



**DECOLONIZING TRAUMA IN AHDAF SOUEIF'S  
THE MAP OF LOVE, MONICA ALI'S BRICK  
LANE, AND ZIA HAIDER RAHMAN'S IN THE  
LIGHT OF WHAT WE KNOW**

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## THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that in my opinion the dissertation submitted by Ghassan Fadhil Radhi AL-MIZRAGEE titled “DECOLONIZING TRAUMA IN AHDAF SOUEIF’S THE MAP OF LOVE, MONICA ALI’S BRICK LANE, AND ZIA HAIDER RAHMAN’S IN THE LIGHT OF WHAT WE KNOW” is fully adequate in scope and in quality as a dissertation for the degree of Ph.D.

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This dissertation is accepted by the examining committee with a unanimous vote in the Department of English as a Ph.D. dissertation. July 20, 2023

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Director of the Institute of Graduate Programs

## **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.

**Name Surname: Ghassan AL-MIZRAGEE**

**Signature :**

## **FOREWORD**

In every chapter of life, there should be some persons who enlighten you and direct you to the right path. In my journey of this study, there are many persons whom helped and supported me unconditionally. The head of the Department, Prof. Dr. Abdul Serdar ÖZTÜRK, is the person whom I cannot forget his help and support through all of these years.

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## ABSTRACT

In the newfangled era, it is necessary to shed more light on the moments of pain and agony that disturb the life of the mankind and affect his/her wellbeing as heavy as those of the warfare. Michael Rothberg's theory of trauma that he proposed in his milestone essay *The Decolonizing Trauma Studies: A Response* published in 2008 gives voice to the traumatic moments which are allocated in the non-Western societies. This research tries to investigate and analyze the traumatic moments in three postcolonial novels from Michael Rothberg's perspective. The study is divided into four chapters and a conclusion. The introductory chapter, as a theoretical framework, investigates Michael Rothberg's decolonizing theory. In the second chapter, Rothberg's theory was applied to Ahdaf Soueif's *The Map of Love*. The third chapter analyzes Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* according to Rothberg's theory. The fourth chapter is dedicated to Zia Haider Rahman's *In the Light of What We Know* in which the traumatic moments are analyzed under the light of Rothberg's theory. Choosing these novels is purposeful. Since the Decolonizing Trauma Theory looks for different sites of trauma, and the postcolonial narrative is the best vehicle for this research. Although these writers are English novelists, they have Eastern roots, and this fact helps to present the moments of trauma of the non-Westerners more authentically. This adds the color of multiculturalism which fits this theory. The study reaches the conclusion that Michael Rothberg's theory is applicable to the postcolonial narrative. Moreover, the hidden sites of trauma in these three novels are investigated and analyzed noticeably and successfully in the light of this theory. Thus, new readings of these three novels were produced.

**Keywords:** Ahdaf Soueif, Decolonizing Trauma Theory, Michael Rothberg, Monica Ali, Postcolonial Novels, Trauma Theory, Zia Haider Rahman.



## ÖZET

Yeni çağda, insanoğlunun hayatını alt üst eden ve onun refahını en az savaş kadar ağır etkileyen acı ve ıstırap anlarına daha fazla ışık tutmak gerekiyor. Michael Rehber'in kilometre taşı makalesinde önerdiği travma teorisi Kolonileştirince Travma Çalışmaları: 2008'de yayınlanan Bir Yanıt, Batılı olmayan toplumlarda öne çıkan travmatik anlara ses veriyor. Bu araştırma, üç sömürge sonrası romandaki travmatik anları Michael Rehber'in bakış açısıyla araştırmaya ve analiz etmeye çalışıyor. Çalışma dört bölüme ve bir sonuca ayrılmıştır. Giriş bölümü, teorik bir çerçeve olarak Michael Rehber'in kolondan arındırma teorisini araştırıyor. İkinci bölümde Rehber'in teorisi Ahdaf Soueif'in Aşk Haritasına uygulandı. Üçüncü bölüm, Rehber'in teorisine göre Monica Ali'nin Tuğla Şeridini analiz ediyor. Dördüncü bölüm, Rehber'in teorisi ışığında travmatik anların analiz edildiği Bildiklerimiz Işığında Ziya Haydar Rahman'ın kine adanmıştır. Bu romanları seçmek bir amaca yöneliktir. Dekolonize Edici Travma Teorisi farklı travma alanları aradığından ve sömürge sonrası anlatı bu araştırma için en iyi araçtır. Bu yazarlar İngiliz olmalarına rağmen Doğu kökenlidirler ve bu durum Batılı olmayanların travma anlarını daha gerçekçi bir şekilde sunmaya yardımcı olur. Bu da bu teoriye uyan çokkültürlülük rengini katıyor. Çalışma, Michael Rehber'in teorisinin sömürge sonrası anlatıya uygulanabilir olduğu sonucuna varıyor. Böylece, bu üç romanın yeni okumaları üretildi., bu teori ışığında gözle görülür ve başarılı bir şekilde araştırılmakta ve analiz edilmektedir. Okumaları üç romanın yeni okumaları yapıldı.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Ahdaf Soueif, Dekolonize Edici Travma Teorisi, Michael Rothberg, Monica Ali, Postkolonyal Romanlar, Travma Teorisi, Zia Haider Rahman.

