: A Genealogy (2000). For Leys, the mimetic model of trauma suggests that an imitation or identification is necessary to understand the traumatic event since the victim cannot fully grasp the event or recall it, she has to act it out or imitate it in other ways. Mimetic trauma model – traditional, Caruthian model- assumes that the victim of trauma has an altered state of consciousness due to the shock of the event, thus requires a hypnotic imitation to recall the events. In this regard, the testimony and the reliability of the victim become problematic as the traumatic occurrence is considered to have never become

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part of the victim's ordinary memory, a truthful testimony of the events is unclear. The anti-mimetic model of trauma, on the contrary, perceives the idea of trauma as "a purely external event that befalls a fully constituted subject" (Leys, 2000; 298-299). In other words, the anti-mimetic trauma model presents the idea of trauma as rememberable and thus recoverable as the focus is on the external forces of trauma rather than putting the victim in a mimetic collaboration with the violence. The reason for this violent collaboration between the victim and the perpetrator seems to be the unreliability of the victim's testimony since the absence of reliable testimony is associated with the problematic actuality of the traumatic event (Leys, 2000; 299).

In Trauma Fiction, Ann Whitehead gives the general forms and techniques of trauma narratives that borrow mostly from postmodernism, postcolonialism and post war legacy. Trauma fiction writers, as she suggests, use these techniques to confront conventional narrative techniques in seek for the complexity of memory and unity of history, to give voice to marginalized or silenced groups or ideologies and to represent the unspeakable atrocities by new modes of referentiality (81-83). Michael Rothberg (2002) used the term "traumatic realism" to describe new literary devices in trauma narratives to make the reader believe the unbelievable. For Michael Rothberg, these traumatic texts search for a new mode of realism to verbalize a new form of reality and push the realist modes of narration to their limits since traumatic knowledge cannot be fully reclaimed without distortion (2000, 14). Whitehead states that most trauma narratives contain certain stylistic features of traumatic realism like intertextuality, repetition and fragmented narrative voice; yet she admits that these features are not the generalized set of rules for the trauma fiction and cites from Caruth to show the pathological nature of trauma and its fiction: "As Caruth has pointed out, there can be no single approach to these narratives: `[we face the] difficulty of listening and responding to traumatic stories in a way that does not lose their impact, that does not reduce them to cliches or turn them all into versions of the same story" (84). In this regard, trauma fiction refuses to be gathered under a single roof and differs from text to text.

Along with the paradoxical state of trauma in literary theory, the first definition of PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) excluded everyday atrocities which are capable of distressing a lot of people, especially women and children, thus resulted in

negligence of a common disorder like rape trauma. Later, Judith Herman and other feminist trauma theorists focused on this neglected issue and redefined the term by adding usually, every day, and ordinary traumatic events into the definition. By focusing on the plurality of the definition and representations of trauma, they underlined the importance of social context when dealing with trauma. Instead of focusing only on the incomprehensibility of trauma in the unconscious, pluralistic trauma theorists tried to locate trauma in social, political and economic context. The narration of trauma was started to be seen as a catharsis on the individual and social level in contrast to Caruth's positioning it a paradox. In this regard, trauma fiction advocated rape trauma and other ordinary traumatic events to be respected and thus conceived as significant disorders by not only presenting rape as their subject matter but also internalizing the traumatic symptoms in the narration.

In the present study, two contemporary novels from different cultures will be analysed in terms of rape, rape trauma and narration of rape trauma. In the first chapter, the concept of trauma will be examined in line with the historical background of trauma and trauma theory. Literary trauma theory of Caruth and pluralistic trauma theories will be analysed and compared in terms of a redefinition of trauma, ungraspable nature of trauma, recovery from trauma and the social context factor on trauma with references to Judith Herman and Laura S. Brown's ideas. Then, the narration of trauma will be examined regarding the paradoxical and cathartic nature of narration in literature. Finally, rape will be scrutinized by referring to its changing definition, its close connection to power throughout history and its individual and cultural connotations as well as its traumatic nature.

The second chapter of the current study will focus on Emma Donoghue's *Room* (2010) by indicating the main character Ma's rape trauma in her seven-year captivity and her traumatic motherhood. Written by an Irish writer, the novel portrays the connection between rape induced captivity and traumatic motherhood with a traumatic narration and the aftermath of the traumatic event. The writer, Emma Donoghue, adopts a modern-day case- the true story of the Frizt family- in her work and adds some elements of fairy tale, dystopia, allusions, references and her own motherly instincts. During her confinement, her perpetrator abuses Ma sexually and victimizes her both physically and psychologically. She gives birth to two children one of whom survives

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and helps her mother to escape from the room. The rape trauma in the novel becomes more significant after their escape because society fails to understand the traumatic experience and her internal and external conflicts exasperate up to her suicide attempt. The narration in *Room* problematises the relation between testimony and narration as the narrator in the novel is a five-year-old child. Hence, the novel will also be examined in terms of traumatic narration as a manifestation of both catharsis and paradox.

The third chapter will deal with the Turkish novel *Bliss* (2002) by the Turkish writer Ö. Zülfü Livaneli. *Bliss* is Livaneli's third novel and narrates the story of Meryem who is raped by her own uncle and sent to Istanbul for the restoration of family honour. The novel will be analysed in three parts: the silence of the rape victim, patriarchal codes in society as the reason for rape and rape trauma and realistic narration of rape trauma throughout the novel. Rape and incest victim Meryem struggles with traumatic symptoms of rape silently; her silence about the perpetrator manifests the long-settled patriarchy that protects the perpetrator and silences the victim. The novel portrays different attitudes towards rape from the point of three people whose lives coincide in a western town of the country. The silent trauma of rape victims and silenced victims of rape will be studied primarily in the light of feminist trauma theorist Judith Herman. Moreover, the three phases of trauma, mentioned by Judith Herman, in traumatized victims will also be analysed through the traumatic story of the main character. Besides, the novel *Bliss* involves the recovery process of the rape victim, thus the novel will also address the recovery process from trauma. Lastly, the narration in the novel will be regarded as realistic due to mainly third-person narration and it is leaving no doubt on testimony.

In the conclusion part, a comparative analysis of both novels will be presented in accordance with rape, rape trauma and the social context of these issues as well as a narrative comparison. Firstly, the reason for choosing these two novels from different countries will be argued by referring to comparative literature and its encouraging function of correlation on different attitudes. Next, two novels will be compared in terms of rape trauma, representation of rape trauma and cultural factors for defining the limits of trauma. Finally, the background of the writers' attitude in presenting the causes and possible outcomes of rape trauma will be analysed.

# 1. CHAPTER ONE: TRAUMA: TOWARDS A THEORY

This chapter introduces the definition of trauma, historical development of ideas on trauma and mentions important names in trauma theory such as J. M. Charcot, Pierre Janet, Joseph Breuer and Sigmund Freud. Next, Cathy Caruth's Literary Trauma Theory is discussed with references to its victimization of the survivor and complicating the relationship between trauma and narration. After that, the ideas against Caruthian approach to trauma will be discussed under the title of pluralistic trauma models and the importance of the social and political context will be highlighted when dealing with trauma. Narration of trauma will be analysed as a manifestation of trauma both in a paradoxical and cathartic level. Lastly, rape will be discussed as a social construct.

Trauma in English derives from the Greek word τραύμα meaning wound (OED). According to David J. Morris, the word was first employed in seventeenth-century medicine to refer to a physical injury; however, it was in the mid-nineteenth century that trauma was first used to describe a psychic injury following a physical shock (2015, 62). Only in 1980, this disorder of memory was officially recognized by the American Psychiatric Association as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Leys, 2). According to the first recognition by DSM-III (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders), PTSD was to comply with the following criteria:

> • PTSD is a reaction to a catalysing event that is 'outside the range of human experience'; 'a recognizable stressor that would evoke significant symptoms of distress in almost anyone'.
>
> • The traumatizing event is re-experienced in a number of different ways: 'recurrent, intrusive, and distressful recollections of the event'; 'dreams of the event'; 'sudden acting or feeling as if the traumatic events were recurring, because of an association with environmental or ideational stimuli.
>
> • PTSD patients experience 'a numbing of response to the external world' along with other observable symptoms, including 'hyper alertness', 'sleep disturbance', 'guilt about surviving', 'memory impairment', and 'avoidance of activities that arouse the recollection of the traumatic event'.
>
> (American Psychiatric Association, 1980; 236-38)

Lucy Bond and Stef Craps emphasize the connection of the trauma paradigm to Western modernity. When considered all the technical, social and cultural tides in the nineteenth century, associating nervous disorders and trauma to modernity takes on a new significance. Large scale changes such as "the spread of socialism, feminism, anarchism, secularism… [and] industrialization, technologization and democratization"

in socio-cultural worlds of Europe and America brought a new public and professional interest in nervous disorders (2020; 12-13). Moreover, the emergence of trauma overlaps modernity especially because of two developments: advancements in mental sciences and the increasing mechanization. Regarding mechanization and industrialization of the nineteenth century, the development of railways across Europe and America brought a new form of risk: railway accidents. Although it was previously known that "exposure to overwhelming terror… [could] lead to troubling memories" (Kolk &McFarlane &Weisaeth, 47), Ruth Leys states that it was John Erichsen, a British physician, "who identified the trauma syndrome in victims who suffered from the fright of railway accidents and Paul Oppenheim, a neurologist from Berlin, to give it the name "traumatic neurosis" (2000, 3). Thus, the study of railway spine on the nervous system disjoined the relation between traumatic neurosis and physical injury, linking modernity to "unprecedented forms of nervous disorders" (Bond & Craps, 16).

## 1.1.    History of Trauma

Turn-of-the-century figures like J. M. Charcot, Pierre Janet, Joseph Breuer, and Sigmund Freud employed trauma in a more psychological context to "describe the wounding of the mind brought about by sudden, unexpected, emotional shock". Thus, they emphasised "the hysterical shattering of the personality" as a consequence of "a situation of extreme terror or fright" (Leys, 3-4). Not only railway spines but also shell shock, combat stress and other traumatic disorders added a new dimension to trauma studies after the Great War and the turmoil of the century. The social insurance policy and worker's compensation demands conducted by modern nervous disorders resulted in a new interest and treatment methods (Bond & Craps). As the pioneers of trauma studies and the treatment of neurosis of the time, Sigmund Freud and his comrades need special attention.

Regarded as the founder of neurology, Charcot (1825-1893) was claimed to rediscover hysteria (Didi-Huberman & Hartz) He believed that traumatic symptoms were mainly psychological rather than physiological even if they depended on a physical weakness. By doing so, he emphasized the role of the unconscious in hysterical disorders. His focus shifted from female hysterics to male victims of industrial workers in time. Thus, hysteria was no longer seen as a female disorder. When Charcot classified nervous diseases, he used the term "hysteria" to describe hysterical symptoms that

emerged when "an individual with a hereditary predisposition to nervous collapse was faced with an unexpected external shock" (Bond & Craps, 19-20). The question of heredity in nervous disorders took attention from other figures.

In relation to the hereditary nature of hysteria, Pierre Janet, another major figure in psychiatry, insisted on the hereditary past on the disease, partly liberalising the causes of neurosis from an external force. He aimed to locate the mysterious lesion which, he believed, was at the root of such pathologies (Bond&Craps, 21). He was "the first psychologist to formulate a systematic therapeutic approach to post-traumatic psychopathology" (van der Hart, 379). The hereditary nature of hysteria was at the centre of the question, as Luckhurst notes in *The Trauma Question* (2008), the hereditary past of trauma makes it hopeless for recovery:

> Trauma was not to be recovered, affirmed, respected, abreacted, mourned, assimilated, brought to closure- the familiar language and trajectory of contemporary psychotherapy. Instead, a traumatic memory was to be manipulated, recomposed, or replaced with another sometimes-falsified memory or else entirely erased (44).

Despite the previous perception of hysterics as females, Charcot's "broadening the condition to male, working-class patients injured in industrial accidents" challenged society's attitudes towards nervous disorders Thus, Charcot and Janet, and later Freud used a process of hypnotic suggestion to allow the patient to play out their fears and dreams in a "safe" therapeutic environment (Bond & Craps, 20).

Freud's earlier contributions to trauma studies are based on his ideas on the causes and symptoms of hysteria in women. *Studies on Hysteri*a (1895) and *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920) are Freud's main works that deal with trauma. Together with Breuer, Freud focused on hysterical neurosis in women, stating that hysteria stems from an external cause (Borch & Jacobson). The traumatized psyche was visualized "as an apparatus for registering the blows to the psyche outside the domain of ordinary awareness", thus causing shattering effects on the mind (Leys, 4). Despite some differences in their theories, Freud shared the dissociation concept in hysteria and trauma proposed by Charcot and Janet. Elaborated by Janet, dissociation meant "the multiple consciousnesses through which the conscious mind might be split into two or more systems or subsystems", most often triggered by a traumatic event (Bond & Craps, 21-22).

Although Freud formed his theory of hysteria focusing on trauma and sexuality, he complexed his model of trauma by adding a number of important concepts. In *Studies on Hysteria*, written with Breuer, Freud traced the traumatic hysteria to the belated return of sexual experiences repressed in childhood (Bond & Craps, 25), which later became known as seduction theory. The belatedness meant sexual experiences at a young age could be triggered by a traumatic event causing the previous insignificant experience to be recalled by a later event. The problematization of the source of trauma by Freud is states by Leys as follows,

> Freud problematized the originary status of the traumatic event by arguing that it was not the experience itself which acted traumatically, but its delayed revival as a memory after the individual had entered sexual maturity and could grasp its sexual meaning. (20)

As it was stated by many scholars, Freud shifted his model of trauma from belatedness of sexual experience to a prototype of the Oedipus complex (Bond & Craps, 25; Leys, 4). His changing focus meant disclaiming the significance of actual trauma on the individual psyche (Leys, 4); settled "repressed sexual desires as a universal aspect of infantile development". This model of trauma was the end of the recognition of a physiological response for mental neurosis; meaning that "traumatic symptoms could belatedly emerge from the reactivation of latent fantasies" (Bond & Craps, 25). Before this model, trauma was thought to be a product of repressed sexual experiences, an external shock. However, Freud's locating libidinal desires, sexual urges at the centre of a traumatic disorder was called into question with the outbreak of the First World War.

In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud states that there exists in the mind a strong tendency towards the pleasure principle. He defines the pleasure principle as a regulatory mechanism which "endeavours to keep the quantity of excitement … as low as possible, or at least to keep it constant". Under normal circumstances, the protective shield prevents the ego from being overwhelmed by an external incentive, however, in exceptional conditions "that tendency is opposed by certain other forces or circumstances" causing the final outcome to be disharmonious with the pleasure principle (year? Reference? 3-5), positioning "death drive" as a psychic exception to the pleasure principle. In the situation of shell-shocked soldiers, the unprecedented violence of mechanized warfare functions as an exceptional shock from the external world which breaks the protective shield of ego (Bond & Craps, 26). According to Leys, this shift

from internal forces to external forces as the cause of trauma put Freud's "death drive" theory under question, however, it certainly benefited from the war as it became clear that psychoanalysis was the only approach to interpret and treat the massive traumas of modern warfare (Leys, 21-22).

Freud's last move in his theory of trauma came with the publication of *Moses and Monotheism* in 1939, the year of his death. According to Caruth, this text "represents Freud's attempt to connect the individual experience of trauma to the collective, transgenerational and religious history of the Jewish people". His connection between the problem of traumatic neurosis and Jewish Monotheism was explained by the term "latency" in which "the traumatized subject undergoes a period of belatedness before memories of the originary event are able to surface" (Bond & Craps, 27). In the same way, the long problematic period in the history of the Jewish religion could be explained by the latency of the traumatic past. With *Moses and Monotheism*, individual traumas were started to be considered in the wider historical conditions from which they emerge. Since then, the field of trauma studies has undergone a great deal of changes and innovative approaches.

### 1.2. Cathy Caruth and Literary Trauma Theory

Cathy Caruth, along with a few other literary scholars, set up the foundations of trauma theory as part of literary criticism in the early 1990s. Sharing a background at Yale University and in deconstruction theory, Caruth, Hartman and Shoshana Felman turned their attention to trauma studies joining a psychoanalytical approach to trauma with a deconstructive method. They concentrated on the indeterminacies of representation in the analysis of texts that bear witness to trauma to allow an understanding of extreme events that are beyond understanding and representation. (Bond & Craps, 53). Thus, trauma theory adopts the textualist and historicist approach to the study of literary texts and takes a great deal from Freud's and Lacan's writings on the case.

In *Unclaimed Experience*, Caruth describes trauma as "an overwhelming experience of a sudden or catastrophic event in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena" (11). By focusing on the ungraspable, overwhelming, and catastrophic nature of the traumatic experience, Caruth forms her theory of trauma on

the survivor's victimization. For Caruth, trauma emanates from unusual and catastrophic events that are beyond the survivor's control. The survivor is not able to comprehend the event truly at the time but only after the event, it might reveal itself in the survivor's dreams and nightmares or in a different way. This "latency" indicates that trauma "returns to haunt the survivor" in an indefinite period (2016, 4). Caruth explains the disruption of daily activities of survivors of trauma by some repetitive compulsion as "the absolute inability of the mind to avoid an unpleasurable event that has not been given psychic meaning in any way" (2016, 59). The response for the traumatic event is delayed since "the event is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time" (Unclaimed, 4). The event is supposed to be left behind by the survivor, yet it remains to sneak around in the body and the mind of him. The mind of the survivor tries to perceive its left out the meaning by repetitions and enactments of the experience of trauma, which is, according to Caruth, "the unwitting re-enactment of an event that one cannot simply leave behind" (2016, 2). Hereby, trauma for Caruth is an oddity hidden in the unconscious which later haunts the survivor, craving to be understood while remaining inaccessible and ungraspable since it inhabits the unconscious.

Caruth builds her trauma theory on the paradox of forgetting and remembering. The traumatic event which is not fully experienced at the time needs a latency period in which the event feeds the survivor's trauma in dreams and bodily reactions. As Caruth claims, the power of trauma dwells in the forgetting and repetition compulsion: "the impact of the traumatic event lies precisely in its belatedness, in its refusal to be simply located, in its insistent appearance outside the boundaries of any single place or time" (2016, 9). Hence, in the Caruthian approach of trauma, the individual first goes through the forgetting period and then "taking over of the mind, psychically and neurobiologically, by an event it cannot control" (2016, 58).

In a similar manner to Freud's death drive when the protective shield cannot prevent the ego from being overwhelmed in exceptional situations to the pleasure principle, Caruth connects trauma and escape from death in the analysis of Holocaust survivors and other life-threatening incidents. Survivors of trauma cannot fully know the reality and the intensity of the traumatic events so their "trauma consists not only in having confronted death but in having survived, precisely, without knowing it" (2016, 54). For Caruth, the escape from death, survival, is also problematic and can turn into another crisis since it can cause a feeling of guilt in the survivor and reminds the survivor

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of the fact of having faced a baffling death threat and stayed alive after that. The survivor's returning to the event in the flashbacks or in the dreams means not only "the very incomprehensibility of one's own near-death" but also "the very incomprehensibility of one's own survival" (2016, 64). Caruth places "this incomprehensibility of survival" at the heart of Freud's formulation of the death drive. She reads Freud's death drive as a "return to the inanimate state" after an overwhelming experience and as "awakening" to life out of a death for which there was no preparation (2016, 65).

In the matter of traumatic history, Caruth considers a connection between trauma survivors and "the endless possibility of a new future" (2016, 68). Referring to Freud's latest text *Moses and Monotheism*, Caruth states that the traumatic structure of monotheism symbolizes a history of survival that is "both an endless crisis and the endless possibility of a new future" (68). Trauma survivor, for her, is not an entity on its own; trauma surpasses the survivor and becomes a sharing site with others so that it might become comprehensible, not for the survivor but perhaps for the next generations. In her words, "this notion of trauma also acknowledges that perhaps it is not possible for the witnessing of the trauma to occur within the individual at all, that it may only be in future generations that 'cure' or at least witnessing can take place" (2016, 136; note 21).

As for the link between trauma and history, Caruth argues that trauma might function "to provide the very link between cultures" (2016, 11). She takes Freud's story of the fort-da which is a child game for departure and return as a focal point to "a larger conception of historical experience". As Freud claims, this game provides the evidence of repetition compulsion, yet, for Caruth, it is also the symbolized pattern of departure and return. In Freud's later work *Moses and Monotheism*, the story of the history of the Jews is proof of this historical pattern of the game. Caruth concludes that in the game of fort-da, "a historical experience of a survival exceeding the grasp of the one who survives, engages a notion of history exceeding individual bounds". In other words, Caruth rethinks the individual trauma as an experience of departure from the individual to arrive in the collective history, transgenerational history and religious history as she deciphers Freud's *Moses and Monotheism* as a path to the collective history (2016, 66-67).