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## ARŞİV KAYIT BİLGİLERİ (in Turkish)

<b>Tezin Adı</b>	BİLDİKLERİMİZ IŞIĞINDA AHD AF SOUEIF'İN AŞK HARİTASI, MONICA ALİ'NİN TUĞLA ŞERİT VE ZİA HAİDER RAHMAN'IN HARİTASINDA KÖKOLONİZATÖRLÜK TRAVMASI
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<b>Tezin Sayfa Sayısı</b>	143
<b>Anahtar Kelimeler</b>	Ahdaf Soueif, Dekolonize Edici Travma Teorisi, Michael Rothberg, Monica Ali, Postkolonyal Romanlar, Travma Teorisi, Zia Haider Rahman.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE THEORY

Life became complicated and man tries to understand it. Hence, within the progression of this complicated life, man suffers from different facets of the contemporary life which affect the living peacefully. Alienation and estrangement were the main themes that color the contemporary man. For this reason, different theories were raised to fulfill the theoretical need and to describe accurately the situation of the contemporary man. One of these theories that come to understand the moments of pain and agony of the contemporary man is the trauma theory. Basically, the theory of trauma was conceptualized by Cathy Caruth and others in the 1990s.

Different voices have noticed that the modern studies had neglected the real aspects of the real world. It was true, the modern theories and studies were in one valley and the real world was in another. The theories fall short from describing the shocking events in the world. In truth, the contemporary world is full with traumatic moments and the shadow of violence and injustice clouded all over the world. For this reason, the trauma theory was initiated to fulfill the need of the contemporary world and reflects precisely what the man suffers from in this world away from imagination and surrealism. The trauma theory comes with one significant trait that differentiates it from the others which is viewing the world with a realistic view in addition to its new method in treating the problems occurring in 'the real world'. By this treatment, the trauma theory assures its novelty. The trauma theory assertively takes this difficult mission and tries to provide a different understanding for the 'new world'. Besides, this theory also provides the necessary tools for improving the new world to be better. Stef Craps says that:

Amid accusations that literary scholarship, particularly in its deconstructive, poststructuralist, or textualist guise, had become indifferent or oblivious to 'what goes on in the real world' ... trauma theory confidently announced itself as an essential apparatus for understanding 'the real world' and even as a potential means for changing it for the better (Craps, 2014, p. 45).

Principally, 'trauma' is known as a stress or a blow that leads to disordered behavior or emotion (Erikson, 1995). The disorder of emotions is a condition, or a state resulted from that stress. In fact, there are some reasons for such state like sexual abuse, the feeling of being unsecured, emotional confusion, harassment, domestic violence, and

even some dejected childhood experiences. For these reasons, trauma studies are colored mainly with psychological universalism. According to the *American Psychiatric Association*, many other experiences are also important to be included in the domain of the trauma theory like those acts that involve death threatening or causing serious wounds (Visser, 2015, p. 2).