Caruth states that trauma "is always the story of a wound that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available" (2016, 4). This vision of trauma accentuates the narrating and the representation of the traumatic event. For Caruth, trauma and its story are interwoven with one another to the extent that she claims trauma cannot be acknowledged without its telling. In her interpretation of the film adaptation of Marguerite Duras' Hiroshima Mon Amour (1959), Caruth states that it is impossible to know the trauma without sharing this knowledge; in the film, a Japanese woman cannot acknowledge the death of her loved one until she shares this with a Japanese man. However, as Schönfelder states Caruth approaches the narration of trauma by scepticism (2013, 31). Caruth claims that narration of trauma is likely to distort the "truth" of trauma and weaken its impact: "[T]he transformation of the trauma into a narrative memory that allows the story to be verbalized and communicated, to be integrated into one's own, and others, knowledge of the past, may lose both the precision and the force that characterizes traumatic recall" (1995, 153).

Caruth ascertains that it is necessary to find another person who would listen and tell them about trauma for the individual to acknowledge one's trauma in the first place. However, the language of survivors to narrate trauma betrays them because their language is affected by the unconscious. Thus, according to Caruth, "trauma demands a mode of representation that textually performs trauma and its incomprehensibility through gaps, silences, the repeated breakdown of language, and the collapse of understanding" (Schönfelder, 31-32). The narration of trauma will be discussed in the following parts in this chapter in detail.

So far, a general understanding of Caruth's literary trauma theory has been drawn based on her ideas in *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (1996) and *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995) which helped to frame the trauma studies in the early 1990s. In the next part, criticisms of and differences from Caruth's event-based approach to trauma will be discussed with references to other trauma models and critics.

## 1.3. Pluralistic Trauma Models

Caruth's theorizing trauma in the literary framework has been criticized by many scholars for not only considering trauma as something ungraspable, thus deleting the

possibility of recovery but also for entangling the relation between trauma and narration. As Leys states, Caruth justifies her claims about the incurability of trauma with certain psycho-analytical and literary-theoretical works by Freud, Lacan, Duras, Resnais, Kant, Kleist and de Man to demonstrate that language is capable of bearing witness only by a failure of witnessing or representation, thus, Caruth traces the textual itinerary of insistently recurring words or figures that generate witness to some forgotten wound (Leys, 268-269). Bond and Craps attribute Caruth's outlining trauma as ungraspable and its lack of integration into consciousness, and thus, irrepresentability to the ideas of Bessel van der Kolk and Otto van der Hart (58). Van der Kolk and van der Hart argue that "a traumatic event elides its normal encoding in memory; it is stored differently and hence cannot become, in Janet's term, a 'narrative memory'". The aim of therapy for Janet was to transform the 'traumatic memory' into 'narrative memory' since traumatic memory repeats the past and is deleted from the conscious awareness while "narrative memory narrates the past as past". For Caruth, Felman and Hartman and other like-minded critics, this transformation from traumatic memory to narrative memory is only possible by the means of deconstructive literature which represents the failure of representation (Bond&Craps, 58). With the contribution of contemporary scholars and critics, perception of trauma underwent radical changes not only in the theoretical framework but also in terms of literary criticism.

In the first place, the definition of trauma (PTSD) underwent a revision. In the third edition of the diagnostic manual (DSM-III) of the American Psychiatric Association, the definition was given as "the development of characteristic symptoms following a psychologically traumatic event that is generally outside the range of usual human experience" (236). This definition fits perfectly well with Caruth's theory, however, it was criticized and broadened by Judith Herman in *Trauma and Recovery*. Herman coins a new term for trauma, "Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder", extending the spectrum of disorders (3); she includes the common, ongoing "usual" traumas like domestic abuse. For Herman, "traumatic events are extraordinary", not because of their rare occurrence, but because of their overwhelming ordinary human adaptation to life (33).

Herman studies the effects that social and cultural practices/conventions and political and economic systems have in generating traumas. According to her, until the

study of combat veterans in the twentieth century, inquiries about trauma had no awareness that violence is a routine part of women's sexual and domestic lives (Herman, 2015). She also thinks that Freud spotted this truth but avoided mentioning this. It was the women's liberation movement of the 1970s which helped trauma to be recognized as "hidden in the sphere of the personal, in private life" (Herman, 28). In contrast to Caruth's emphasis on forgetting, Herman focuses on "remembering and telling the truth about terrible events [which] are prerequisites for the restoration of the social order and for the healing of individual victims (1). In this way, remembering and telling the hidden truth signifies meaning for recovery in the face of trauma.

For Herman, individual/personal traumas cannot be disconnected from communal problems and socio-economical systems since one indicates the other; domestic abuse indicates patriarchy in Herman's understanding. She quotes from Virginia Woolf about the public and private reciprocity: "…the public and private worlds are inseparably connected… the tyrannies and servilities of one are the tyrannies and servilities of the other" (cited in Herman, 32). She states that "the traumas of one are the traumas of the other"; "the hysteria of women and the combat neurosis of men are one", thus she finds that the recovery from trauma, both on a communal and individual level, is possible only after its acknowledgement and sharing with a community (32). Herman's connecting individual traumas to social/communal actions is a contradiction of Caruth's victimized and incurable traumatized individuals. Caruth disregards this connection because she sees trauma as a locked, hidden material in the unconscious that stems from its enigmatic features rather than the larger social context it is produced in.

Another contradiction to Caruth's trauma theory is seen in Laura S. Brown's "Not Outside the Range: One Feminist Perspective on Psychic Trauma" which is included in Caruth's edited volume *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995). Brown uses the term "insidious trauma" to embody the "everyday assaults on integrity and personal safety in the daily lives of women and other nondominant groups" (105). Brown starts her criticism with the definition of trauma (PTSD) in APA's DSM in 1987 in which trauma is described as, along with other things, an event outside the range of human experience (Brown, 100). She states that some traumatic events like rape and incest are relatively common and happen so often to women, thus, they are not regarded

as events "outside the range of human experience". She recalls the term "secret trauma" by Diana Russell (Russell, 1986) for incest and rape which happen behind the closed doors of marital relationships, stating that "most traumas do occur in secret" (Brown, 101).

Brown's term "insidious trauma" is borrowed from her colleague Maria Root; according to Root, the term refers to "the traumatogenic effects of oppression that are not necessarily overly violent or threatening to bodily well-being at the given moment but do violence to the soul or spirit" (Brown, 107). Brown goes on with the ideas of Root on cultural and social reasons of insidious trauma: "… for all women living in a culture where there is a high base rate of sexual assault and where such behaviour is considered normal and erotic by men, as it is in North American culture, is an exposure to insidious trauma" (107). Referring to cultural, social and political systems, Brown states that "many women who have never been raped" are aware that they may be raped at any time and by anyone, thus, many women have symptoms of rape trauma and are hypervigilant to certain cues, avoid situations that sense high risk (107). For her, "insidious rape trauma is a part of everyday life" for those women who can hardly resist it. She includes other types of discriminations about race and gender in the same category of "so-called safety net" cracks of society all of whom encounter insidious trauma.

Another criticism of Brown is for the mainstream trauma theory. She states that in trauma theory "human experience" refers to often "male human experience" or at least an experience common to both women and men (Brown, 101). Mainstream trauma theory, according to her, is constructed on the human experience of men of the dominant class: white, young, able-bodied, educated, middle-class, Christian men"; thus, trauma is regarded to disrupt only "these particular human lives, but no other" (101). Brown also states that post-traumatic symptoms are recognized as intergenerational only in the case of children of survivors of the Nazi Holocaust. It is known that the starting point of trauma theory owes its foundations to the archive research of the Nazi Holocaust. Luckhurst states that the pioneers of trauma studies like Cathy Caruth, Shoshana Felman, Geoffrey Hartman and Dori Laub were inspired by the Collection of Fortunoff Video Archives for Holocaust Testimonies (4). What Brown suggests is that trauma is not confined to a certain gender, race, or group; membership in an oppressed social group can mean a lifetime risk of exposure to certain trauma (108).

In the first chapter of *Contemporary Approaches in Literary Trauma Theory* (2014) edited by Balaev himself, he puts contemporary approaches to trauma studies under the umbrella term of the "pluralistic trauma model" because of the plurality of theories and approaches (3). Balaev attributes the plurality of trauma theories to the "varying definitions of trauma and its effects" (2). Due to the contemporary shifts in literary trauma theory, trauma is situated in a larger framework of contextual factors. Along with Leys and Cvetkovich, Balaev repudiates the definition of trauma as unrepresentable in the classic trauma theory of Caruth and moves toward a definition of trauma considered in the social and cultural contexts of traumatic experience (3). He affirms that trauma causes disruption and reorientation of consciousness as it was claimed by classic trauma theories, however, he reminds that "the values attached to this experience are influenced by a variety of individual and cultural factors that change over time" (3). Hence, literary approaches to trauma move beyond the restrictive analysis and show trauma's varying representations.

Balaev's "pluralistic trauma model" can be regarded as subsequent to Brown's "insidious trauma" in terms of considering "the social context and the individual's personal history within that social context" when dealing with trauma. Balaev's principal denunciation is to Caruth's textualist approach which is based on written and visual texts produced mostly in Europe or the USA. Balaev expresses that this textualist approach of Caruth and others dismiss that "trauma occurs to actual people, in specific bodies, located within particular periods and places" (7). Caruth's claim that "trauma is never simply one's own" and that "we are implicated in each other's trauma" is problematic according to Balaev since involving everyone as victims of trauma means involving everyone as perpetrators. According to Balaev, overgeneralizing trauma produces a problem involving the assignment of responsibility for violence as well as understanding the relationship between direct and indirect action. The attempt to include everyone as victims of trauma runs the risk of including everyone as perpetrators. (7)

Balaev discusses that Caruth's approach was helpful for setting a framework of early trauma studies, yet it ignores the characteristics of different contexts for every trauma by positing them under the same category. In this regard, Craps states that Caruth's textualist approach to trauma locates the trauma in the unconscious of the survivor rather than connecting it with "a wounding political, social or economic

system" (Craps, 2013; 28); thus, Caruth's theory disregards possible progress for society and turns a blind eye to the oppressive systems to stay unchallenged.

With the contemporary shifts in understanding trauma, feminist and postcolonial theories reinterpreted classical trauma theory in terms of its event-based, Eurocentric, universalist, textualist and individual-oriented approach. Prior to feminist and post-colonialist theories, trauma studies were mostly limited to two main approaches: the classical Caruthian approach which is event-based and built on extraordinary and catastrophic events individuals go through and the insidious trauma model which is associated with the everyday, ongoing and usual traumas caused by everyday racism, sexism, classicism and other forms of oppression.

As for the feminist criticism of classical trauma theory, Judith Herman takes an important place since she, as aforementioned, reframes the definition of trauma in "usual" and "everyday" atrocities. For her, "certain violations of the social compact are too terrible to utter aloud" and thus they are "unspeakable"; however, these atrocities deny being buried and they need to be remembered and told for the restoration of the social order and for the healing of the individual victims (Herman, 1). For Herman, established diagnostic concepts of severe personality disorders commonly diagnosed in women have failed to recognize the impact of victimization (3) and are usually resulted in a wish to forget by the community (8). Herman quotes from Leo Eisinger, a psychiatrist who has studied the survivors of the Nazi concentration camps, about the cruel conflict between victim and bystander:

> War and victims are something the community wants to forget; a veil of oblivion is drawn over everything painful and unpleasant. We find the two sides face to face; on one side the victims who perhaps wish to forget but cannot, and on the other all those with strong, often unconscious motives who very intensely both wish to forget and succeed in doing so […] (127-62).

Herman states that there is a conflict between victim and perpetrator when the traumatic events are of human design; moreover, the community is easily tempted to take the side of the perpetrator (7). As the victim demands action and remembering, the community finds it more effortless to forget and do nothing. Secrecy and silence stimulate the perpetrator; in the absence of them, the perpetrator questions the credibility of the victim. Herman criticizes the mainstream trauma studies due to a tendency to discredit the victim or her credibility (8). Despite the abundance of documents of

psychological trauma, she elucidates, the debate on the credibility and reality of the phenomena holds the centre of trauma studies.

According to Herman, a consciousness on traumatic reality needs a social context to protect the victim; it is the social relationships for the individual victim, likewise, for the larger society it is the political movements that give voice to the disempowered (Herman, 9). Thus, the support of a political movement for the systematic study of psychological trauma gains prominence. As a matter of fact, Herman relates three steps of psychological trauma in history – hysteria, shell shock and sexual and domestic violence- to the political contexts of the time (9-28). The question of sexual trauma which was formulated on the studies of hysteria is an outcome of the women's liberation movement of the 1970s. With the women's movement, it was recognized that "the most common post-traumatic disorders are not those of men in war but of women in civilian life" (Herman, 28).

As above-mentioned, Laura S. Brown approaches the study of trauma from a feminist perspective, too. Brown criticizes the definition of PTSD in DSM III-R of APA (1987) for thinking trauma as "an event outside the range of human experience", thus, ignoring the usual, everyday traumatic events in the definition (Brown, 101). The distinction of the traumatized subject in the mental health disciplines becomes prominent regarding the gender; "the 'self-defeating' woman who's been in a battering relationship is treated quite differently (and less well) than is the survivor of a train wreck, even when the presenting symptoms are similar" (Brown, 101). For her, the victim of a train wreck is always seen as an innocent victim of an event while the former is thought to have contributed to her problem. She finds the crux of the problem in the definition of trauma and the constructed images of trauma within the experiences of dominant groups in cultures (102).

The oppression based on gender in trauma studies can easily be demonstrated to be generic and typical in all cultures. In the early 1980s, a study by Diana Russell showed that one woman in four had been raped and one woman in three had been sexually abused in childhood (Russell, 1986). The studies encouraged by the women's movement not only helped to raise consciousness about the silenced victims of sexual crimes, but it also contributed a boost of research on the previously ignored subject of sexual assault (Herman, 29-30). Along with numerous research in trauma studies, feminist analysis of

trauma aims to understand and demonstrate "the complex web of interaction between the internal, phenomenological experiences of the individual and the external, social context in which that person lives" (Lerman, 1986). As Brown believes, feminist therapy theory attempts to eradicate the biased gender norms based on white male experiences.

The oppression of a group and ignoring their situation in trauma studies do not pertain to the issues of gender; likewise, mainstream trauma theories neglect the traumatic experiences of non-European people. Post-colonial approach to trauma studies adopts a critical approach to event-based and textualist trauma model of Caruth for being Eurocentric and universalist. Ogaga Ifowodo, in *History, Trauma and Healing in Postcolonial Narratives* suggests that postcolonial history is a history of trauma; the devastating record of imperialist domination has caused a more catastrophic injury to the psyche of the colonized (2). According to Ifowodo, the traumatic injury to the psyche of the colonized manipulates the individual and collective identity which is "shattered by the massive blows of slavery and colonialism" (2). Ifowodo refers to the claim of Fanon that "only a psychoanalytical interpretation of the black problem can lay bare the anomalies of affect that are responsible for the structure of the complex" (cited in Ifowodo, 3). In this regard, Fanon and Ifowodo consult the unique characteristics of different contexts in which trauma occurs; hence, offer a varied criticism of trauma studies in terms of postcolonial context. As Craps emphasizes, "trauma is actually a Western artifact, invented in the late nineteenth century"; however, "the concept of trauma is used to describe responses to extreme events across space and time"; it is not finite to the Western world (2013; 20).

Balaev's term "pluralistic trauma model" is, as aforementioned, closely linked to the insidious trauma model and its involvement with structural oppression through a contextualized and interdisciplinary approach to trauma studies. The pluralistic trauma model underlines the variability of trauma in specific places and time as well as in specific individual histories. According to this model, the perception of trauma can be divergent in different contexts; a traumatic event for an individual or a culture may not be traumatic for another context. Balaev states that "the pluralistic trauma model allows determinate value and social specificity", "thus acknowledges the variability of trauma in its definition and representations" (2014; 6). In contrast to the classic notion of trauma as a silent haunting or an absolute indecipherable, the pluralistic approach builds on "the

ranging values and representations of trauma in literature and society"; it emphasizes "the harm caused by the traumatic experience" as well as "the many sources that inform the definitions, representations and consequences of traumatic experience" (Balaev, 2014; 6).

Caruth's model of trauma victimizes the survivor as a prisoner of knowledge that they can never fully comprehend since it imprisons trauma in the unconscious. Thus, this classic model eliminates the possibility of recovery for both the individual survivor and for the betterment of the community. Yet, the pluralistic trauma model proposes that trauma is "identifiable to a greater or lesser degree" (Balaev, 7). Balaev asserts that "trauma's meaning is locatable rather than permanently lost" in "the larger social, political and economic background contexts that influence violence" (8). In addition to the neurobiological and social contexts, contemporary pluralistic approaches acknowledge that "the language can convey the variable meanings of trauma" (Balaev, 7). After all, a single conceptualization of trauma is unlikely to fit the multiple and often contradictory depictions of trauma in literature because, as Balaev states, "texts cultivate a wide variety of values that reveal individual and cultural understandings of the self, memory and society" (8).

On the concept of recovery, pluralistic trauma models adopt a different approach from the event-based, classical trauma models. For the classical, event-based trauma model, trauma is an inaccessible and ungraspable "enigma" and it repudiates any possibility of working through. Caruth regards survival from trauma rich with "endless possibility of a new future (2016, 68) and for her, history of trauma turns into a sharing site as a transmission between different generations and cultures. She presents this transmission as a "pass[ing] the awakening on to the others" rather than an understanding or an awakening of the self (107-108). The awakening, then, according to Baysal, refers to a transmitted knowledge which is impossible to access or possess (20). It is a transmission of what is unknowable and incomprehensible. This model considers trauma as an unsolvable phenomenon of the unconscious, thus the transmission of the awakening in the unconscious highlights the ungraspable nature of trauma rejecting any chance of recovery.

In pluralistic models, trauma is supposed to be locatable in social, political and economic structures, instead of the unconscious. Recognition of trauma is the only way

out to recovery. Although she is an event-based theoretician, Herman posits remembering and telling the truth about trauma as "prerequisites both for the restoration of the social order and for the healing of individual victims" (1). In her approach, recovery develops step by step which she describes as "fundamental stages of recovery". In the first "establishing safety" step, Herman recommends the removal of the survivor from their traumatising environment. In the second stage "reconstructing the trauma story", Herman considers it necessary to put the trauma into words. Putting trauma into words coincides with the idea of "talking cure" of Freud and Charcot and with Caruth's emphasis on language and the act of telling. For Herman, the reconstruction of trauma into words transforms the traumatic memory and integrates it into the survivor's life story (175). She states that "traumatic memory is wordless and static", thus, the role of telling the story is to transform it into words and music (Herman, 175). The last stage for Herman is "restoring the connection between survivors and their community" in which the bond broken due to traumatic experience is re-established between the individual and their community. For Herman, traumatic events have primary effects on the psychological structures of the individual self as well as "on the systems of attachment and meaning that link individual and community" (45). Thus, mending this broken relationship is vital for recovery as "recovery can take place only within the context of relationships; it cannot occur in isolation" (Herman, 133).

Kai Erikson addresses trauma and its connection to community in his article "Notes on Trauma and Community". Erikson argues that traumatised people are dragged "into a kind of protective envelope, a place of mute, aching loneliness" where they are "set apart" and "made special" (1995; 185-186). He goes on with that this sense of difference creates a status, "where people are drawn to others similarly marked" (186). Erikson considers this shared trauma serves as a source of communality, thus, creates a spiritual kinship, a sense of identity. This "gathering of the wounded" becomes the starting point of recovery. Since traumatized people have "a changed worldview", "a changed sense of self" and "a changed way of relating to others", their recovery seems conceivable by means of relationships of the wounded (Erikson, 194)

### 1.4.    The Narration of Trauma: A Paradox or A Catharsis?

The connection between trauma theories and literature has been the worksite of scholars starting with Freud. Along with his medical research of trauma, Freud related

this mystery to literary texts. His interpretation of trauma in *Moses and Monotheism* and his perpetual references of figures from literature-inspired scholars to use literary texts as anchors. In *Trauma Fiction* (2004), Anne Whitehead calls attention to the connection of trauma theories with literature stating that literary readings add something or speak something that the theory cannot express (4). Trauma fiction can possibly be the voice of the silence of trauma.

Likewise, Vickroy states that "literary and imaginative approaches to trauma provide a necessary supplement to historical and psychological studies" (2002; 221). In other words, literary texts and their fictional worlds engage with the subject of trauma in a "personalized and contextualized", "fictionalized and historicized" way as well as "psychologized and metaphorized" at the same time (Schönfelder, 2013; 29). A literary approach to trauma engages readers' emotional identification and sympathy along with critical reflection on the other. However, with the first trauma theories, this possibility becomes problematic as trauma is seen as unspeakable and thus testimonies of trauma in real life and in fiction turn into a paradox.

Cathy Caruth's treatment of trauma emphasizes the trans-disciplinary nature of trauma theory with the combined essays and interviews by literary theorists, filmmakers, sociologists and psychiatrists in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*; from this standpoint, literary trauma theory was shaped around the ideas of Caruth. Her definition of trauma, emerged from the diagnostic category of PTSD, as aforementioned, puts trauma in the centre of the collapse of understanding (Whitehead, 5). In her concept of trauma, the ungraspable nature of trauma at the time of its occurrence, its haunting possession of the individual and its belatedness to fully experience it complicate the relation between experience and the event of trauma. Hence, Caruthian trauma theory emphasizes the disruption of time and history in the same way as Freud's concept of "deferred action" or "afterwardsness" to describe the complex and temporal affinity between the traumatic event and its fully understanding by the victim (Whitehead, 5-6). Caruth's conceptualization of trauma suggests that "if trauma is at all susceptible to narrative formulation, then it requires a literary form which departs from conventional linear sequence" (Whitehead, 6).

When viewed from the Caruthian concept of trauma, broken/fragmented narratives in literary fiction play a crucial role in narrating trauma. Coming from a

deconstructive literary school, Caruth and other event-based trauma scholars see broken/fragmented narrations as a powerful mode of access to history and memory. In this regard, Laurie Vickroy in *Trauma and Survival in Contemporary Fiction* states that trauma fictions not only present trauma as subject matter but also internalize the traumatic situation by using silence, simultaneous knowledge and denial, resistance and repression in narrative techniques. In a way, the Freudian model of trauma is manifested in trauma fiction in the form of flashbacks, repeated dreams and repressed resistance to show the symptoms of trauma and fragmented perception of the traumatized. The unspeakable nature of trauma causes traumatic memory to be wordless and static, thus the victim keeps his/her silence; s/he cannot place the memories in chronological order or in a linear, clear way of narration. Corresponding to the fragmented state of traumatized, trauma narration internalizes the silence and imitates the traumatic state of the survivor. In other words, trauma is best phrased through figurative language; symbols and metaphors stand for the damage to the mind, fragmentation and dissociation of the self.

Anne Whitehead in *Trauma Fiction* states that "trauma fiction is a paradox because if the experience of a traumatic event resists language and representation then how can it be narrativized in fiction?" (3). This is because the language is not effective enough to transfer the terror and destruction in the traumatized victim. On the function of language in describing trauma, Laub and Auerhahn write that language may not function as it normally does since the victims lose their connection to the language to define the traumatic experience, and thus the language of the traumatized victims tends to break down due to massive acts of aggression (288). Since the victim is trapped between the traumatic world and post-traumatic world, s/he is haunted by the traumatic past which eliminates a clear order of events. As aforementioned, flashbacks, dreams, hallucinations, lack of linguistic efficiency or other symptoms of psychosomatic disorders represent the impossibility of representation of trauma. In this sense, the silent narration of trauma proves the inexpressibility of the event as well as the impossibility of testimony. Moreover, the silence in the narration prevents any kind of working-through as a means to healing on the personal level.

On the other hand, as Geoffrey H. Hartman points out in "On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies", "literature is indeed one way to express whatever kind of memory the traumatic event allows… and [traumatic representation] is best phrased

through figurative language" (1995; 542). Accordingly, the symbols and metaphors related to the traumatic state of the victim convey the meaning and make it more understandable. Moreover, narrating the trauma may partly achieve a kind of "working through" for the victim, thus allows a "sharing" which helps for the recovery (Kaplan, 37). In other words, narrating trauma either to a psychiatrist or a reader can work as a catharsis to relieve the traumatic symptoms. In this sense, Freud and Breuer developed the cathartic method of treatment for their patients who suffered from hysteria. They used hypnosis to help the patients recall traumatic experiences and this process helped the repressed or ignored emotions express themselves. From this point forth, narratives of trauma can be regarded as a device to catharsis on both personal and public levels. As Hartman states that the function of literature is equal to that of the talking cure while another scholar Suzette A. Henke coined the term 'scriptotheraphy' for "the process of writing out and writing through a traumatic experience in the mode of therapeutic re-enactment" (Henke, 1998).

The role of trauma narratives or trauma fiction is, above all, to represent the trauma adequately, to vocalize an unbearable psychic wound that the subject or group is not able to communicate or express, in other words, to represent and mediate what cannot be spoken. To do this, most writers mimic the form and the symptoms of trauma with temporality and chronological collapse. These representations are characterized by a challenge to "narrate the unnarratable" (Whitehead, 4). In this regard, trauma narratives use modernist and postmodernist elements like distorted or unbroken narratives, non-linear plot structure and unreliable narration to understand and give a full account of trauma. However, Craps in his *Postcolonial Witnessing: Trauma Out of Bounds* challenges the notion that "traumatic experiences can only be adequately represented through the use of experimental, modernist textual strategies" (2013; 39). He traces the preference of modernist forms for the representation of trauma back to Adorno's damnation of poetry after Auschwitz. His famous statement is as follows: "It is barbaric to write a poem after Auschwitz, and that is why it has become impossible to write poetry today" (Adorno, 1951; 31). Adorno's denial of aesthetics in poetry became more complex in trauma narratives as trauma theorists and trauma fictions "justify their focus on anti-narrative, fragmented forms by pointing to similarities with the psychological experience of trauma" (Craps, 2013; 40). Craps criticizes this tendency as it narrows trauma canon to only non-linear, modernist texts by mostly Western writers.

Craps see this as a danger for the field of trauma becoming limited to a selection of texts for trauma representation.

Regarding the paradoxical essence of trauma, literary representations of trauma question "the possibility of verbalizing the unspeakable, narrating the unnarratable and making sense of the incomprehensible" (Schönfelder, 2013; 30). The characteristic challenge of trauma, as Luckhurst states, is to inquire about the capacities of narrative knowledge (2013; 79), thus most trauma narratives focus on the "narrative/anti-narrative tension at the core of trauma". This tension of narrative possibility or impossibility manifests itself in the potentials or limitations of language and narration. For Caruth, the words narrating the trauma are never sufficient enough to represent the trauma efficiently, hence, she states her scepticism toward the capability of narration. She states that transforming trauma into a narrative is likely to distort the truth of trauma and weaken its impact: "[T]he transformation of the trauma into a narrative memory that allows the story to be verbalized and communicated, to be integrated into one's own, and other's knowledge of the past, may lose both the precision and the force that characterizes traumatic recall" (1995; 153). In this regard, representations of trauma demand a mode of representation that textually performs trauma and its incomprehensibility through gaps, silences, repeated breakdown of language and the collapse of understanding.

The role of the reader in trauma fiction is another significant point to take into consideration while dealing with trauma narratives. The relation between the narration and the reader is similar to the relation between the analysand and the analyst. In the traumatic narrations, the reader is in a passive, inarticulate condition which ends in vicarious traumatization by showing empathy for the victim. As Hubert Zapf believes, literary trauma texts reflect the paradox of trauma upon the readers as the readers operate in an imaginary and textual realm. The individual trauma history of the readers may have a particular impact on the comprehension of the literary trauma; besides, the socio-cultural context and political agenda are other factors that impress the comprehension of trauma by the readers (Schönfelder, 2013; 29-30).

Moreover, the questions of testimony as a witness through a traumatic narration become paradoxical. Geoffrey Harman mentions that trauma theorists try to find "a way of receiving the story, of listening to it, of drawing it into an interpretative conversation"

(1995, 542); thus, the reader is offered to a witnessing process. The problem with the testimony is whether it is possible to avoid sympathy turning into over-identification. On this, Dominick La Capra distinguishes a boundary between empathy and identification. For him, empathy is a bond with the other person with an affirmation of otherness and focuses on cognition and critical analysis. However, identification does not recognize these limits and causes a secondary trauma on the reader (Whitehead, 2004; 8-9). However, with the popularity of postcolonial trauma narratives, the reader is not an innocent victim, instead, he is "a bystander or potential collaborator". As Craps states, these texts rely "on a no-frills, realist aesthetic", which differentiates them from the canon of trauma literature. In other words, broken narratives are not the only way to represent trauma; realist narratives of trauma can offer an adequate representation of trauma (Craps, 41-43).

The term herstory was first used at the International Conference 'Trauma Narratives and Herstory' held in November 2010 at the University of Northampton and has been applied to the analysis of feminist novels to distinguish between patriarchal history and feminist viewpoints on history. From this regard, the writings of women on traumatic experience support the power of storytelling to turn traumatic memories into narrative ones and this may function as a survival both at the individual and collective level. As a whole, focusing on texts by women or about women probes into the diversity of representational methods to depict traumatic experiences as well as to show the complex relationship between trauma and gender. In other words, traumatic experiences of women like rape, domestic abuse and social gender inequality can be remembered and represented properly.

### 1.5. Rape: Individual or Cultural?

Despite the abundance of meanings and interpretations on the issue of rape, it is simply described as "sexual intercourse without the woman's consent" (Cathy, 9), since this study focuses on the rape of women rather than of men. The Greek and Latin roots of the word "rape" are metaphorically associated with the actions of a bird: among the many meanings of the word, the Latin word rapio connotes "to drag away violently and with greed" as a bird "swoops down to catch its prey and carry it off with the intention to devour or consume it". Thus, the definition of the word implies theft, snatching or

stealing a "live prey" which can be women, children, slaves or livestock, regardless of the sexual act (Du Toit, 35).

The long history of rape and its everyday reality doesn't make it more tolerable or resolvable. Lack of deterrent penalties causes the number of rape events remain unsolved and the victim to be silenced. Examples of raped women from the very beginning lead to a false impression that rape is evolutionally inevitable. Greek and Roman mythologies are rich to offer stories of rape as part of daily life. The chief Greek God Zeus is part of many rape stories; Medusa was raped by Poseidon; the story of Lucrece's rape in *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594) by Shakespeare; myths of Philomela and Arachne and many other stories portray the long-standing rape culture. A recent study by Thornhill and Palmer (2000) investigates the reality of rape in terms of evolutionary theory. They attempt to explain that men are genetically programmed to rape in order to improve their evolutionary prospects- they impregnate women who are out of their league. However, it is clear that not only women of childbearing age are raped but rape is also less probably to result in pregnancy. Thus, the evolutionary explanation of rape fails to satisfy to give a deeper understanding of the causes of rape.

Tracking the humiliated history of women, rapes and attempted rapes unearths the extreme power-relation between men and women. Though common in all cultures, Western society's subjection of women has been an undeniable fact, despite social enforcements. The stereotypes on women created by the art and literature in Western society have portrayed women as silent, chaste and obedient, thus have affiliated rape directly with chastity. Rape transforms the status of women both sexually and socially; a raped woman loses her honour, and she no longer fits to the definition of "good" woman: as a virgin, wife or widow. In other words, rape redefines the identity of women in a socially and ideologically male-dominated world (Cathy, 1-6).

Redenominating women's identity as a result of rape can be traced to the definition of women historically and ideologically as the possession of a man. In this regard, rape is seen as a "property crime" against the father or husband. Legal steps in the medieval period against rape played a key role in the definition of identity, by trying to set boundaries to the self "through the rightful protection of property" (Graham, 209-33). As Nazife Bashar states, rape was started to be treated differently from abduction in the second half of the 14th century; only then the legal definition of rape emerged as

a "crime against the person" (Bashar, 1983; 41). Yet, the question of the mind and body conundrum remained open; whether the mind is affected by actions done to the body has not been regarded as critical to the rape studies or crimes until recently (Cathy, 15).

It is to the point to mention two important rape stories from literature since their stories associate with the two rape stories in the current study. The stories of Lucrece and Helen elucidate the rape culture in the history of humanity. Lucrece, as in Shakespeare's poem, represents the rape story in which the woman is forcibly violated without being abducted; this representation matches with Meryem's rape and her being left where she is found. In the stories of both Lucrece and Meryem, rape is regarded as a property crime against the husband or the father. In the case of Meryem, the family favours the punishment of death for Meryem since the family is dishonoured. The rape of Ma in the current study is associated with the story of Helen; the paradigmatic stolen woman whose rape consists of abduction as well. To this respect, Meryem and Ma's rape stories imply the consistency of rape culture.

Hitherto, it has been attempted to show the undergoing reality of rape in history, mythology and literature. Yet, the traumatic status of rape has been acclaimed recently with the feminist interpretations of trauma theory. The initial feminist movements focused on raising consciousness about the real conditions of women. For the first time, in 1975, a centre for research on rape was created in response to feminist pressure: rape rates were horrifyingly high: "One woman in four had been raped. One woman in three had been sexually abused in childhood" (Herman, 30). Speaking about their experiences for women was certain to result in public humiliation, disbelief and ridicule. Thus, women were silenced by fear and shame and were expected to live with sexual and domestic exploitation in every form.

The feminist movement changed the phase of rape in two ways: first, they redefined rape as an atrocity, a crime of violence instead of a sexual act. Rape was started to be discussed publicly and the idea that rape was women's deepest desire was reversed by feminist critics. Second, rape was redefined as a method of political control of women through terror. Susan Brownmiller called attention to rape as a male power to subordinate women:

> Man's discovery that his genitalia could serve as a weapon to generate fear must rank as one of
> the most important discoveries of prehistoric times, along with the use of fire and the first crude

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stone axe. From prehistoric times to the present, I believe, rape has played a critical function. It is nothing more or less than a conscious process of intimidation by which all men keep all women in a state of fear (30).

The first study on the psychological effects of rape was conducted in 1972 by Ann Burges and Lynda Holmstrom concluding that it was observed a pattern of psychological reactions on rape victims which they called "rape trauma syndrome". Burgess, in "Rape Trauma Syndrome" gives the definition of rape trauma as "the stress response pattern of the victim following forced, non-consenting sexual activity" (Burgess, 1983; 97). According to their studies, women saw rape as a "life-threatening event and they generally feared mutilation and death during the assault". Some of the symptoms of rape were reported as insomnia, nausea, startle responses, nightmares and dissociative or numbing expressions. They also stated that some victims' symptoms were similar to those described in combat veterans (Herman, 31-32). Another study on rape trauma (Murray, 2012) discusses that it was observed by Burgess and Holmstrom rape trauma occurs in two stages: the first one being a period of extreme fear which follows a reorganizational interval characterized by more moderate emotional symptoms. Murray goes on to state that during the acute stage, victims inconsistently responded with "extreme grief, anger, or even languor or lassitude", corresponding to Herman's assertions. In addition to these symptoms, victims also displayed some other physical symptoms such as "nightmares, sleeplessness, phobias and general emotional retreat" as well as "hesitation or refusal to press charges, lack of emotional affect, and returning to the scene of the crime" (Murray, 2012; 1639).

In "Rape and Sexual Assault", Dr. Fiona Mason, one of the most important researchers in RTS (Rape Trauma Syndrome), and co-writer Jan Welch write that the impact of rape can be regarded as the most outrageous since almost all people who experience rape are "more likely to develop post-traumatic stress disorder than victims of any other crime", although the physical and psychological reactions of the victims vary notably. Mason and Welch accentuate "anxiety, tearfulness, self-blame and guilt, disbelief, physical revulsion and helplessness" as the early symptoms of rape trauma. As stated by Mason and Welch in the same study, half of the rape victims "recover from acute psychological effects" after about twelve weeks; however, these symptoms prevail "many" victims for years, estimating the development of mental health and social

problems such as depression, feelings of shame, and suicidal ideation in 17 percent of rape victims (Welch & Mason, 2007; 1157).

Ann Burgess, in "Rape Trauma Syndrome", writes that between 1970 and 1979 there has been a 100% increase in reported rape cases and this figure must be doubled as she estimates that 40-50% of forcible rapes are not reported (1983; 97). The reasons behind victims' delayed reporting are stated as follows:

> It may be hard for a victim to do anything that reminds them of the circumstances of the assault and simple tasks may become impossible... Some find it too hard to talk about what happened, and thus they may delay reporting the events and not tell anyone, even those who love them most. Many women blame themselves and feel ashamed. Most of us would comfortably talk about being in a car crash, or being mugged, but how many of us would feel comfortable talking about having been raped? (Mason, 2010; 118)

Society and societal stereotypes play an important role in belated reporting rape cases. Women do not report rape or do not identify themselves as rape victims since the stereotypes about rape include the notions such as she "asked" to be raped, secretly enjoyed the experience or lied about it. Survivors face a dilemma on whether to accept rape myths and keep their silence or to accept the burden of being an outcast. There is a reciprocal relationship between stereotypes about rape victims and rape myths which can be defined as "prejudicial, stereotyped, or false beliefs about rape, rape victims, and rapists" (Burt, 1980; 217) and "attitudes and beliefs that are generally false but are widely and persistently held, and that serve to deny and justify male sexual aggression against women" (K. A. Lonsway, L.F. Fitzgerald, 1995; 134). In a study in 1994, rape myths were subsumed into three groups in terms of their reasons: victim masochism such as "they enjoy it/ want it", victim precipitation such as "they ask for/ deserve it, it only happens to certain types of women" and victim fabrication like "they tell lies/ exaggerate". Accordingly, rape myths allow society to justify male sexual violence and so women deny personal vulnerability to rape. (Buddie &Miller, 2001; 140).

Buddie and Miller, in the same study, state that society's comprehension of the trauma of rape might not be beneficial for rape victims since most studies on rape and rape trauma focus on how rape victims should behave and more likely to justify sexual harassment. Moreover, many rape victims do not exhibit overt negative reactions, so they are not perceived as actually traumatized. Buddie and Miller comment that society expects rape victims to be visibly upset, in shock or display some extreme emotional responses. They also mention that rape victims' credibility depends on their emotional

responses as "participants in a study identified more with a victim who exhibited an emotional response rather than a victim who remained calm and unemotional" (Buddie & Miller, 2001; 143). In other words, an emotional response to rape such as anger, guilt, or upset is perceived as more serious and appropriate by society. Therefore, stereotypes have a great impact regarding the belated reporting of rape events and the perception of rape victims by society.

Another reason for the belated status of rape trauma syndrome is the definition of PTSD. The first definitions of PTSD in DMS III-R of APA focused on trauma as an event outside the range of human experience; however, it ignores the usual, everyday traumatic events. Rape for the woman is outside the range of her experience, but for society, it has been normalized through the traditional patriarchal norms. Moreover, the idea of the normality of rape has been transferred into societies through language, art, literature and films. Society has always seen a combat veteran or a victim of a train wreck as innocent while a raped woman has always been blamed or been compelled to share the burden of rape. Thus, the feminist movement and rape studies of Judith Herman and Laura S. Brown helped in redefining rape and PTSD and so changed the direction of rape and trauma studies. Recapitulating what Virginia Woolf wrote about the public and private worlds being interconnected, trauma studies focused on the equality of traumas for men and women. The hysteria of women and combat neurosis of men are now seen as one.

Rape can be regarded as one of the experiences where the public and private forms of organized social violence coincide. It is crucial to recognize that rape is not just a word, it is a whole story with a beginning and a tragic ending; it happens to a human being. So, Caruth's idea of trauma which degrades the people who experience rape to only victims of an ungraspable and unspeakable reality fails to appease all rape cases. A rape survivor Alice Sebold testifies to this brutal experience: "When I was raped, I lost my virginity and almost lost my life. I also discarded certain assumptions I had held about how the world worked and about how safe I was" (cited in Herman, 51). Furthermore, the society plays an important role in defining the rape cases as ordinary or outside the range of human experience. In order to comprehend rape reality accordingly, it is crucial to approach rape cases both individually and culturally. From the individual perspective of rape, the Caruthian trauma model is applicable with

references to Freud, Breuer and van der Kolk regarding the traumatic symptoms, belatedness of trauma, unspeakable and ungraspable nature of the traumatic event, as well as the healing probability. On the other hand, rape is not only an individual case; the social and cultural motives of rape reveal the social and political context of trauma, thus, Balaev's "pluralistic trauma model" corresponds to the fundamental study of traditions and cultural and social structure of a society dealing with the trauma of rape.

On the representation of rape trauma in literary narration, the paradoxical questions on the testimony and victimization recall the questions on the nature of trauma. Representations of rape and domestic violence tend to either portray female victimization and social critique of female victimization or are challenged by the question of testimony regarding the stereotypes of rape victims. The definition of trauma by Caruth limits the trauma to the unspeakable and unrepresentable nature, thus complexes the relationship between the traumatic event and its representation. In this regard, literary representation of rape trauma challenges the testimony of rape victims in a traumatic narration where the trauma is not only the thematic concern but also the form that performs the trauma. Thus, traumatic representation of rape obstructs the relation between fact and fiction by destructing the reliability of narration. The realistic narration of rape trauma, on the other hand, overcomes the questions of testimony by not internalizing the trauma and providing a working through for possible healing. However, a working through of trauma in literary representation connotes a tendency to female victimization.

Consequently, trauma theories have been proved effective to analyse the traumatic state of rape victims and the social context of rape cases in accordance with the theories of Caruth, Balaev and some feminist critics specifically Judith Herman and Laura S. Brown. Literary trauma theory not only represents traumatic events as its subject matter but also internalizes the form of trauma in literary works. In the next chapters, two novels regarding rape will be analysed in terms of literary rape trauma theory both from the individual and contextual levels.

## 2. CHAPTER TWO: EMMA DONOGHUE'S *ROOM*

> Fiction gives eyes to the horrified narrator.
>
> Eyes to see and to weep. . .
>
> —Paul Ricoeur

This chapter discusses the role of captivity correspondingly rape on trauma and traumatic narration in the work of Emma Donoghue's *Room* (2010). The novel is analysed in terms of Ma's rape and seven-year captivity, her motherhood in the novel, and social adaptation problems Ma and Jack experience after their rescue. Traumatic narration through the perspective of a-five-year-old narrator, Jack, is another point analysed with references to trauma fiction and its paradoxical essence in trauma narratives.

Emma Donoghue was born in Dublin, Ireland, in October 1969. She is a novelist, literary historian, teacher, playwright, radio and film scriptwriter. She is the eighth child of literary parents, Denis and Frances Donoghue. She writes in a wide range of literary genres, including historical fiction, contemporary fiction, fairy tales, the bildungsroman, short stories and poetry. Since 1998, she has lived in Ontario with her partner and their two children. She maintains her dual citizenship between Ireland and Canada; both countries embrace her works in their literary traditions.

*Room*[*] is Donoghue's seventh and most acclaimed work of fiction published in 2010, which was also turned into a screenplay later. The movie version of the novel is nominated for The Best Movie in Academy Award in 2016. The novel was also shortlisted for the Man Booker literary prize. Room is a work of fiction; however, it was inspired by a true story of the Fritzl family in Austria who escape from a dungeon. Based on a modern-day case, Emma Donoghue's novel was accused of cynicism and abounded sensationalism. The story of the Fritzl family is an atrocious one: Josef Fritzl locked his daughter, Elizabeth, in a basement for 24 years and raped her repeatedly and fathered her seven children- three of whom he imprisoned with her. When the newspapers reported the case of Fritzl family, Emma Donoghue says, she was triggered by the story

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[*] All the references to *Room*: Donoghue, E. *Room*. Electronic Edition. Pan Macmillan. 2002. ISBN 978-0-330-53398-0 PDF/ISBN 978-0-330-53397-3 EPUB.

of five-year old Felix Fritzl, Elizabeth's son, emerging into a world he had no idea about like a Martian coming to the Earth. She conveys to have been taken over by the idea of a child born into captivity and raised in secret isolation in the middle of a contemporary city. She declares the story of Jack and Ma could be everybody's story in some sense. Despite the accusation of cynicism, Emma Donoghue recalls the writing period of the novel as quite painful (Crown, 2010) (Donoghue, 2010b, 4).

The novel, *Room*, is narrated entirely from the perspective of a five-year-old boy, Jack and is divided into five parts. These parts follow Jack's developmental stages as he perceives his surroundings, during and after his captivity and outside and within society. The writer, Donoghue, explains her choice of Jack as the narrator as the only way to handle this constrained situation. The first part is titled "Presents" and focuses on their daily routines and the pleasures that mother (Ma) and child (Jack) share in each other's company during their horrifying confinement. The only friend for them is 'the television' which plays a main role in the novel to transmit the external world. Jack is 5 years old and the small room- 11-by-11-foot space- is the only place he has spent his entire life along with his mother. His mother has chosen to raise him with the understanding that there is nothing else outside the four reinforced walls within which they reside. Their only intimate connection to the external world – the tv- fails to connect them to the real world; Ma states it rots their brains and Jack thinks the people on the screen are from other planets. Thus, without the only reality of the television, Jack and Ma are left alone in their microcosmic reality.

The other connection to the outside is Old Nick, Ma's captor who had abducted her seven years ago and has held her captive in the room since then. The limited information about Old Nick is only implied through some unrelated details: the unemployed middle-aged man who enters the dead-bolted room several nights of the week to sexually abuse Jack's mother. "Old Nick" is an abstract threat, even his real name is unknown: Old Nick is only the name Jack gives him according to a character on TV, he is only the man who delivers the food and supplies and "makes Ma's bedsprings creak at night". Jack never perceives Old Nick as real, maybe only half real because he never meets Old Nick clearly but only through the door of the wardrobe. He hides in the wardrobe when he hears the door and stays there until Old Nick leaves. Thus, Jack's perception of reality is different from Ma's as he was born and raised in the walls of

Room. For Jack, this horrifying existence and captivity is the only entity he knows. Due to his lack of other references, Jack never assumes that his Room is small or a prison. His world in the Room is personified by inanimate objects to recoup the community they lack. Simple things like door, chair or table are described in a personified way through the eyes of the 5-year-old narrator:

> I flat the chairs and put them beside Door against Clothes Horse. He always grumbles and says there's no room but there's plenty if he stands up really straight. I can fold up flat too but not quite as flat because of my muscles, from being alive. Door's made of shiny magic metal, he goes beep beep after nine when I'm meant to be switched off in Wardrobe (10).

Every object in Room has a purpose and Jack feels safe here. His traumatic stage starts after their escape in the real world. Though he has to hide himself in the wardrobe when Old Nick comes for his nightly visits, he never assumes their imprisonment, "beep beep" sound of the Door or Old Nick's creaking Bed as weird. After their escape from the Room, Jack grows awareness towards the outside world bit by bit. He admits his awareness towards the outside world despite his assuming their room as real and the world on TV as only in stories (313).

Jack's first contact with the "real" world is more traumatic than his confinement considering that he feels bewildered outside: his looks are all different, there is a confusion about his gender because of his hair: long and put in a ponytail, his physical appearance seems weak and under-sized, and he is still being breastfed. The things which seem natural in the Room create puzzlement in the eyes of the onlookers. In the Cumberland Clinic, where they stay for a while to get appropriate care and an adjustment period, doctors and psychologists disapprove the long-lasting breastfeeding of a-five-year-old boy, thus Ma feels uneasy when confronted with obtrusive gazes (144). Moreover, the media refers to Jack as "Bonsai Boy" to describe the pint-size of Jack. Jack has a great difficulty to understand peculiarity about them when he finds a newspaper. "I'm not a tree, I'm a boy" (193), he thinks.

As above-mentioned, Jack feels shielded in the Room and after their rescue, he has to face responses that fluctuate between severe judgementalism and sympathy, between horror and pity and between curiosity and morbidity. People don't seem to understand the bond between Ma and Jack as they see Jack as the grotesque son of a rapist, in spite of her insistence on that the boy only belongs to her, that he is "the dead spit of me" (7). Jack's dehumanization by his biological father, Old Nick, and his

grandfather- they both address him with the impersonal 'it'- provokes a feeling of abuse at society's own convenience; Jack assumes that he is weird and can be scrutinized and judged or abused (Ladron, 2017; 89). Although there are many other aspects about the trauma of Jack, current study focuses on the trauma of Ma due to her rape and her captivity.

### 2.1. Captivity of Ma

Throughout the novel, the narrator, Jack, calls her Ma, yet after their rescue, she recovers her name, Sharon, to reclaim her identity again. She was kidnapped when she was a 19-year-old college student by Old Nick. "Old Nick- I even didn't know him. I was nineteen. He stole me" (88). She was tricked by Old Nick and brought to a prison which they call Room. Though she seems to be a normal mother to her child who is loving, caring, attentive and balanced, she shows the symptoms of trauma through her behaviours. In her seven-year captivity, Ma is abused and raped repeatedly, Old Nick visits Room some days of the week. The naïve narrator, Jack, tells the "beep beep voice" of the door when Old Nick comes, and he has to hide himself in the wardrobe to listen and count for the creaking of the bed. Judith Herman writes that such kind of repeated abuse can exist in prisons, concentration camps and slave labor camps as well as in religious cults, in brothels and other institutions of organized sexual abuse (2015; 74). In this regard, the Room is a prison where Ma is abused over and over again.

Domestic abuse is regarded as one which is rarely recognized since physical barriers in confinement are rare to escape (Herman, 2015; 74). Ma is not the wife of Old Nick, yet, in seven years the relationship between them is similar to the one in a malevolent marriage. Especially after the birth of Jack, Ma behaves obediently to protect Jack. Moreover, Old Nick complains about his being degraded to a grocery boy for Ma and Jack which is similar to some domestic examples. He says: "I'm just the grocery boy, take out your trash, trek around the kidswear aisles, up the ladder to deice your skylight, at your service ma'am " (36). Although he is being sarcastic about the condition and his prisoners are chained in the walls of the Room, the abusive relationship can be regarded as a domestic one, too. Jack regards their lifestyle in a small room as a normal one, thus he never feels a threat from Old Nick. His mother obliges him to hide in the Wardrobe at night, yet Jack is never fully aware of the situation. On his fifth birthday, he hears Old Nick wants to buy him a present but Ma objects it and states that she never

wants to be subjugated by Old Nick except for necessary things (37). Sexual and psychological abuse of Ma for seven years of captivity elucidates domestic abuse.

During captivity, the victim is pushed into sustained contact with the perpetrator, and it creates a special type of forced relationship, one of coercive control (Herman, 2015; 74); Ma and Jack are subordinate to Old Nick. In their life, the perpetrator shapes their psychology and their minds. Jack's birthday present from Old Nick is a remote-control jeep and this provokes a-three-day punishment of them when Jack accidentally slides it on sleeping Old Nick. Old Nick accuses Ma of trying to kill him in his sleep. The next morning Jack realizes some marks on her neck: "'You're dirty on your neck [...] Actually that's not dirt, I don't think… I think Old Nick put those marks on her neck…I think the marks are Old Nick's fingerprints" (49-52). The perpetrator's enslavement of his victim(s) and exercising despotic control over them every day become his tools of oppression.

Alongside physical domination, the perpetrator craves for psychological domination. According to Herman, the perpetrator demands appreciation, respect and even craves for love (75); to justify his crimes, he needs the victim's affirmation. Accordingly, it appears that there has been made an agreement between Old Nick and Ma. "'I can be quiet, […] You know how quiet I can be, so long as you leave him alone. It's all I've ever asked'" (70). Ma agrees to behave obediently so as to protect Jack. As it is suggested in Herman's, threats of the perpetrator against the beloved ones are as penetrating as direct threats against the victim herself (77).

In cases of captivity, the perpetrator increases fear by "inconsistent" and "unpredictable" outbursts of violence and by capricious enforcements of petty rules. To convince the victim that the perpetrator is omnipotent, and resistance is useless, he uses some forceful techniques (Herman, 2015; 77). When Old Nick cannot have Ma's will, he cuts the power of the Room for three days to punish them for their disobedience. The following lines from the novel indicate how victims are helpless against these forceful techniques of the perpetrator:

> 'There's no power in anything just now.' It's a strange kind of day…We try and fill Bath but after the first bit the water comes out all icy so we just wash with cloths...TV doesn't work too... Ma says let's put on another shirt and pants each to be warm, even two socks each foot. We run Track for miles and miles and miles to warm us up, then Ma lets me take off the outside socks because my toes are all squished…My ears hurt (73).

Ma says this is all her fault as she made him angry by screaming. She also says she had not done it in years which shows that she cried for help to get rid of that place many times. The first time she wanted to escape from that place, she tried to scream for help, but she restrained herself from doing that (89). In addition, the "perpetrator seeks to destroy the victim's sense of autonomy" by controlling "the victim's body and bodily functions" (Herman, 2015; 77). Ma is demoralized when they have the power cut and have no hot water or electricity for the fridge: they are freezing and have to eat slimy vegetables for days.

Another outcome of captivity for Ma is that she feels obliged to be grateful for not only being allowed to live but also for being supported to live. Once the perpetrator succeeds in controlling the victim, he becomes a source of not only fear and humiliation but also of solace. The hope of a meal, a bath, a kind word or some ordinary comfort can become a solacement to a person who has been kept captive for a long time (Herman, 78-79). Jack, seeing Old Nick hurting his mother, wishes he never comes back. He says: "I bet he never comes back, that would be super cool", but for Ma, the disappearance of Old Nick means more predicament and even starvation in the room. She says: 'Think about it.... I mean, what would happen. Where does our food come from?'" (77). Therefore, after several unsuccessful attempts to escape from the Room and having come to terms with her situation, Ma is at the point of viewing her perpetrator, paradoxically, as her saviour. Proving this, Ma is grateful that Old Nick hasn't turned the water off while he could have done so.

Herman states that the perpetrator usually needs to achieve complete domination by restricting a connection between the victim and other humans. Thus, the perpetrators usually "seek to isolate their victims from any other source of information and emotional support" (79). Correspondingly, Old Nick keeps Ma alone in a prison-like room for seven years. The special qualities of the room are startling: it is a shed in Old Nick's backyard, and it contains a chain-link fence: "When he was turning the shed into Room […] he hid a layer of fence under the floor joists, and in all the walls and even the roof, so I could never ever cut through" (91). Subsequently, Ma tells Jack that she has tried everything to flee from there: she tried to dig the walls, the floor and even the roof; she tried to kill Old Nick with the toilet lid which wasn't strong enough to kill him. To enforce him to tell the code for the door, she made a bid to press the knife against his throat. Unfortunately, he gave her the wrong numbers. Therefore, Ma is convinced

that the walls of the Room are unbreakable and Old Nick is unkillable. Besides, killing Old Nick also means being locked in the Room without any supplies to feed them.

The birth of Jack in her second year of captivity functions as a psychological relief for Ma: Old Nick has no longer unlimited power over her. Herman claims that in the absence of any other human connection, the victim will try to find benevolence in her captor; yet, by means of a "transitional object", the victim can preserve her sense of connection to others (81). Jack can be regarded as her instrument to sustain her sense of affiliation with society. The anticipated emotional bond that develops between the victim and the perpetrator, especially in domestic abuse, is not materialized in the situation of Ma and Old Nick. At first, Ma knows nothing about him, and she maintains her emotional distance toward him. In contrast to the anticipation of Herman (82), Ma never loses her previous belief system, and she never comes to empathize with her captor. She finds her sense of affiliation with society in Jack; thus, she can stay away from Old Nick emotionally. After their rescue, she talks about this with her doctor, she tells her doctor that during her confinement, she was looking for somebody else to talk to but now she only needs Jack. The doctor replies: "The Soul selects her own Society--Then--shuts the Door— "and assumes that Ma had to change to survive (288).

It is known that in relationships and marriages, the abuse of the wife often involves children, too. Men who hurt their wives- victims- are also likely to hurt their children. Despite the lack of resistance and defense for themselves, women defend their children. Herman states that for the sake of survival, the victim comes to a stage of "robotization" which is "shutting down of feelings, thoughts, initiative, and judgment". The testimonies of survivors of prostitution and political dissent show that under extreme pressure, anyone can be "broken". Moreover, witnessing atrocities committed against loved ones completes the demoralization of the victim (Herman, 83-84). However, Ma achieves to defend her son against Old Nick all the way. She achieves not showing his son to her perpetrator. Old Nick assures her that he would not do anything bad to him or never lay a hand on him, yet Ma never allows him to get closer to her son. Once, Old Nick is close to having full sight of him, but Ma yells a high-pitched shout even to scare Jack (69). She reminds Old Nick that she had all asked him to leave Jack alone. Therefore, Ma can be considered to be far away from complete demoralization since she has both the responsibility and the support of Jack.

In the novel, the narrator Jack states that his Ma is gone some days (56); during these days, her mother does not wake up properly; she is neither sleeping nor fully awake. The occasional depressive mood of Ma drags her to bed all day. During these days, Jack watches television as much as he wants, prepares his own meals and asks himself what would happen if Ma were gone for more than one day: "Ma's never Gone more than one day. I don't know what I do if I wake up tomorrow and she's still Gone" (58). These shutting off days are the hints that Ma cannot maintain dissimulation in which she has to make up a miniature world for Jack. As pointed out by Herman, the victims who lose the will to live will start a process described as "an attitude of absolute passivity" where they are regarded as the living dead (85). Accordingly, Ma's 'gone' days can be viewed as a passive stage and she has no will to live. As aforementioned, however, Jack's responsibility is on her shoulders, so she has to go on.

Confinement, in a rape victim's life, has the power to alter the physical well-being of the victim, as mentioned before. Besides, rape and confinement following rape have certain psychological effects on the victim; by all means, the victim is powerless and as Herman signifies, "psychological trauma is an affliction of the powerless" (33). For trauma, Herman states that it is a feeling of "intense fear, helplessness, loss of control, and the threat of annihilation" (33), all of these feelings can be observed in the character Ma, both during and after her captivity. Moreover, ordinary human response to danger may be a system of complex reactions but traumatic ones occur when the threat, or the action is no more available for the victim. In this sense, the period after their escape from the prison-like room indicates the three main categories of symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder as discussed by Herman: these are "hyperarousal", "intrusion", and "constriction" (35).

Hyperarousal, for Herman, is the first symptom of PTSD and occurs after the traumatic experience; it is used to describe the permanent alert supposing that the danger may return at any minute. The symptoms of the hyperarousal stage are easy startling responses, irritable reactions to small provocations and poor sleeping, resulting in nightmares (Herman, 2015; 35). In this regard, Ma's overreacting to the police officer about breastfeeding her son shows that she is easily alarmed about a simple thing outside the Room, she says: "'Is there a problem?' Then why is she staring at us?' Her arm goes around me tight. 'I'm nursing my son, is that OK with you, lady?'" (144). Ma is also reported to have sleeping problems in Cumberland Clinic even after they are safe from

her rapist and their captor, Jack, the narrator, tells that Dr Clay and Ma talk about "stuff why she can't get to sleep" and, as the child narrator understands, tachycardia which means heart failure. It seems that Dr Clay connects her heart failure to re-experiencing of the traumatic events and he medicates her (160). What makes PTSD symptoms different from normal symptoms of fear and anxiety is their extensiveness and endurance, thus as Herman states, PTSD patients are always alert for the danger, have an extreme response to unexpected provocation, and they react to each repetition as if it were a new and dangerous one. Therefore, traumatic events seem to be able to alter the human nervous system according to the traumatic event (36).

The second stage of PTSD is "intrusion" which happens long after the danger is gone. According to Herman, traumatized victims continue reliving the traumatic event as if it were reiterating in the present. This stage was also mentioned by Janet, Freud and Caruth as "idee fixee", "fixation", "belatedness of trauma" or "re-enactment" of trauma to refer to the tendency of re-creating the moment of terror in different forms: these forms can be literal or disguised as in dreams. While some of these re-enactments of trauma can be dangerous and risk-taking, some other forms of re-enactments are, for Herman, adaptive to integrate them into their lives (Herman, 37-40). Freud's mentioning a "death instinct" as a result of these re-enactments conveys the dangerous side of them; the victim cannot adapt to change or cannot find any meaningful affirmations to continue living after the traumatic experience, thus, the victim is drawn into a recurrent intrusion of traumatic experience. This is exactly what happens to Ma after her escape from captivity only to confront social judgement on her motherhood. Her suicide attempt can be regarded as the manifestation of her belated rape trauma as she feels completely powerless and cannot resist in any form as Herman explains this third stage as "constriction" which shows total surrender (42). Ma's taking overdose to end her life corresponds to the findings of a study which suggests that traumatized people who have difficulties adapting to post-traumatic conditions tend to produce dissociation by using alcohol or narcotics. In Ma's situation, she never develops an addiction to numbing substances, but she tries to dissociate herself from the events for a while. As her doctor says, "… she needs to be on her own for a while" (245).

### 2.2. Traumatic Motherhood

Emma Donoghue, in an interview, has explained that she adapted the basic notion of her novel from the real story of the Fritzl family and she described the situation of an imprisoned woman raising her rapist's child as happy as possible as an "extraordinary act of motherhood" (Donoghue, 2012; 102). In *Writing Room* (2010), Donoghue states that the theme drew her attention because she had two small children when she started writing Room in April 2008. Though "the bond between mother and newborn is a tiny, cozy world", "motherhood-even under ideal circumstances- also has elements of a nightmare as well as a fairy tale, sci fi as well as realism" (2). She associates motherhood with a "locked room" where kids are struck with parents just as parents are struck with them. In the novel *Room*, Ma and Jack are literally stuck with each other, thus, Ma faces a lot of conflicts about motherhood both inside and outside of the room.

Despite her numerous failed attempts to escape over the years or fantasies of being rescued- she digs a hole, she flashes lights at night in case somebody can see it, she screams with Jack and she leaves notes in trash bags, her acknowledgment to be saved comes when she is pregnant. After that, she begins to be polite to Old Nick with the sole purpose of keeping the baby safe. Through the end of the novel, Ma also confesses that Jack was not her first child but "she had lost her first baby, a girl, after Old Nick had refused to provide medical assistance when the baby got tangled in the umbilical cord" (Ladron, 2017; 91). Old Nick's being in the room and watching her while she was delivering her first baby torture her since he did not do anything to help her. When the troubles in her first childbearing are considered, Ma's exceptional efforts to protect Jack from her perpetrator seem substantial.

An unintended pregnancy as a result of rape induces negative health outcomes for both mother and child (McFarlane, 2007). Yet, Ma repeatedly states that Jack is "the dead spit of me", explaining that Jack looks like her, and he has made of her regardless of his biological father. After their rescue, Ma's father cannot accept the idea of growing a rapist's child, but Ma insists that Jack belongs to her only. Therefore, motherhood for Ma does not adhere to her traumatic captivity entirely in the Room but becomes more traumatic outside, after their rescue and after finding out people's judgements about her motherhood.

During their captivity, Ma generates a successful microcosmic reality so that Jack feels secure and independent in the room without feeling awkward. Jack's upbringing is quite rich in terms of stimuli and affection despite his lack of social training (Ladron, 2017; 87). Jack's mother supplies his imagination with different stories, rhymes, and songs as well as by inventing a lot of games using inanimate objects. Despite her limited means, Ma is capable of finding miscellaneous ways to amuse him, she creates some games out of toilet paper rolls that they call "Labyrinth" and "Fort" (15). In this constructed reality, Jack never questions the reality he has. Even though they have a TV, Jack imagines that the people on TV are not real. For him, the people on TV are from other planets and not as real as they are (13). Obviously, Ma can mostly keep her resilience during their confinement by creating a microscopic reality for her son. Besides, her attachment to the daily principles maintains their will to continue without destructing Jack's notion of reality about their room. Ma and Jack have a strict routine and they have things to do around the room all the time. Their daily routine consists of eating, getting dressed, brushing teeth, washing up, physical games, reading, watching TV and other daily chores available in the room (10). By this attachment to routines, they manage to look beyond their limited reality.

According to a study about motherhood, maternal practice is characterized by three demands from the mother: "preservation, growth and social acceptance" (Putti, 2019; 85). Reflecting the notions of "mother space" and "motherhood" by the theories of Marsha Marotta and Iris Young, the study questions the role of the mother as a social construct and a natural one. Accordingly, being a mother not only means fulfilling these demands for the child's sake, but it also requires getting recognized by society. Inside the room, Ma successfully answers the first two demands of motherhood: preservation and growth. As aforementioned, Ma adheres to her principles about eating and cleaning, thus, Jack is nourished well according to their conditions. Ma and Jack take nutrition and vitamin pills regularly so as not to get sick (11).

Moreover, Ma is still breastfeeding Jack even though he is five years old; normally, the breastfeeding period will stop at the age of two for the child, yet, in their situation, Ma wants her son to be well-nourished, so she continues giving him her breast milk. However, after their rescue, Ma and Jack are sent to the hospital where Jack is found physically weak and below the average weight. In the news related to their rescue, Jack is referred as "bonsai boy"; when Jack asks what this means, his mother answers:

"A very tiny tree. People keep them in pots indoors and cut them every day, so they stay all curled up" (193). In this respect, Ma does her best to protect and perverse her son in her long confinement.

As for the second demand of motherhood, Ma is highly interested in the emotional and intellectual growth of Jack. Although she is the only one to support him emotionally and intellectually, Jack is exceptionally bright in "literacy" and "numeracy" (Ladron, 2017; 90) as the doctor tells his mother in the Cumberland Clinic. Due to the scheduled teaching of Ma during their captivity, Jack is good at reading, mind developing games and with numbers. Moreover, Ma has filled Jack's head with entertaining and educatory stories in modified versions. When she forms her plans for their escape, she uses these stories to reassure Jack about what to do and also to persuade him about the other reality outside. She reminds him of the story of Count of Monte Cristo who was locked up in a dungeon on an island and pretended to be dead to get out of the dungeon. In relation to Jack's emotional and intellectual growth, Ma has fulfilled the demands of motherhood in her limited facilities.

The third requirement for good motherhood is social acceptability which is, according to Ruddick, cannot develop instinctively but has to be trained in the social context (Ruddick, 1995; 21). Between Ma and Jack, there is a close and reciprocal bond in which Jack reacts and responds accordingly. Yet, outside the walls of the room, Jack is perceived as weird and retard by the media because of his adjustment problems. The doctor at the clinic says that Jack will probably have some adjusting problems both mentally and physically (161). This explains why Jack keeps banging into things and why he cannot use the stairs since "he has been so familiar with his confined environment that he hasn't needed to learn gauge distance" (161). However, in the socially construed standards of motherhood, Ma is accused of not being a good mother to her child as if she had other options. The media presents Jack as "haunting, long-haired Little Prince" (192) who was caged for all his five years "in a rotting cork-lined dungeon" (192) and who is expected to have some kind of "long-term developmental retardation". There are also some concerns about the masculinity of Jack as his mother has never cut his hair and braids his hair as well as about his long-standing breastfeeding. Thus, based on society's standards, Ma is labelled as an unsuccessful mother which leads to her suicide attempt.

As the author, Emma Donoghue states, motherhood is not only the bond between the child and mother, but it also has elements of a nightmare (Donoghue, 2010b, 2). Jack's feeling safe in Room and feeling scared Outside derive from the demands of society about motherhood, childhood and self. For the second part of the novel, Emma Donoghue has explained that she intentionally lets Ma and Jack be seen as freaks, as "a lost tribe" with their own "strange kind of island culture, island religion and a pidgin form of English" to recapitulate the idea of the Other (Back Bay Readers' Guide, 328). By doing this, the author challenges the social assumptions about motherhood, childhood and the self. Consequently, from the perspective of three demands of motherhood, Ma has accomplished all the demands inside the room. Outside, the third demand of motherhood which is social acceptability is also accomplished later when she achieves redemption in motherhood.

Judith Herman states that "most people have no knowledge or understanding of the psychological changes of captivity" therefore "social judgement of chronically traumatized people tends to be harsh" (Herman, 2015; 115). The passivity and apparent helplessness of the chronically abused person and her credence into betrayal of moral values and relationships provoke anger and condemnation. This is exactly what Ma encounters after their rescue from the room. Herman affirms that there has been a tendency in health professionals to attribute "the abusive situation to the victim's presumed underlying psychopathology" in a similar vein to the hereditary nature of trauma in the early studies, thus, this approach lacks seeing the passivity and helplessness of the victim as a response to an abusive situation. Provably, Ma and Jack confront a group of people who have little understanding of their captivity situation, including the doctors in the clinic. The unapproving looks from the police and even her mother about breastfeeding a five-year-old boy arouse anger, distress and disbelief in Ma: she asks: "In this whole story, that's the shocking detail?" (233) to demonstrate the disappointment she has.

In reply to the implied accusation about the safety and the identity of Jack, Ma says that she has kept him safe all these years and insists that Jack does not need treatment. The formalities about the DNA test make her crazy again as the narrator Jack observes: "DNA? You think I had other visitors?". The worst part of social judgement is when she talks to the media to save up some for future education of Jack. She is asked about Stockholm syndrome, whether she was emotionally dependent on her captor and

any reaction of hate and feeling forced to bear a rapist's child; yet, for Ma, Jack's birth was what saved Ma as she felt alive again. Ma confesses that she did everything on autopilot- like Stepford's Wife- after the birth of Jack so as to keep him safe. In consummation, Ma does not fit the expectations of a weak and needy mother who has long been kept captive and has to bear an unintended child, so she tries committing suicide when she is not able to tolerate the standards of society. Her suicide attempt illustrates that she has lost the common tendency of pleasure towards life and, in Freud's term, the protective shield does not prevent the ego from external, exceptional events, thus, she shows a tendency towards "death drive" which is the opposite of pleasure principle.

The traumatic motherhood of Ma, especially after their escape from the room, challenges the traditional view of mother and motherhood and the bond between the mother and the child. Sarah Blackwood, in her article "Room is the 'Crash' of Feminism", states that room is the metaphor for the womb where a close and intimate relationship exists between mother and child (Blackwood, 2). Ma, outside Room, feels hopeless and irritated as she is no longer the sole nourisher of her son, however, Andrea O'Reilly opposes the idea of Ma's bond to Jack is pathological and restrictive, for O'Reilly, it is rather redemptive and reciprocal for both mother and son (O'reilly, 2017; 93). Given the conditions of captivity for Ma, the close and intimate relationship between her and Jack is a necessary one: as Ma states in her interview when asked about their solitary confinement to raise a child: "If you've got a village. But if you don't, then maybe it just takes two people… I mean me and Jack" (210). Therefore, Ma condemns the way society treats them like they are freaks and the only ones who ever lived through something terrible; she says, all she did was to survive and to do a good job raising Jack.

## 2.3. Traumatic Narration in *Room*

Literary trauma studies explore the relation between the psychic wound and its signification, its representation, the words. As Caruth and the first wave trauma theorists state, trauma is ungraspable at the time of its occurrence, but it haunts the individual later; its belatedness- in Freud's words afterwardsness- perplexes the relation between the traumatic experience and the event of trauma. In correlation to the ungraspable nature of trauma, the narration of it internalizes its silence and the traumatic state of the survivor

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is imitated and represented in the narration. In this regard, figurative language, symbols, and metaphors in the narration represent the damage to the mind and the fragmented states of the self. In traditional trauma model, the tendency to present trauma as the abnormal division of consciousness, the belatedness of trauma and non-linear, fragmented narration are contrasted in pluralistic trauma models which free trauma from being unrepresentable. In this regard, *Room* has unique elements of narration regarding both the traditional and pluralistic trauma models.

Traumatic narration can be better expressed and understood under the reader-response discourse as stated by Marcus Tan (79). Tan uses the definition of Wolfgang Iser who is a key figure in reader-response theory as stating that a literary work has two poles: the artistic and the aesthetic; "the artistic pole is the author's text and the aesthetic is the realization accomplished by the reader" (Iser, 2010; 1524). In this regard, two-way communication that takes place between the reader and the text highlights that the (traumatic) experience is not only shaped but also shared by the reader. Thus, trauma fiction creates a shared experience between the reader and the text by way of narrative modes. In this way, sharing of traumatic experience becomes paradoxical as the boundary between empathy and identification is frail. In other words, traumatic narration blurs the line between sharing and experiencing for the reader.

Narrated from the point of a five-year-old boy-Jack, *Room* tells the story of Ma's captivity and sexual abuse for seven years as well as motherhood and childhood notions juxtaposed with the traditional view on them. The writer of the novel Emma Donoghue explains that she has chosen a small child as the narrator to make such a horrifying premise original, involving, but also more bearable. To narrate the unnarratable, Donoghue uses Jack's perspective, his innocence thinking that it would "partly shield readers on their descent into the abyss". She accepts the technical worries about having such a young writer, yet, she has felt that Jack would be perfectly able to tell the whole story. Moreover, Jack's newness to the real world- he has spent his first five years in a room and faces the real world for the first time after their escape, as she states, gave her freedom to satirize modern mores and media and question the nature of reality (Back Bay Readers' Guide, 326).

Caruth associates the representation of trauma with broken and fragmented narratives to demonstrate the emphasis on trauma's disruption of time or history. Taking

Freud's concept of "NachtraÈglichkeit", which has been translated as `deferred action' or `afterwardsness' as the main point, Caruth complicates the relation between the traumatic event and its full perception by the victim (Whitehead, 2004; 6). In this regard, a departure from the strictly linear structure in narration is perceived as the temporality or belatedness of memory. The novel *Room* is narrated by a child narrator, yet, in terms of structure, as Donoghue states in an interview, "[…] it is a clean book: straightforward, clearly and linearly narrated, realistic." She also expresses that her novel has elements of horror, science fiction and fairy tale as well as a "wide-eyed narrator" typical in *Gulliver's Travels*, *Robinson Crusoe,* and *Candide* (Back Bay Readers' Guide, 327). The linear, non-broken and complete narration of the novel is juxtaposed with the traumatic experience of the characters in the way the experience or "wound of the mind" manifests itself belatedly.  The language the narrator uses in the novel and the sense of dissociation the writer tries to focus on remind the mimetic function of trauma fiction which was mentioned by Whitehead.

Jack, the narrator, uses a mode of communication in which there are sentence fragments and personification of inanimate objects. He turns nouns into proper nouns as he omits definite and indefinite articles when he refers to some objects in Room. In his personification of the objects, he displays his emotional energy and attachment for them: "Ma leans out of Bed to switch on Lamp, he makes everything light up whoosh" (3). His unique language raises questions on whether his naïve voice is a "characteristic of an average five-year-old's linguistic skills or whether it shows the consequences of Jack's confinement in Room all his life" (Tan, 51). Vickroy, in *Reading Trauma Narratives*, contends that social environment plays a crucial role on the development of a child, and she identifies a relation between the symptoms of the traumatized child and the traumatized adult: "Unlike adults, [children] can suffer regression, misperceptions of time, pessimism about the future, disrupted attachments, and impaired social skills and cognitive development" (2015; 14). Hence, Jack's limited ability of social skills "like a newborn in many ways", as Dr. Clay states in the novel (161), can be conceived as the social dimension of traumatic experience he and his mother experience for a long time.

Moreover, Vickroy mentions that the survivor of a traumatic event experiences an inability to express themselves in the wake of trauma (2015; 6), as displayed in the inability of Jack to use language to communicate Outside. Before their escape, Ma

teaches him what to say but Jack feels worried about the words, he says: "'But the words'--, What if they don't come out at all?'" (108). Ma realizes that he has never talked to anybody but her so she writes a note to keep hidden which explains everything so that he can give it to the first person he meets. Later, when he is Outside, Jack feels baffled, he cannot remember what to shout. "I'm on mute, I just keep running at them" (128). His voice does not come out and her mother's voice is not in his head anymore: "Ma, Ma, I need you for talking" (129). When the police come, Jack's language sounds more broken, as in sentence fragments or just some words. He cannot communicate in a normal way with the police, he even cannot tell them her mother's real name as he has always called her Ma. As Vickroy states, the language of traumatized people fails to perform the ability to communicate.

Balaev states that in narrative methods of trauma, there are two important factors to portray the suffering: landscape imagery and the use of place as a site that shapes the experience and perception of the traumatized (Balaev, 2012; xi). For him, the term "place" is not only a location, but it is also an entity that organizes memories and feelings as well as meaning for the individual and for groups (xv). The child narrator in the novel feels more confined in the prison-like room as his perception of reality is limited inside the walls of the room. His mother Ma creates an illusion of reality for Jack which does not consist of the outside world but the inside of the room only. By doing this, Ma wants to protect his child from the outer distractions that are not in her control. When asked in the interview about deceiving his child about the outer world, the narrator realized that Ma looks not friendly as she asks: "What was I meant to tell him--Hey, there's a world of fun out there and you can't have any of it?" (210). Moreover, the outside world is scary for Jack since it is out of his perception. All the time he has seen people on TV but learned that they are not real. Outside, he feels lost and insignificant because he has to share his Ma now.

Furthermore, the spatial boundaries in *Room* refer to the belatedness of trauma, which was mentioned by Caruth, both for Jack and Ma. We, as readers, know that room is a confined place or a prison for the characters, however, their experience outside after their escape shows that the narrator Jack feels trapped outside rather than inside; expanding the boundaries leads to a state of anxiety for him. Besides, Ma experiences a psychological crisis which leads to a suicide attempt since her motherhood is criticized

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harshly. The spatial boundaries are crossed the moment Jack leaves the room and enters the outside world for the first time. Jack as the narrator portrays his escape details in a horrifying way as he gets beyond the limits of his world both literally and discretely.

On the traumatic narration, Kali Tal argues that "Accurate representation of trauma can never be achieved without recreating the event since, by its very definition, trauma lies beyond the bounds of 'normal' conception" (Tal, 1996; 15). Balaev indicates that, in the traditional model of trauma, the Freudian perspective of the mind is represented as a timeless void that shatters the identity and memory, thus language fails to code it. Therefore, due to this unspeakable experience, the only representation of trauma is achieved through abreaction (Balaev, 2012; 6). In *Room*, justifying the traumatic narration, the inability of language to communicate and the unreliability of narrator, or to be more precise the incomprehensibility of the events by the child narrator, can be viewed as a contemplation of the unrepresentable nature of trauma without recreating the event. Donoghue seems to have employed a narrative device that parallels a symptomatic trait of traumatic experience through her child narrator.

As aforementioned, the traumatic captivity and motherhood and sexual abuse of Ma for seven years manifest itself especially after their escape from the prison room. Some of the symptoms of PTSD- emotional numbing, depression, mental dissociation- can be observed in Ma and Jack in the last two parts of the novel. According to Tan (2018), Jack manifests symptoms of PTSD in the form of physical ticks and recurring visual images; for example, he feels more anxious around other people while he feels safe only around his mother and he consistently wishes to be back in the room since he loses his perception of reality (30). Moreover, his long-lasting breastfeeding and his insisting on this demonstrate the necessity he feels to be comforted in an unfamiliar world. Ma, on the other hand, is familiar with the real world outside, yet she also manifests similar symptoms. Being called freaks and implicit questioning of her motherhood cause a mental dissociation. The day after Ma's interview with a journalist, Ma is gone again, as Jack says it. He thinks this being gone is similar to the ones in the room, just for one day. However, it turns out that Ma committed suicide by taking many pills, but she is rescued by the doctors. After this, Jack has to live with his grandmother for a while and the period he spends without his mother teaches him how to be an individual. Jack affirms the changes he experiences throughout the years. "…Now I'm

in Outside but it turns out lots of it isn't real at all" (248), he says, affirming the mental and physical change he goes through.

Luckhurst argues that trauma narratives that focus on narrative impossibility rather than possibility criticize the idea of integrating and understanding trauma as well as healing and recovery (2013; 83). Shönfelder carries this idea on by stating that "anti-narrative theorizations of trauma tend to be anti-therapeutic", and she cites from Caruth on the marginalization of the topic of recovery (Schönfelder, 2013; 32). Accordingly, healing and recovery seem impossible in trauma narratives which embody a traumatic representation of trauma. *Room*, in this regard, can be regarded as both mimesis and a catharsis for trauma. In the first four chapters of the novel, the focus is on the dissociation and the incomprehensibility of trauma by the others: Ma feels left alone and isolated, after their escape, in a world of contradictions in the same way she left abandoned in a prison-like room for seven years. Her first confinement was a compulsory one as she had no one but Old Nick whom she never wished to have intimate relations with. Though she is rescued from her captivity in the room, her psychological confinement outside does not seem to settle immediately. With his inquisitiveness for the outside world, Jack overcomes his trauma expeditiously. However, Ma's healing process starts after she recovers her identity again. In this regard, the traumatic narration in *Room* reinforces the traditional trauma theories that focus on symptomatic acting out and the repetition compulsion as a manifestation of mimesis theory.

In opposition to traditional Caruthian trauma theory, later pluralistic trauma models by Horvitz, Vickroy, Kaplan and Griffiths emphasise the cathartic aspect of trauma narratives. For them, literary trauma writing does not have to exclude recovery and healing (Schönfelder, 2013). While some blind spots remain regarding the narration of trauma and recovery, telling stories about trauma may partly achieve a certain working through for the victim as well as permitting an empathic sharing for the readers (Kaplan, 37). In the last chapter of the novel, titled "Living", Ma and Jack try to set up their life from the scratch in Independent Living Residential Facility by the clinic; it is clear that Ma and Jack have started their recovery process if only by inches. The major event for their recovery is the day when they visit the Room as visitors only: Jack has already wanted the materials from the room like the old Rug, Jeep and Remote that the police gave back to them. When they visit the room, Jack has a difficulty in accepting

the reality of the room which is smaller, emptier and smells weird. Jack describes their room in an unbelieving tone:

> We step in through Door and it's all wrong. Smaller than Room and emptier and it smells weird. Floor's bare, that's because there's no Rug, she's in my wardrobe in our Independent Living, I forgot she couldn't be here at the same time. Bed's here but there's no sheets or Duvet on her. Rocker's here and Table and Sink and Bath and Cabinet but no plates and cutlery on top, and Dresser and TV and Bunny with the purple bow on him, and Shelf but nothing on her, and our chairs folded up but they're all different. Nothing says anything to me. "I don't think this is it," I whisper to Ma. "Yeah, it is (293).

The reliability of the testimony of trauma survivors is another question the trauma theories are concerned with. In Caruth's writings, trauma emerges as a "crisis of truth" (1995, 6), thus transmitting truth through narratives becomes an aporia between speaker and listener; narrator/writer and reader. According to Whitehead, the listener bears a dual responsibility to both receive the testimony and avoid appropriating the story as his or her own (2004; 7). As La Capra stated, empathy can easily turn into over-identification; in *Room* the traumatic narration by a child narrator absorbs the reader into the traumatic experience of characters so that the reader finds himself in vicarious traumatization that the listener or witness bears the burden of the victim as their own. Whitehead also implies that a child perspective as narrator departs the narration from the testimonial mode by offering the readers a defamiliarized view about their world. This defamiliarization corresponds to what Donoghue says about her child narrator's function:

> I hoped having a small child narrator would make such a horrifying premise original, involving, but also more bearable: his innocence would at least partly shield readers on their descent into the abyss. I also knew that Jack would have some interesting things to say about our world, as a newcomer to it; the book's satire of modern mores and media, and interrogations of the nature of reality… (Back Bay Readers' Guide, 326).

The novel *Room* has many elements of allusions and references allowing the narration to be worked on different levels. The writer of *Room*, Emma Donoghue, states in an interview that she has used allusions from fairy tales, science fiction, horror, literary works with cultural and individual references in her narration. The narrator's social and mental development reminding some echoes from *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, *The Catcher in the Rye* as well as some reflections from Plato and the Bible.

After their escape, the newspapers report Jack as "Hope for the bonsai boy"; in another title, Jack's welcomed to "Brave New World" as a "Little Prince". Donoghue, in another interview, accepts that she had Samuel Becket's *Waiting for Godot* referring to the conversation of Ma and Jack about measuring the Room; "Do we have something else to do?" (20) reminds us the sentences from Becket's play: "that passed the time/ it would have passed in any case" (Donoghue, 2012; 103). As for the fairy tale elements, Donoghue mentions designing the novel in two halves, each of which sheds light on the other. In the first half, Ma and Jack have superhero qualities, and these superhero qualities are contrasted with their flawed and more human-like elements in the second half. Donoghue explains she has adopted this controversial element to make the book much more honest as well as to avoid the implication that Outside, the wider society represents a simple happy ending (Back Bay Readers' Guide, 329).

A feminist reading of trauma proves to be applicable to the novel of Donoghue since she started her productive cooperation with the feminist theatre company Glass Productions and she employs a great effort for recovering lost stories of women in history in her other works. Moreover, she declares that when she was about fourteen, she realized she was a lesbian, and therefore, in society's terms, "a freak". Thus, not only homosexuality but also the clash between individual and community are marked in many of her published works. Her novel *Room* deliberately discards the character of Old Nick. Donoghue explains that she wanted to keep him at bay, "refusing to let him set the terms of this story". She reminds that John Fowles's *The Collector* (1986) is the ultimate statement about a man who wants to own a woman, so she wanted to tell a different story. Moreover, Old Nick is already punished, as she says, when his sexual fantasy has become a domestic grid (Donoghue, 2012; 103).

Sarah Blackwood, in her article "'Room is the 'Crash' of Feminism" interprets the room as a metaphor for the womb that can illustrate the traditional biased views on the bond between mother and infant. Society, she continues, enjoys "judging the perversity of that bond" when it moves to the extreme (Blackwood, 2). Ma's depression after the rescue, her trying to stop breastfeeding and Jack's comprehension of his separate identity can be read as both the stamina of this bond and social judgement of cultures as well. A close and caring mother and son relationship is regarded as anomalous whereas a relationship based on separation is naturalized. Olga Silverstein and Beth Rashbaum explain a normal attachment of mother and son as following:

[Our culture believes] that a male child must be removed from his mother's influence in order to escape the contamination of a close relationship with her. The love of a mother—both the son's love for her, and hers for him—is believed to "feminize" a boy, to make him soft, weak, dependent, homebound … only through renunciation of the loving mother, and identification with the aggressor father, does the ... boy become a man. (1994;11).

During their confinement, Ma and Jack do not have separate identities and they have to share everything; when Jack finds the spider web, he hides this from his mother and comments: "It's weird to have something that's mine-not-Ma's. Everything else is both ours" (10).  However, outside Jack realizes the separate identities of him and her mother. When the doctor asks him, "Do you know who you belong to?", "Yourself", Jack thinks "He's wrong, actually, I belong to Ma" (209). Consequently, Donoghue in *Room* juxtaposes cultural norms of motherhood with the individual struggles of it, allowing for the representation of "the other", "marginal" and liminal".

To give a summary of the second chapter, *Room* is a work of fiction which both uses rape trauma as its subject matter and internalizes some symptoms of trauma in its narration. It can also be read as an answer to John Fowles's *The Collector* (1963) in terms of presenting the victim's point of view rather than the perpetrator and the trauma such an event can evoke in victims. According to trauma theorist Judith Herman, captivity in rape cases can be more traumatic when combined with confinement conditions. Therefore, a span of seven years of confinement for the traumatized character in the novel demonstrates the symptoms of rape trauma for Ma and has a negative influence on her motherhood. Yet, Ma and his son Jack face another intense trauma outside since they are judged and criticized harshly by society. Both characters are haunted by unresolved past memories that contain both inside and outside of their prison. For Ma, it takes a while to reconciliate with her new self as she is neither the former woman seven years ago, nor willing to make a new start for her life. Thus, PTSD induced by rape not only influences her physically, but her mental health is also affected negatively.

# 3. CHAPTER THREE: ZÜLFÜ LİVANELİ'S *BLISS*

"Silence becomes a woman".

Pat Barker

This chapter discusses Turkish writer Ö. Zülfü Livaneli's *Bliss* in terms of rape and rape trauma as a cultural construct. Focusing on the patriarchal society as the cause of rape and trauma, *Bliss* will be analysed in the light of trauma theories mentioned in the first chapter with special references to Judith Herman's views on symptoms and healing and Crap's ideas on realistic narration of trauma.

*Bliss*, originally *Mutluluk* in Turkish, was published in 2002. The book was also translated into other languages and published in different countries such as Greece, France, Sweden, Italy and Netherlands. Livaneli's third novel *Bliss* became the best-seller in Turkey and in 2007 it was adopted into cinema. The novel was awarded with the annual "Discover Great New Writers Award" in 2006 by Barnes&Noble as well as being chosen as the "Book of the Month" in Italy as having "superior literary quality" in 2007.

Its writer Ömer Zülfü Livaneli is a Turkish musician, scriptwriter, writer, director and politician; he has been honoured with many national and international awards as a result of his music and literary works. He was born in 1946 and had to flee from the country during the coup of March 12th, 1971 due to political reasons. He stayed in

Stockholm, Paris and Athens for a while; in 1984, he returned to Turkey. As well as fictional works, he has also written biographies and interviews with some important writers and thinkers such as Yaşar Kemal and Elia Kazan. His efforts to maintain Turkish-Greek friendship were crowned with his founding the Greek-Turkish Friendship Committee in 1986 together with the Greek composer Mikis Theodorakis. He was also appointed as a Goodwill Ambassador of UNESCO as a result of his contributions to world peace and still continues to work on peace programs around the world. He was described as "a Renaissance man" who is ahead of his time by international intellect Federico Mayor Zaragoza (Livaneli & Köse, 2019; 15).

Zülfü Livaneli writes about a great number of topics in his works including East-West conflict, political problems in Turkey and neighbouring countries and the reality of gender problems especially in the east of Turkey. In *Bliss*, he writes about three people whose search for bliss crosses their paths. Through their stories, Livaneli draws a portrait of Turkey in terms of women's issues, patriarchal society and search for identity. Gender roles for women and men are mostly fixed in Turkish society, especially in the east part of the country, thus, Livaneli's novel *Bliss* successfully portrays the struggles of women in a patriarchal society. Although Livaneli is not a female writer, he thinks that a writer should show empathy towards gender issues, so his works are regarded as critical on gender issues as well. In a biographical interview with Zafer Köse, Livaneli states that his main intention has always been to replace atrocity with fairness, tyranny with hope. He has always aimed to support freedom, equality, women's rights, children's rights, and do so in many other areas (Livaneli & Köse, 2019; 328).

Bliss[†] starts with a dream-like scene where Meryem sees herself flying through the air on a phoenix. She thinks that the bird wants her milk and then her flesh as it squawks. Through the end of her dream-like vision, the phoenix turns into a man's face covered with dark growth; Meryem recognizes her uncle with his black beard. She begs: "Uncle, please give me back what you've torn out" (11), yet she was left alone on top of a mountain. When she wakes up, she realizes "she had been clasping the place between her thighs so tightly with both hands that it hurt" (12). Two young men find her near the graveyard, her skin scratched by thornbushes and with dried blood on her legs. They carry her through the village so that everyone witnesses the incident. Meryem's

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[†] All the references to Bliss: Livaneli, Zülfü. Bliss. New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2002.

family locks her in the damp and dingy outhouse they call the barn waiting for the punishment she deserves.

Livaneli's *Bliss*, like his other novels, is highly concerned with the conflict between traditional and modern, eastern and western and rural and urban. The village Meryem lives in with her family is a small one in the eastern part of Turkey, hence, it depicts the traditional views especially on women. Meryem, like the other girls in the area, is considered to be a figure rather than an individual; she is oppressed under the patriarchal society as she is grown up in the system of strict rules to determine the daily lives of women. Being a woman is regarded as sin itself in the traditional society she lives in. His uncle, who is a religious sect leader, shows disgust against women by directly stating that women are especially "accursed" (18) as they are born to tempt men into trouble. He also attributes the sinful nature of women to the story of Eve as he thinks her the first sinner. Growing up with these ideas in her mind, Meryem hates being a woman and constantly cries out against God: "Dear God, why did you make me a woman?" (18), so following her rape by her uncle, she prefers remaining silent about the incident and the perpetrator.

Gender issues have always been a matter of debate in Turkey concerning the conflict between the east and west parts of the country. As it is known, Turkey is composed of different groups of people from various religious, political, social, ethnic and educational backgrounds. Having its roots in the late Ottoman period, the conflict between east and west describes the struggle between conservatism and development, between traditional and modern. Although gender issues are not intrinsic to the East, some traditions against women in the East portray the inequalities between men and women. One of these traditions is "Honour crimes":  it takes its force from "töre" which is the name for general rules that are accepted and obeyed by everyone in some communities. Accordingly, women are always seen as inferior ones and are the primary victims of the tradition. When women are found guilty of not being able to protect the family's honour, her family is expected to kill her because "töre" demands so. According to this tradition, even if women do not consent to extramarital sexual relationship, they are found guilty and killed (Kaya, 2009; vi). In the novel *Bliss*, Livaneli depicts "töre" and honour killings as part of eastern traditions in Turkey.

Patriarchy is another aspect of the conflict between eastern and western values in the novel. In her article "Not Outside The Range", Laura S. Brown conveys that "social context and the individual's personal history within that social context" (110) are vital to comprehend the meaning of trauma, thus, in *Bliss*, Meryem's trauma can be sustained through a feminist trauma criticism which includes the social context that is patriarchy in the novel. In eastern Turkey, patriarchy and masculinity are regarded as violent, despotic and murderous; men in a patriarchal family system oppress women in every facet of their daily life. In the novel, Meryem and other women in eastern Turkey are oppressed by the values of the male-controlled system; likewise, the patriarchal traditions penetrate violence including rape. On the other hand, men in the western parts of Turkey are portrayed as merciful, generous, gentlemen and they do not see women as an object but a respected individual. In this regard, İrfan Kurudal, another major character that helps Meryem to find her real self in a more civilized society, is contrasted with the portrayal of Meryem's uncle or Cemal, both of whom are the agents of patriarchal traditions.

*Bliss* is narrated from a third-person narration, and it is enriched with interior monologues and stream of consciousness technique. The narration switches between Meryem's story, Cemal's military story and the search of İrfan Kurudal for meaning in his life. The stories seem unconnected to each other until their paths cross: from Meryem's story, it is clear that she expects the companionship and help of Cemal, her uncle's son who is doing his military service against PKK forces in the eastern part of the country. Meryem yearns for their childhood when they could play together until she started signs of puberty and her spending time with boys was restricted then: the remembrance of her childhood when her life was easier and she could spend time with other children gives her horrible pain (18).

With the start of her puberty, she realized that she was different from Cemal and other boys. "They were human, and she was a transgressor" (18), so she was expected to cover herself and hide away. She was petrified of turning into a woman which she calls a "creature" and she assumed being a woman and a mother as a punishment since she grew up with the stories of her mother's death in childbirth. Therefore, Meryem's silence following her rape by her uncle can be read as a manifestation of both her lack of voice as a woman and rape trauma she suffers from.

### 3.1. Silence of Meryem as a Manifestation of Rape Trauma

Judith Herman states that "traumatic events are extraordinary, not because they occur rarely, but rather because they overwhelm the ordinary human adaptations to life" (32). Laura S. Brown, in her article "Not Outside the Range: One Feminist Perspective on Psychic Trauma" observes that incest was not regarded as unusual and wasn't outside the range of human experience to be included in PTSD in the public eye. Diana Russell mentions incest as the "secret trauma" since most traumas for girls and women do occur in secret (cited in Brown, 101). These secret traumas, as Brown states, "happen in bed, where our fathers and stepfathers and uncles and older brothers molest us in the dead of the night" (101). These experiences of women are normalized in the male-dominated culture and have been excluded from traumatic analysis for a long time (Brown, 102). In *Bliss*, the traumatic event Meryem experiences illustrate the secret trauma of rape and incest still prevail in the lives of women in some parts of the world. Silence of Meryem about her rapist is a manifestation of her sufferings from rape trauma.

In the simplest terms, rape trauma can be defined as the stress of the victim following forced, non-consenting sexual activity. Meryem, in *Bliss*, feels her experience of rape as a life-threatening event: the dream-like scene of her rape by her uncle evokes a nightmarish reality from which she does not want to wake up since "the reality was more horrifying" (12), yet she feels more secure after they wake up and she, at least, no longer feels so afraid. She immediately wipes out the thought of her uncle from her mind and replaces him with the phoenix image in her mind. When two young men find her near the graveyard with blood on her legs and scratches on her skin, she is described as "delirious with fright" and she was fluttering like a wounded bird" (12). The first period of extreme fear follows a more tolerable emotional interval for Meryem as claimed by Murray (2012): by pretending she had a bad dream, she is not able to remember the hut by the vineyard at the edge of the village where she went to take her uncle his food, she no longer recollects how the man threw himself on her and violated her. Her memory is blurred, and she even doubts it had ever happened. She buries all the events in the hut deep in the shadows of her mind. This second stage of rape trauma corresponds to disbelief which was mentioned by Mason in "Rape and Sexual Assault". Moreover, Herman mentions "intense emotion without clear memory of the event" or remembering everything but without emotion as traumatic reactions (34): in this regard, Meryem's

restraint from the event and the perpetrator's identity show the overwhelmed and disorganized self-defense of human system as a result of traumatic experience.

Mason and Welch state that "self-blame" and "guilt" accompany the rape victim after the first acute physical stage of trauma: "depression and feelings of shame" as well as "suicidal ideation" can be observed in the victims. Corresponding to this, Meryem reminds herself how guilty she is as she is a woman; according to her uncle, "all human beings were sinners, but women were especially accursed", "to be born a woman was a punishment" since "women were devils, dirty and dangerous" (18); therefore, Meryem blames herself for the atrocity she has experienced and detests being a woman. The uncle's words to curse Meryem and her sin enforce her sense of guilt, he says: "Lock up that accursed, immoral whore!" (16); these words make her tremble even more. Inasmuch as her guilt, Meryem is expected to hang herself or to be sent to Istanbul. When she wants to know what happens to girls who get into trouble like her, her stepmother Döne tells her that some girls have chosen to solve the problem by hanging themselves, thus she intimates her to commit suicide (16). Hereof, Meryem's suicidal ideation results from the expectations of the society and her family. In the barn where she is locked, she realizes that the villagers are impatient to see her dead and things to get back to normal for the restoration of the family's honour (53).

For Herman, secrecy and silence are the two main powers of the perpetrator since he does everything to encourage the victim to forget. Moreover, "the more powerful the perpetrator, the greater is his prerogative to name and define reality" (Herman, 2015; 8). Meryem maintains her silence about her rape and the rapist because she is not only terrified but also keeps blaming her for being a woman. The midwife Gülizar, who is an elderly and influential woman in the village, tries hard in vain to take the name of the rapist from her mouth, she says: "You must tell me who the wretch was, or who they were to save yourself" (74). Yet Meryem remains silent without opening her mouth and begins to rock back and forth as if she is in a trance. The perpetrator's – her uncle- power as a religious figure benefits him since the perpetrator and the victim faced in isolation-the hut by the vineyard at the edge of the village and the victim is a woman who is already devalued in the society, as well. In Meryem's condition, her perpetrator and her judge are the same person: her uncle both as her rapist and decision-maker in the family

and the village abuses her. Therefore, Meryem's traumatic experience as a victim becomes unspeakable.

Women who suffer from rape are "more likely to develop post-traumatic stress disorder than victims of any other crime" (Mason, 2007; 1157). Herman categorizes these post-traumatic symptoms into three phases: hyperarousal as the perpetual expectation of danger; intrusion as the unforgettable imprint of the traumatic moment and constriction phase reflecting the numbing response of surrender (35). All the three phases of post-traumatic state can be observed in Meryem's story starting after her rape until she finds her identity in a western city of Turkey. After a traumatic experience, the human system of self-preservation signals a permanent alert to protect itself from the possible return of the danger, thus the traumatized person shows the signs of startle, giving irritable reactions to small provocations as a sign of hyperarousal (35). Corresponding to Herman's ideas, Meryem utters terrible cries, scratches the dust and jerks her arms and legs in the air so that people thought she was bewitched; moreover, she does not go quietly as two young men help her to take her home: she kicks and struggles to fall in a faint to the ground (73). It is obvious that she still feels the possible danger even she is in a safe environment. Traumatic events, thus, seem to recondition the human nervous system.

For the intrusion phase of rape trauma, Herman says that long after the danger is past, the traumatized victim can relive the event for the trauma repeatedly interrupts the course of life. Attesting the ideas of Caruth regarding the return of the repressed to haunt the survivor, Herman mentions flashbacks and nightmares or insignificant reminders to evoke traumatic memories that enforce the original event (37). Following her rape, Meryem's childhood and puberty memories emerge to invade her as signs of hatred towards her gender; she associates each memory of hers from her childhood to the traumatic event she has experienced. Furthermore, the memories of the event continue to haunt her even after she leaves the village. Janet's description "idee fixe" and Kardiner's denotation "fixation on the trauma" explain the belated interruption of the memories. Through the end of the novel, Meryem and Cemal live in a small town by the sea with professor İrfan and an ex-ambassador and the house they stay in reminds her of the vineyard cabin near her village where her trauma is originated. "Whenever she closed her eyes and began to doze, she thought she was in that cabin and kicked wildly in the

air to repulse the black-bearded shadow bearing down on her…" (301). Therefore, even normally safe environments evoke danger for the survivor as she is never assured that she will not encounter some reminder of the trauma.

The term "latency" is used to describe "the period during which the effects of the experience are not apparent": for Freud, latency refers to the successive movement of the trauma from its repression to its return, yet Caruth uses the term for the fully conscious reexperience of the event after a forgetting period as she thinks the victim is not fully aware of the experience during the traumatic event. In this regard, the narrator in *Bliss* asks:

> The part of her brain that was working soundly whispered to her that even in the barn she had not suffered so much. Much time had elapsed since then, and she was far away from the village. Just when she thought she had forgotten everything; how could the horrifying memories return to haunt her? (301-302).

By the same token, the recollection of her rape after a latency period takes place when she is far away from the danger: though she utters no words or memories about the original event and she maintains a relatively comfortable life, she is clearly haunted by the horrifying memories. The professor wants to warm her in her sleep after spending a few hours in water by putting his arms around her, however, he reminds her of his uncle, and she unconsciously returns to the traumatic scene and utters the name of her uncle for the first time (278).

As for the third cardinal symptom of post-traumatic stress disorder, Herman uses the term "constriction" to refer to the alterations of consciousness varying from resistance to surrender, from terror to a paradoxical detached calmness. The helpless victim can escape from her situation by altering her state of consciousness instead of by action in the real world. This constriction phase can be compared to a "freeze" state when in danger: perceptions of the events can be distorted or numbed; a sense of time may be altered with a sense of slow motion. While Herman defines constriction state as small mercy from nature to protect the victim against unbearable pain, feelings of indifference, profound passivity and emotional detachment can be observed in the victims like a hypnotic trance state (42-46). In the novel, Meryem recedes the events during and after her rape from her memory until she reexperiences them unconsciously and in an independent context from the original one. Between her rape and re-enactment of her rape trauma, she oscillates between extremes: "One moment she felt at the height

of her courage, and the next she plunged into the depths of cowardice. She did not believe her fear would ever go away" (283-284).

Besides, following her rape, her varying manifestations from extreme terror to a relative calmness emphasize the constriction phase of trauma: after she leaves the barn to go to İstanbul with her cousin Cemal, Meryem shows no signs of pain, terror or fear; she watches everybody and everything around her, first on the bus, then on the train to İstanbul and lastly on the ferry from Asia to Europe, and she struggles passively to comprehend an unusual life, yet the reminiscent of the past stops following her until she faces her death on a half-built, high concrete bridge as Cemal prefers executing her in an abandoned viaduct. Suddenly, as Herman suggests, her terror, rage and pain dissolve in a "fight or flight" response. Her fear is described in a similar way to the original fear: "Terror was like a bird flapping its wings inside her chest" (214); and her memories - good and bad ones- in the village rush back to her. Consequently, it is clear that Meryem keeps silent about the perpetrator of her rape but she suffers heavily from rape trauma. The first signs of anger, rage, suicidal ideation and belated symptoms of hyperarousal, intrusion and constriction indicate that her rape trauma is not less insignificant than a war-neurosis. By the same token, the novel draws a correspondence between rape trauma and shell shock since the symptoms are not very different. In the first few chapters of the novel, Cemal is a soldier and the brutal reality of war lingers his mind even when he is not in physical danger. As soon as he finishes his service in the army, he takes a bus to his village but on the bus, "he felt as if the danger might come from any direction. Once, when a car's exhaust pipe exploded, he threw himself to the ground" (100). As a matter of fact, on the way to Istanbul, days after his military service, the nightmares about the war and its ruthlessness haunt him in his dreams, just like Meryem is haunted by her own traumatic experience.

Traumatic events violate the victim's self, faith and her basic human relationships in the community; the attachments to the family, friendship, love and community are shattered as a result of traumatic events. A rape victim, in Herman's *Trauma and Recovery*, testifies to this loss of self, faith and security: "When I was raped, I lost my virginity and almost lost my life. I also discarded certain assumptions I had held about how the world worked and about how safe I was". Mardi Horowitz explains the violation of basic human attachments as lack of assimilation to the victim's "inner

schemata": traumatic events destroy the victim's fundamental assumptions about safety, positive value of the self, faith and the meaningful order of creation (Herman, 51). Furthermore, traumatic events destroy the autonomy of the person at the level of basic bodily integrity, thus, violates the belief that one can be oneself in relation to others. The purpose of the attack in rape, for Herman, is to demonstrate contempt for the victim's autonomy and dignity. In this regard, the idea of sin reinforces itself as a sign of the destroyed value of self after her rape so that Meryem regards committing suicide as a duty to her family and her society (54). For the same reason, she can be herself with the professor: "The respectful attention of this wealthy, learned man with his sensitive ways made her tremble inside and opened the door to a mixture of feelings. For the first time in her life, she felt valued, intelligent, and beautiful" (275). Therefore, it is clear that Meryem lost her autonomy over her mind and body.

At the end of the novel, the silence of Meryem transforms into relief, a calmness, a resolution, and a serenity which signals the dawn of healing. According to Herman, a full recovery from trauma can only be accomplished by "the empowerment of the survivor and the creation of new connections" (133). Thus, recovery cannot occur in isolation but only within the context of relationships. This explains why Ma in *Room* cannot recover from trauma while she is in confinement. However, Meryem in *Bliss* has the means of re-creating the psychological faculties that were damaged or deformed by the traumatic event- her rape. She renews connections with other people including the faculties of "trust, autonomy, initiative, competence, identity and intimacy" (Herman, 133). These sentences indicate her recovery from trauma:

> Meryem went to her own room early, got into bed, and tried to sleep. Rather than being upset by all that had happened, she was calm. She felt relieved that everything was out in the open and felt that life was about to take a new turn. She had almost no fears or doubts about the future. Her resoluteness and serenity astonished her, yet she enjoyed the power that was building up inside her (327-328).

Though she does not have the treatment of a therapist as Herman suggests, Meryem reclaims her autonomy and identity with the company of the professor and the ex-ambassador whose house they stayed in for a while. She receives greater support from a family she has just met and with whom she thinks of a future. Thus, despite the fact that she gets the full support of the professor, her real recovery starts with her attachment to the family she meets there (312).

For the role of the therapist for a full recovery, Herman suggests that remaining "disinterested" and "neutral" is an ideal stance to be striven for: abstaining from using one's power over the patient and avoiding taking sides in the patient's inner conflicts, the therapist should constantly remind herself that the patient is in charge of her own life (135). In this regard, Meryem is inclined towards the new family rather than her kin. The lines above indicate that new connections are created in a "disinterested and neutral stance" with the family who welcomes her to their life. In short, as stated by the professor in the novel, "it takes one human to heal another" (262).

As it is seen in the novel and is stated by Herman, recovery from trauma takes time and unfolds in three stages. While Herman sees these three stages as merely an attempt to impose simplicity and order upon a process that is turbulent and complex, she acknowledges the repeated emergence of these steps since the classic works of Janet on hysteria, thus these three steps for recovery can be observed in trauma victims including Meryem in *Bliss*. To show the spectrum of traumatic syndromes for a progression of recovery, Herman uses the table below (Table 1).

**Stages of Recovery**

| Syndrome | Stage One | Stage Two | Stage Three |
|---|---|---|---|
| Hysteria (Janet 1889) | Stabilization, symptom-oriented treatment | Exploration of traumatic memories | Personality reintegration, rehabilitation |
| Combat trauma (Scurfield 1985) | Trust, stress-management, education | Reexperiencing trauma | Integration of trauma |
| Complicated post-traumatic stress disorder (Brown & Fromm 1986) | Stabilization | Integration of memories | Development of self, drive integration |
| Multiple personality disorder (Putnam 1989) | Diagnosis, stabilization, communication, cooperation | Metabolism of trauma | Resolution, integration, development of postresolution coping skills |
| Traumatic disorders (Herman 1992) | Safety | Remembrance and mourning | Reconnection |

Table 1: Stages of Recovery, Herman, Trauma and Recovery, 2015, 156.

Accordingly, Herman identifies these stages as the establishment of safety, remembrance and mourning and lastly reconnection with ordinary life. As for the first stage, the traumatized victim needs a safe environment as the immediate task of crisis intervention. Home may be the most secluded place as a safe environment, yet, if the perpetrator of the trauma is a family member as it is in *Bliss*, home may be the most unsafe place to go (Herman, 162). Meryem is able to start a healing process only after she leaves the village but especially in the western town which has the opposite characteristics. "On this boat, there was something that belonged to "that world," something different from her own, a freedom in the atmosphere, full of life and joy" (263). As a matter of fact, for the first time since her childhood, she feels so carefree and eager to change. The professor underlines the human ability to adapt to new conditions and accept a new order of things so quickly, he thinks: "Human beings were chameleons, with the ability to survive by adapting to their surroundings" (272). Her need for safety is satisfied in the tiny fishing town encircled by the scent of orange blossoms and butterflies.

Once Meryem is convinced that she is safe from the source of rape trauma and her rapist, she tells the story of the trauma, of her rape, yet in a wordless and static way and this telling the story of the trauma induces the second stage of recovery: remembrance and mourning. This stage is generally thought to be possible with the help of a therapist as the therapist plays the role of a witness and ally and in the presence of the therapist, the traumatized victim can speak of the unspeakable. Freud mentions the uncovering process in psychotherapy in which the patient reconstructs the trauma:

> [The patient] must find the courage to direct his attention to the phenomena of his illness. His illness must no longer seem to him contemptible, but must become an enemy worthy of his mettle, a piece of his personality, which has solid ground for its existence, and out of which things of value for his future life have to be derived. The way is thus paved . . . for a reconciliation with the repressed material which is coming to expression in his symptoms, while at the same time place is found for a certain tolerance for the state of being ill (Freud, 1914; 145-156).

Reconstructing of the trauma story, as Herman states, "begins with a review of the patient's life before the trauma and the circumstances that led up to the event". Reclaiming the patient's earlier history is also underlined by Yael Danieli to "re-create the flow" of the patient's life (Danieli, 286). In this regard, the scene where Meryem mistakes the professor for her uncle can be considered as the beginning of the remembrance of her rape and thus starts the mourning process for her. During the silent

talk with the professor, Meryem lets the traumatic rape experience of hers be verbalized for the first time:

> "I'm sorry I frightened you," he said. "I didn't mean any harm. I only wanted to protect you, I swear. Like a father…" The girl continued to cry. İrfan realized that he had entered dangerous waters again. "Did a man hurt you?" Meryem wept silently. "You thought I was your uncle, didn't you?" he asked. "Did he rape you?" Meryem sobbed, and İrfan concluded that he was right. She did not deny it. Respecting Meryem's distress, he remained silent (279).

"The girl did not move or speak. "Was it your uncle?" She did not answer. "Was it Cemal's father?" She had remained silent, looking as if she had surrendered to a power greater than herself" (280). After this talk, she comes to the phase of mourning which is both the most necessary and the most dreaded task of recovery. The survivor of trauma resists mourning as her mourning can bring an act of humiliation, yet, as Herman states, only through mourning "can the patient discover her indestructible inner life" (Herman, 186). In *Bliss*, the reminiscences of the past haunt her after she verbalizes her traumatic experience:

> That night, Meryem had dreamed again about the phoenix tormenting her with its black beard and pincerlike beak. It was the first time she had seen the creature since leaving the barn. On the narrow bed in her cabin, she writhed and moaned, begging the bird to let her go. The creature did not listen but went on ferociously stabbing at the sinful place between her legs (282).

The days after her talk with the professor can be understood as her mourning process as she loses her cheerfulness and her health thinking about the experience. She once more feels ill just like she did in the village following her rape and starts to wear her old clothes which means she blames herself and her being a woman for what happened to her. She even begins to call her body as sinful again:

> Her bloody flesh felt immersed in sin. Maybe it would have been better if she had tied the greasy rope around her neck. By now, her name and her face would have been forgotten, and no one would remember her. As it was, she felt that her sin would haunt her forever (282).

However, having come to terms with the traumatic past, Meryem faces the task of creating a future: after she has mourned the old self that the trauma tested, she now must develop a new self. As stated by Herman, in the last stage of recovery from a traumatic experience, the victim develops new relationships, a new self and reclaims her identity (196). In respect to the third stage of recovery, Meryem understands that she has been a victim and she is ready to take concrete steps for future; for one example, she is no more possessed by the traumatic experience in her daily life.

> Meryem went to her own room early, got into bed, and tried to sleep. Rather than being upset by all that had happened, she was calm. She felt relieved that everything was out in the open and

felt that life was about totake a new turn. She had almost no fears or doubts about the future. Her resoluteness and serenity astonished her, yet she enjoyed the power that was building up inside her (327-328).

Moreover, as part of her recovery stage, Meryem learns to fight against her own social assumptions that made her vulnerable to exploitation in the past. Just as she overcomes her own fears and inner conflicts, she also overcomes external social pressures. Her first confrontation is to Cemal about her future, and she makes a choice for herself for the first time and leaves her cousin in that house. In other words, her silence after her rape by her own uncle cries for itself and haunts her for a long time to be reclaimed, verbalized, and recovered.

### 3.2.    The Role of Patriarchy in Rape Trauma in *Bliss*

Judith Herman, in *Trauma and Recovery*, acknowledges the link that Freud discovered between hysteria and the general "perverted acts against children" in all classes of society. Yet, as Herman continues, Freud turned his focus on the seduction theory as the source of traumatic neurosis since the idea of violence as a routine part of women's life was unacceptable (14). However, with the feminist movements, social context of trauma victims started to take attention. The numerous studies on the causes and effects of rape, characteristics of rapists and victims, treatments for rape and legal and policy issues on rape fail to reduce the frequency of rape. According to feminist theorizing of rape, if the same oppression problem includes more than two people, it is no longer personal but political, thus rape is a political matter (Manhart & Rush, 1974). Additionally, as Griffin articulates, "rape is not an isolated act that can be rooted out from patriarchy without ending patriarch itself" (35). Patriarchal codes in society create rape myths which in return function as "psychological releasers or neutralizers" allowing men to justify their violations against sexual aggression (Mouilso and Calhoun, 2013; 160). By the same token, rape myths serve for men in the patriarchal society where women are blamed in rape cases.

Rape culture roots in the foundations of patriarchal culture in which rape-supportive ideologies and belief systems are built; in return these ideologies and belief systems construct and sustain rape cultures. In rape culture, rape and other forms of gender violence are "trivialized" and "normalized" and regarded as acceptable expressions of sexuality. In a study by Caroline Blyth, along with other contributors, religions, and their discourses- the Bible in specific- are blamed for gender violence by

endorsing patriarchal belief systems while it is not accurate to claim that they originate rape culture. As any text draws the reader into their discourse, biblical texts not only reflect the ideologies of the societies they were written in, but they also empower the same ideologies in communities they are read in (Blyth et al, 2018; 2). In other words, patriarchal hegemony in these biblical texts is sustained in modern societies as part of rape culture. In this regard, patriarchal ideologies and beliefs in *Bliss* reinforce rape culture through rape-supporting discourses and symbols with the exploitation of religion.

In two studies (Burt, 1980; Murmen, Wright, and Kaluzny, 2002) on the affiliation between patriarchal power and rape, the results show that belief in rape myths and masculine ideologies have a great impact on the frequency of rape cases in society. The societies associated with male social dominance, interpersonal violence, the subordination of women and a general hostility towards women were found to be more inclined to rape. The society into which Meryem was born and raped by her uncle is a patriarchal one. In her family, her uncle who is also a religious leader, a sheikh in the region dominates the family including her father; the silent nature of his father in family matters empowers her uncle in the family. Her uncle acts as a guide in daily issues both in the family and in the region, thus nobody can confront him when he sentences Meryem to death.

Moreover, her uncle confines her to the barn after the village hears she has been raped and calls her as "accursed, immoral whore" (16); thus, the society blames the victim for getting raped, for not protecting her chastity. The uncle's word "accursed" reminds us the first sin of Eve to cause great trouble for men so according to Meryem's uncle, being a woman is a good reason to be sinful:

> […] all human beings were sinners, but women were especially accursed. To be born a woman was punishment enough in itself. Women were devils, dirty and dangerous. Like their forerunner, Eve, all of them got men into trouble. Get them constantly with child and regularly give them a good hiding, for they are a disgrace to mankind (18).

In the patriarchal ideologies, gender hierarchy and the subordination of women are important factors to consider in rape cases. In the study of Murmen, Wright and Kaluzny (2002), gender hierarchy and subordination of women are directly associated with sexual abuse. In Sanday's classic study on rape, it was identified that such factor like male social dominance, belief in traditional sex roles and adversarial attitudes

towards women created sexually aggressive societies (Sanday, 1981). Hereof, in Meryem's family, women are humiliated in all parts of life: for one example, women cannot eat with men, they have to serve dinner to the men and wait on them. "Only when they had been fed and the table cleared away could the women gather in the kitchen to eat the leftovers" (24). Likewise, girls and boys are also treated differently in her village; when they reach puberty, girls have to cover themselves and hide away. "By command of her uncle, the bearded patriarch of the village, her family had stopped sending her to school after the first grade. It would be immoral for a girl to sit beside a boy, he decreed" (123). Meryem realizes the main difference between herself and her cousin Cemal and their friend Memo: "They were human, and she was a transgressor" (18); she considered her womanhood as a doomed transgression. Most of the time, she blames her body, the place of sin as responsible for all the trouble she had to go through.

In her two studies (1980, 1998), Martha Burt concentrates on the effects of rape myths in the domain of patriarchal power and control theory to explain the correlation between beliefs in rape myths and a rape-supportive culture. Without rape myths, the general public, she assumes, would understand the entity of rape in every act of coerced sex; yet, as she elucidates, "rape myths influence the common perception" (Burt,1998; 129). Rape myths are defined as "prejudicial, stereotyped, or false beliefs about rape, rape victims, and rapists" (Burt, 1980; 217). Rape myths in a rape-supportive culture are associated with behaviours of rape victims like blaming the victim, trivializing rape, sexual objectification of women and denying of widespread rape and the harm caused by sexual violence. Therefore, patriarchal ideologies create and sustain rape myths that normalize and trivialize the rape of Meryem in *Bliss*. The uncle who rapes Meryem blames her for "asking for it"; these words of him indicate how a rape victim is regarded in the society: "If the bitch doesn't wag its tail, the dog doesn't follow … who knows what else she's been up to on the sly?" (104). Additionally, the stories in the society encourage the rapist by normalizing incest and rape as the women are ashamed and embarrassed to utter these crimes, thus these incidents are not brought before the law and it is quite common to harass the women in most families: "Uncles and in-laws rape their nieces" articulates İrfan (280). The result is always painful for the women as they pay either by committing suicide or being murdered.

Another patriarchal ideology to support the rapist is honour killings in some parts of the world. In the novel, honour killings are served as part of *töre* that is defined as general rules accepted and obeyed by everyone in some particular communities. According to these rules, as stated by Kaya, women's positions never change in such societies: they are always the inferior ones and primary victims of *töre* (Kaya, 2009, 36). In rape or incest incidents, the men are expected to kill "the guilty woman" to be able to protect the family's honour. In other words, while men are not regarded as responsible for their actions in rape incidents, women are left with all the burden. In the novel, "Meryem had been defiled. She had to be gotten rid of in order to cleanse the family honor, and Cemal had been entrusted with this duty" (p.198). As a raped woman, Meryem had one more choice according to the midwife: the best solution would be to find the rapist and force him to marry her; however, her uncle despises this option, he ordains: "Whether a bastard or a rapist, it's all the same. Neither of them is entering my family!" (75). The executor Cemal has some hesitations, but he has no doubts about her sins, thus he tries to focus on the idea of the inhuman enemy as he learned in the military. Meryem is no more an innocent girl from his childhood, instead she is a sinful woman who gave discredit to his family: "His family could not survive such shame. For centuries, this crime had been dealt with and punished in the same way. This was God's will. It was his father's will. No one could defy God's rules" (215-216).

Although honour killings are more cultural than being religious (Kaya, 2009; 38) and the origins of rape culture and gender violence do not lie in religion (Blyth, Colgan & Edwards, 2018; 2), Berktay acknowledges the gender inequality before religion as well as the double standards of religion in terms of men and women (2012, 8). At the same time, she recognizes the differences in theory and practice and the cultural and historical distinctions of religion; however, as she states the women stereotype in religious texts focuses on the subordination of women (9). Accordingly, the multiple references to sin and religion, the story of Eve committing the first sin, and the gender hierarchy related to Islamic religion in the novel *Bliss* portray the misconstruction and abuse of religion for the benefit of patriarchal society. All women are sinners, indecent, corrupt and filthy creatures who are guilty of a grave sin. "It was obvious that creature called woman was an invention of the Devil, created to tempt men into sin". "She was corrupt … indecent … filthy. She had sinned" (175). Cemal's father's words penetrate Cemal about women's deceptive and destructive nature and his association women with

Satan (39). Therefore, honour killings as a result of rape justify the rapist and the executor while raped women are blamed for dishonouring the family.

On the other hand, it is clear that rape culture and gender violence exist not because of religious ideologies but abuse of them for the patriarchy. As stated by Berktay, religious ideologies are constructed and reshaped in compliance with the discourses of societies (15). Therefore, the traditional and patriarchal discourses of some societies especially in the eastern part of Turkey are harshly criticized in the novel for not reflecting the true nature of religion. Selehattin, Cemal's friend in İstanbul questions the mission of Cemal to execute his cousin and reminds him some exploitations of religion for the benefit of some groups and he emphasized that adultery is difficult to prove (229).

Despite the questions of Cemal about sin, and women who have sinned, and the "just punishment" for adulteresses, Selehattin rejects the idea of Islamic order to kill women who have sinned or the stoning; being "buried up to the waist in the ground and stoned to death" (229); for Selehattin, these are just made-up stories. On his visit to another religious figure in İstanbul, Cemal begins to change his idea of killing his cousin as he hears this verse: "Whoever kills a person guiltless of killing others or of setting people against each other will be seen as the killer of all humanity. Whoever lets that person live or saves him from death will be seen as the savior of humanity" (232). In other words, the misconceptions about Islam serve for the patriarchy since they help control, determine and define gender roles in a society.

By the same token, patriarchal power reproduces itself in the military discourse: from an early age, boys are well trained in the military discipline in order to shape their masculine personality. Accordingly, men learn a sexual and gender hierarchy that is created by their entitlement of masculinity, thus aggression against those with less power is often regarded as sexual pleasure (MacKinnon, 1981; 86-87). Additionally, according to social construction theory of Scully, "rape is a learned behaviour", due to cultural factors (1990, 143); in other words, learned masculinity, aggressive sexuality and military discipline are instruments of patriarchal ideologies. Hence, Cemal in the novel is familiar with traditional ideas about women in his society: women are "deceptive" and "destructive" and "frail" for him (39), and he dehumanizes women as he does to the enemy in the military. The girl in front of him, in his attempt to kill her, is no longer his

childhood friend but a soiled, sinful woman who has dishonoured his family: "Since the beginning of their journey, Cemal had felt he must remain emotionally unattached to the girl. This was not through cruelty but the attitude of a predator. His instincts told him that Meryem must remain a stranger to him, so he had tried to suppress all memories related to their childhood" (215). The act of killing a human is normalized in his military training, therefore, he questions his hesitation to kill Meryem: "He was amazed that the simple killing of a girl was turning out to be such a lot of trouble" (151).

The suppressed sexuality in patriarchal societies plays an important role in rape cases, as well. It is stated in the novel that one of the characteristics of patriarchal ideologies in some eastern cultures in Turkey is suppressed sexuality: "Light is carnal in Ionia … Though Istanbul was not Ionia, it shared the same culture. The dynamic potential of this society and the basic motive that determined its behavior was suppressed sexuality" (59). In this regard, jokes and stories about sex reinforce the subconsciously suppressed sexuality in society, as Irfan believes, sex dominates the subconscious of all social classes. Cemal's embarrassed and confused feelings towards his friend's sister and wife demonstrate the patriarchal ideology that has repressed sexuality. It's the same with Meryem as she realizes her dare to look at young men with interest- their slender bodies and charming smiles: the way they hugged the girls… she found their bare, tanned, muscular arms and their little movements attractive" (255). In her village, the idea of "raising her eyes to meet a man's" is considered as inconvenient "let alone gaze at them as she was doing now" (255). Consequently, suppressing sexual desires functions as a learned behaviour due to cultural factors and thus maintains patriarchal ideologies in learned aggressive sexuality.

### 3.3.    Realistic Narration of Trauma in *Bliss*

Between the paradoxical and cathartic essence of trauma fiction lies the referentiality in the narration for Caruth; the same concept of trauma is mentioned as the contradiction between "a mimetic and an anti-mimetic model" by Ruth Leys in *Trauma: A Genealogy* (2000). For Leys, the mimetic model of trauma suggests that an imitation or identification is necessary to understand the traumatic event since the victim cannot fully grasp the event or recall it, she has to act it out or imitate it in other ways. Mimetic trauma model – traditional, Caruthian model- assumes that the victim of trauma has an altered state of consciousness due to the shock of the event, thus requires a hypnotic

imitation to recall the events. In this regard, the testimony and the reliability of the victim become problematic as the traumatic occurrence is considered to have never become part of the victim's ordinary memory, a truthful testimony of the events is unclear. The anti-mimetic model of trauma, on the contrary, perceives the idea of trauma as "a purely external event that befalls a fully constituted subject" (Leys, 2000; 298-299). In other words, the anti-mimetic trauma model presents the idea of trauma as rememberable and thus recoverable as the focus is on the external forces of trauma rather than putting the victim in a mimetic collaboration with the violence. The reason for this violent collaboration between the victim and the perpetrator seems to be the unreliability of the victim's testimony since the absence of reliable testimony is associated with the problematic actuality of the traumatic event (Leys, 2000; 299).

In *Trauma Fiction,* Ann Whitehead gives the general forms and techniques of trauma narratives that borrow mostly from postmodernism, postcolonialism and post war legacy. Trauma fiction writers, as she suggests, use these techniques to confront conventional narrative techniques in seek for the complexity of memory and unity of history, to give voice to marginalized or silenced groups or ideologies and to represent the unspeakable atrocities by new modes of referentiality (81-83). Michael Rothberg (2002) used the term "traumatic realism" to describe new literary devices in trauma narratives to make the reader believe the unbelievable. For Michael Rothberg, these traumatic texts search for a new mode of realism to verbalize a new form of reality and push the realist modes of narration to their limits since traumatic knowledge cannot be fully reclaimed without distortion (2000, 14). Whitehead states that most trauma narratives contain certain stylistic features of traumatic realism like intertextuality, repetition and fragmented narrative voice; yet she admits that these features are not the generalized set of rules for the trauma fiction and cites from Caruth to show the pathological nature of trauma and its fiction: "As Caruth has pointed out, there can be no single approach to these narratives: `[we face the] difficulty of listening and responding to traumatic stories in a way that does not lose their impact, that does not reduce them to cliches or turn them all into versions of the same story" (84). In this regard, trauma fiction refuses to be gathered under a single roof and differs from text to text.

As Craps states, focusing on the anti-narrative, fragmented forms of trauma fiction restricts the canon of trauma to only Western, Eurocentric texts; likewise, Craps also challenges the perception of traumatic realism used in most trauma texts to represent trauma adequately by imitating the traumatic symptoms (Craps, 2013). *Bliss* is not written by a western writer, and it does not imitate the trauma and its symptoms in the narration. In *Bliss*, the protagonist's silence about her rape by her uncle is contrasted with the narrator's voice to verbalize the trauma. Omniscient third person narration and conventional linear sequence in the novel ensure the adequate representation of traumatic event the protagonist experiences. This non-traditional piece of trauma fiction may seem insufficient to express the traumatic, fragmented world of the victim and to narrate the unnarratable, yet it highlights the sufferings of women belonging to a non-Western culture by focusing on the social and historical contexts in which trauma narrative is produced and received. In this regard, realist narration of trauma in *Bliss* offers an anti-mimetic, non-traditional and non-western analysis in terms of trauma theory.

The anti-mimetic trauma model is different from the traditional Caruthian trauma model since the focus in the anti-mimetic model is on the external events the victim undergoes and portrays the victim as "a fully constituted subject" before the traumatic event (Leys, 2000; 299). In this regard, Meryem in *Bliss* is presented as a victim whose psychical autonomy and integrity are damaged by the traumatic event she undergoes. The narration is not affected by the traumatic memories of her in the recreating of the event, thus, the unreliability of the narrator does not constitute a problem as can be seen in the mimetic model. The narrator's voice is critical and disapproving of the traditions and patriarchal society that suppress women. In the following lines, the narrator sounds cynical about the traditions of the society:

> So this is what her family had decided her punishment should be. Meryem was to hang herself in the barn quietly, without fuss, and soon all would be forgotten. Who in this place would think of inquiring into a young girl's death or suicide? When, previously, two young girls had hanged themselves, everyone, assuming the false mask of grief, had gossiped about it endlessly in every detail (16-17).

Moreover, in the anti-mimetic trauma model, as Leys asserts, the identification with the aggressor is not imitated, thus "depicts the violence as purely and simply an

assault from without" (Leys, 2000; 299). Leys enunciates the preference of the anti-mimetic trauma model by women's advocates such as Judith Herman since they accept the reality of traumatic memory and believe in the unproblematic actuality of the traumatic event. In other words, the anti-mimetic narration of trauma resolves the problem of the unreliable narrator and the unreliability of the traumatic event by depicting the victim as a fully constituted subject who is damaged by external events. Hence, third-person narration in *Bliss* does not mimic the form and symptoms of trauma in the narrative techniques; yet the realist narration in the novel is used to criticize external forces as the cause of trauma. These external forces as the cause of rape and rape trauma are implied by the writer as patriarchy, traditions and beliefs against women and rape culture in some parts of the Turkish society.

Despite the anti-mimetic trauma model in *Bliss*, some certain aspects of the mimetic trauma model can also be observed through narration. Ann Whitehead argues in *Trauma Fiction* that writers of trauma narratives face the demands of extremity by pushing the realist project to its limits since they suggest that traumatic knowledge cannot be fully understood or retrieved without distortion in form (84). Whitehead states that intertextuality is one of the most recurring stylistic elements which tend to occur in trauma narratives (84); the definition of intertextuality is given as the multiplicity of the text through "a wide range of intertexts: citations, references, echoes, cultural languages", which is regarded to be associated with the act of memory (Whitehead; 85). As Whitehead explains, the relation between intertextuality and memory is that the former suggests surfacing the forgotten and repressed memories to consciousness; in other words, the intertexts of the text reverberates "the traces of the past emerge in the present as textual echoes, determinations and directions" (85). Accordingly, the richness of *Bliss* in terms of intertextual references and echoes strengthens the haunting power of rape trauma which is encoded in the traditions of society.

The first reference in the novel is to the myth of the phoenix which centres around a bird believed to appear from the East and re-born from its own ashes after committing itself to the flames and continues its life-cycle eternally (Burton, 1961; 382). The bird symbolizes renewal and resurrection from the ashes just as Meryem recovers from rape trauma after a period of pain and mourning. In this regard, Whitehead argues that intertextuality evokes a literary precedent "to determine or influence the actions of a

character in the present" (85); thus, the novel gives hints about the exceptional recovery of Meryem from rape trauma which is not very common in most situations. The phoenix symbol is also possible to signify the long grounded patriarchal traditions in some societies that suppress women because the phoenix in the novel turns into her uncle who rapes her and disengages himself from the event as well as the responsibility. Another reference in the novel lies in the story of the innocent bride: the story of a young and naïve girl secluded and sheltered from all evil and raised like a precious flower tittivates the dreams of many teenage boys like Cemal: "Although the identity of the innocent bride was unknown, the young men of the village never ceased to talk about her—endlessly repeating to each other the same titillating story" (36). The naivety and innocence of the bride underline the stereotypes about women in society. Hence, the intertextual references in the novel help establish the codes of patriarchal society against women.

The narration of trauma in *Bliss* overlaps with postcolonial fiction and the focus on non-Western and anti-Eurocentric trauma fiction argued by Stef Craps. As Whitehead states in *Trauma Fiction*, trauma fiction represents the marginalized or oppressed peoples or cultures; "silenced voices articulate their own stories and bear witness to their former historical and cultural exclusion" (90-91). Craps, in *Postcolonial Witnessing: Trauma Out of Bounds*, argues that Adorno's damnation of aesthetic principle of stylization has avoided realism and realist figuration and has been shared by most trauma theorists and trauma writers within the context of fragmented, anti-narrative structure (40). Craps adds that trauma writers "justify their focus on anti-narrative, fragmented, modernist forms" by indicating the "similarities with the psychic experience of trauma" (40). Furthermore, Craps observes that this tendency to modernist forms in trauma writing narrows trauma canon to non-linear and modernist texts mostly written by Western writers. According to Craps, the field of trauma is becoming limited to a selection of texts, histories, and cultural forms rather than engaging the global scope of traumatic events and numerous forms of witnessing to traumatic events. Luckhurst touches upon this limitation of trauma canon, too; he writes: "Trauma has become a paradigm because it has been turned into a repertoire of compelling stories about the enigmas of identity, memory and selfhood that have saturated Western cultural life" (2013, 80). By the same token, Luckhurst and Craps reject the sole focus on anti-narrative forms of trauma theory by stating that trauma generates both *possibility* and

*impossibility* of narration (Craps, 41; Luckhurst, 83). Hereof, the realist narration of trauma in Bliss stimulates the possibility of narration as well as underlining the cultural atrocities causing trauma for women who are silenced.

The position of the reader is another question in trauma fiction; testimonial bearings of the texts are built upon the relationship between the witness and the reader which is similar to the relationship between the analysand and the analyst. Craps states that passive, inarticulate victim bears witness to a truth which he or she is not fully conscious whereas a knowledgeable expert responds to the witness's testimony to act as a political intervention (2013, 41-42); in this regard, the position of the reader becomes more significant as the reaction of the reader can lead to empathy and vicarious trauma on the reader if the narrator is not reliable for testimony. Hence, the third-person narrator in *Bliss* is not a passive, inarticulate victim but sounds like a knowledgeable expert who is fully conscious to bear witness. Craps gives the example of a few trauma texts in which the reader is addressed not as an innocent victim but instead as a bystander or potential collaborator; Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) is one of the examples inviting the reader to see indifference to the sufferings of the racial, ethnic or cultural atrocities by a privileged and empowered Western public (Craps, 2013; 42). In a similar way, the reader of *Bliss* is invited to fight against the atrocities, traditions, and patriarchal culture oppressing women in the eastern part of the country mostly. The novel achieves this by the realistic representation of the sufferings of women and the social, cultural and political context in which these sufferings are created. As Craps suggests in his book,

> Rather than positing a necessary relation between aesthetic form and political or ethical effectiveness, trauma theory should take account of the specific social and historical contexts in which trauma narratives are produced and received, and be open and attentive to the diverse strategies of representation and resistance which these contexts invite or necessitate (2013; 43).

As a result, Livaneli's novel *Bliss* portrays its female character Meryem as a victim of rape due to the traditions, social constructions against women and patriarchal society that normalizes rape and honour killings following rape. The novel demonstrates physical and psychological symptoms of rape trauma Meryem struggles against, as well as the recovery process from rape trauma as stated by trauma theorists such as Judith Herman, Cathy Caruth and pluralistic trauma theorists like Forter and Balaev. Strict

gender-related rules in her society determine the lives of many other girls like Meryem; the society where girls are regarded less worthy than boys, where women are regarded as the source of sin and where honour killings are presented as a way of victimizing women. The aftermath of her rape by her own uncle reveals the hidden trauma controlling Meryem physically and psychologically. The silence Meryem maintains about the perpetrator of her rape, her suicidal ideation, self-blame and guilt are the products of patriarchal society which blames women and protects the rapist. Craps's focus on the sufferings of the suppressed and silenced groups corresponds the novel's portrayal of silenced and oppressed women as a non-western and anti-Eurocentric artefact through a realistic narration which does not imitate the symptoms of trauma but instead considers the social, historical and political contexts as the main causes of trauma. The realist narration in *Bliss* also helps the reader to feel responsible for the atrocities in the society rather than putting the reader in a passive and vicariously traumatized position. In contrast to the mainstream trauma theory of Caruth, traumatic realism in *Bliss* is not presented as an obstacle for the testimony of the victim, but instead, it gives the reader a fully conscious and reliable narration of rape and traumatic phases the victim overcomes. Lastly, the rape victim in the novel, Meryem, is not portrayed as a helpless victim who repetitiously experiences the trauma but as a survivor who goes through a recovery process and reclaims her identity as a woman in society.

## 4. CONCLUSION: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF *BLISS* AND *ROOM*

Emma Donoghue's *Room* and Ö. Zülfü Livaneli's *Bliss* are analysed through the perspective of trauma theory which focuses on the traumatic symptoms, phases of trauma, possibilities of recovery and narration of trauma. The argument of this thesis is that these novels portray rape trauma both as incomprehensible without re-enactment of the experience as proposed by the traditional trauma theory of Cathy Caruth, and also from the point of pluralistic trauma models that consider social context as crucial to understanding trauma. Besides, these two novels portray different narrative techniques for the representation of rape trauma, thus the narrative differences of trauma fiction are also analysed in the current thesis.

In the first chapter, trauma theory is studied in accordance with the theory's historical development starting with Freud and his contemporaries as a response to a physical shock. Later, the connection between a physical event and the trauma was replaced with the idea of traumatic neurosis argued by Paul Oppenheim, and the term was started to use for extreme terror or flight people experienced in wars and combats, as well as modern developments such as trains and machines. Thanks to studies of Charcot, Janet, Breuer and Freud, the idea of trauma drew the attention of nations as serious health problems. The literary trauma theory started much later with Cathy Caruth, who adopted a textualist and deconstructive approach to Freud and Lacan's writings and concluded that trauma was ungraspable at the time of traumatic experience and can only be reclaimed after a latency period. She, as well as other theorists of traditional trauma theory, focused on the textual impossibility of representation since the language betrays the traumatic experience and thus distorts the truth about it. For them, representation of trauma is only possible with the internalization of trauma in the narration. This meant a broken narrative with flashbacks, symbols, metaphors, interruptions, gaps and inconsistencies as a way to manifest traumatic symptoms. According to pluralistic trauma theorists, Caruthian trauma theory turns trauma narration into a paradox due to its enigmatic nature and distortion of truth in narration. They tried to put individual traumas into social and cultural context to show the relation between them and focused on the social and cultural systems in which traumas are created. Possibilities of recovery from trauma made it possible to see trauma narration as a

catharsis both for the traumatized victim and the society. Feminist trauma theorists included rape in the definition of PTSD which previously excluded rape and other ordinary experiences as they were not regarded as "outside the range of human experience". Rape was started to be seen not only as a crime against the individual but also as a disorder that has serious effects on the victim. Thus, trauma theory highlighted both the traumatic symptoms of rape and the social background of rape cases. Trauma fiction, in this regard, employed a wide range of modernist and realist literary techniques to manifest the trauma in the narration. Hence, this study focuses on both the trauma manifestation in the novels and the social context of rape cases.

The novels in this study, *Room* and *Bliss*, are written in different cultures, thus the motives that cause rape trauma are recognized to be different from each other. Although each pain is different and the sufferings of each one demand to be understood in its uniqueness, the manifestation of social inequalities of power in terms of gender draws parallels between representations implicitly and explicitly, thus comparing the representations of rape trauma both links the sufferings of women around the world and reveals the hidden common motives behind them. The first novel analysed in this study is Emma Donoghue's *Room*, which is written by an Irish writer who now lives in Canada. The novel is analysed mostly in the light of traditional trauma theory that regards trauma incomprehensible and narration of trauma a paradox. The second novel in the study is *Bliss* by a Turkish writer, Ö. Zülfü Livaneli, who puts rape trauma in the social context and looks for the cultural motives of rape trauma and is mostly analysed according to pluralistic trauma models. In other words, the two novels reflect the various sides of trauma theory and trauma narration and the whole study fulfils through the study of trauma theory.

In relation to rape trauma, both novels, *Room* and *Bliss*, portray raped victims, Ma and Meryem; Ma is abducted when she is a university student and has to live in a prison-like room for seven years while Meryem is raped by her own uncle and then sent to Istanbul to be murdered to restore the family's honour. Meryem is also imprisoned in an old, dingy barn for a while after the villagers learn the situation. Both characters exhibit symptoms of trauma inside and outside their confinement. These symptoms are common in terms of fear, hyperarousal, intrusion, and constriction for both characters: Ma displays these symptoms inside and outside the room; although much of the earlier

confinement period of her is not covered in the novel, her overreactive behaviours due to her psychological dominion by Old Nick and her gone days indicate her traumatic state of mind inside. Outside, she is dragged into a suicide attempt through a dissociation period in which she has difficulties in adapting to the changed conditions. Meryem's confinement following her rape lasts shorter, yet her physical freedom is shadowed by the continuous threat of honour killings. Until she reaches a resolution with her new identity, her wound continuously cries out.

As discussed in the study, trauma returns to haunt the survivor after a latency period. This is because the mind of the trauma victim cannot assimilate the event fully at the moment of happening. Both traumatized victims in the novels experience a latency period after which the traumatic events haunt them for proper recognition. Ma's confinement period functions as the latency period during which she cannot fully experience her trauma because of two reasons: the first reason is that she is repeatedly raped and abused during this period and the second reason is her motherhood as she has to perform daily duties as a mother. However, after their escape, Ma feels more trapped in social judgemental borders and her traumatic experience demands to be re-created and fully comprehended. By the same token, Meryem belatedly re-experiences her rape in the shape of dreams, hallucinations, passivity, and selflessness. The latency period for both rape victims indicates a traumatic state of mind which demands a return of the repressed.

Both victims from the novels hint at a possibility of recovery after they fully comprehend their belated trauma. The three stages for recovery mentioned by Herman are fulfilled in both novels with minor differences. Meryem in *Bliss* can be observed to have a full recovery from her traumatic experience due to her relatively instant safety from the source of rape trauma and her newly formed relationships. However, Ma reaches a possibility of recovery much later despite staying in a clinic for a while; her belated recovery is possibly due to her lack of relationships and her disappointment by her family and her society. The role of the therapist in recovery from trauma has proven to be extremely helpful, yet for Ma, having professional help from Dr Clay in the clinic does not mean full support as she never feels fully understood by anyone around. The relationships especially newly found ones after the traumatic event are also important in the possibility of recovery. Meryem, in this regard, is more fortunate to have people

around her who have a neutral stance towards her situation rather than taking sides in her inner conflicts. But Ma lacks this kind of relationship; instead, her father disappoints her by having the son of a rapist and her mother seems changed a lot than she remembers. Thus, the relationship context in the recovery process of Ma proves to be less helpful to get a full recovery from her rape trauma.

Relating to the causes of rape trauma and the attitudes towards raped victims displaying trauma symptoms, the social context must be the key point as pluralistic trauma theorists suggested. In *Room*, the causes of rape and domestic abuse are not generalized in the society, but the portrayal of lack of comprehension of traumatized victims consists almost all levels of society. The media especially tries to either victimize Ma and Jack or portray them as heroes due to their reconciliation against such an atrocity. Ma is disappointed by the portrayal of her son as an alien who seems vulnerable to the demands of modern society while she is portrayed as both heroic for protecting her son in difficult conditions and a traumatized mother. On the other hand, Bliss portrays patriarchal society and rape culture as the main causes of rape and rape trauma. Silencing victims of incest and rape in Turkey in *Bliss* is criticized through the story of Meryem. The diverse traditions in the same country are juxtaposed in the comparison of society's attitude towards raped victims: while these victims are normalized and murdered in the eastern part, they are provided with understanding and help in the western part of the country. In this regard, *Bliss* portrays patriarchy as both the cause of rape events and lack of it to recover from the rape-induced traumas.

Moreover, two novels in the study indicate three main differences in terms of trauma narration. The first difference is about the reliability of the narrator and thus the reliability of testimony. In *Bliss*, the third person narration gives an objective point of view about the rape victim Meryem, the perpetrator and the rape culture. Hence, the reader does not question the testimony of the rape event which took place in secret. On the other hand, in *Room*, the narrator is a five-year-old boy who does not have a full comprehension of their situation and he regards their prison-room as their home. Thus, the testimony of the victim is contradicted with a naïve and subjective narration. Another difference between the novels is their approach to the internalization of trauma: while some traumatic symptoms such as fragmentation, dissociation of the self and figurative language are internalized in the narration of *Room* which leads to a paradoxical trauma

narration, the realistic narration of trauma in *Bliss* functions as a catharsis when Meryem reaches a reconciliation with her traumatic past. In this regard, the two novels show different approaches to the representation of trauma in fiction. Reader's role in trauma fiction is the last difference observed in the novels; in *Room*, the narration creates identification with the victim that may cause a secondary trauma on the reader since the reader is exposed to the victim's traumatic state of mind throughout the narration. Yet, *Bliss*, in this regard, reaches an empathic cognition with the victim and puts the reader in a more critical place. The reader is not an innocent and passive victim of the representation of rape trauma in *Bliss*.

Finally, comparing the writers' attitudes towards rape and rape trauma is another significant factor in the analysis of *Bliss* and *Room*. As a female, Emma Donoghue in *Room* focuses more on the internal conflicts of the traumatized victim while Livaneli approaches rape trauma from an external point of view in *Bliss*. Donoghue is also known to write against the nature of reality constructed in modern society. Thus, the problematization of trauma, motherhood, and representation of trauma in her novel implies a contradictory and alternative nature of reality against the cultural and social beliefs upon "the other". Livaneli portrays a cultural conflict regarding rape and thus highlights the underlying reasons for victimizing women in a patriarchal society.

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# LIST OF TABLES

## CURRICULUM VITAE

Selma PARLAKAY TOPBAŞ was born on 27 September 1985 in Kastamonu. After finishing Abdurrahmanpaşa Highschool, she started to study English Language and Literature at Hacettepe University. In 2008, she graduated from her department and one year later she started to teach English in School of Foreign Languages at Karabuk University. She started the Master of Arts in the Department of English Language and Literature in the Institute of Social Sciences at Karabuk University in 2019. She likes literature and painting.