Etymologically, the meaning of the word 'trauma' comes from Greek word (τραύμα) which means a wound or an injury that the body may have. This sense of the word had been converted and expanded over ages. In its modern use, principally in the medical and psychological environment including the literary texts, the word Trauma is identified with the wound in the mind. Cathy Caruth is regarded as the founding mother who established this type of studies as an independent theory. Caruth depends largely on Freud's views and notions, although she criticizes some points. She defines trauma as "a shock that appears to work very much like a bodily threat but, in fact, it is a break in the mind's experience of time" (Caruth, 1996, p. 61). She explains this term according to Freud's notable book *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* as "the wound of the mind is not, like the wound of the body, a simple and healable event, but rather an event that is experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known" (1996, p. 3) and in this state it is "not available to consciousness until it imposes itself again, repeatedly, in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor" (1996, p. 4). Presenting this phrase 'is not ... a simple and healable event', it comes clear that Caruth does not believe in the aspect of healing on the part of traumatic moment.

Moreover, the term trauma is not simply a pathology or a case of illness, it denotes a wound in the psyche. It is that wound which contains cries and storms inside. These cries are held and repressed. The long they repressed; the worse the wound may come. These cries deliver a truth, but the way for emerging is 'not available'. Caruth believes that the truth lying deep with its "delayed appearance" as well as its "belated address" (1996, p. 4) is inadequate in its linkage to the known. Moreover, it stays in the unconscious zone of action and language. Caruth also notes that trauma is "an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena" (1996, p. 11). The way in which the experience is re-emerged to represent the event one more time against his or her will and cannot be left behind is called "traumatic neurosis", a term coined by Freud (1996, p. 2).

Two main notorious sources that shed the light on the complication of the term in question are Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* and *Moses and Monotheism*. These two books were written as reactions to the events which were accompanied WWI and WWII, respectively. This is what has made the critics to build a bridge of correlation between trauma in Freud's theory and the violence in that point of history. Caruth suggests that these two works have to be read together to comprehend the notion of trauma that is meant by Freud. The endeavor to comprehend the notion of trauma is, in essence, an attempt to comprehend the complexity of the surviving at the core of the man experience in this life (1996, p. 58).

Hence, there were different developments on the trauma theory to suit the ongoing needs. Critics and researchers confront difficulties in applying the trauma theory. Therefore, many calls were ushered to widen the scope of trauma theory. These calls suggest encompassing other moments of pain and agony that can be occurred in the normal life. Other calls invite the scholars to view and investigate the sites of trauma out the bound of the Western community. These endeavors try to expand the center of discussion of the trauma studies. In truth, the traumatic experiences cannot be found only in wars. Thus, new developments in the trauma theory were initiated to suit the need. One of the most influential developments in the trauma theory was the emergence of Michael Rothberg's the decolonizing trauma approach. Rothberg has redirected the route of the trauma studies to encompass more traumatic moments and provide the necessary tools for analyzing and investigating these sites of trauma which were neglected and out of flavor in the Caruthian model of the trauma theory.

The importance of this study is the application of Michael Rothberg's theory of trauma to three novels: Ahdaf Soueif's *The Map of Love*, Monica Ali's *The Brick Lane* and Zia Haider Rahman's *In the Light of What We Know*. The novelty lies in using Rothberg's model to produce a new reading for these postcolonial texts for the first time. As a matter of fact, the old model of trauma through its deconstructionist approach blocks other approaches to interfere with the trauma studies. But, by applying Rothberg's model of trauma the permission will be granted to answer the questions of the mixed cultures and afford an access to the zones of anthropology and multiculturalism. Moreover, enough space will be provided for exploring the system of belief and spirituality which were neglected areas in the old model of trauma. Therefore, applying Rothberg's model of trauma is aimed to explore and study the less-investigated

aspects and sites of trauma. Different cases of trauma can be found in the domain of the cultural-bias conditions where the depiction of these cases is clear like those in the postcolonial novels. The neglected cases of the traumatic experiences are reconsidered and counted in this new model. Rothberg's model will open new doors for investigation in different sites of trauma which were previously uncounted sorts of traumatic experiences.

Hence, the purpose of this study is to analyze these three novels Ahdaf Soueif's *The Map of Love*, Monica Ali's *The Brick Lane* and Zia Haider Rahman's *In the Light of What We Know* according to the perspective of Rothberg's model of trauma, the Decolonizing Trauma Theory. Thus, this study is conducted to reveal the different social and cultural dimensions of traumatic experiences outside the range of the Eurocentrism. Breaking the circles of Eurocentrism and psychoanalysis in the trauma studies and providing a different sort of reading to these novels from the perspective of Rothberg's model are the main goals of this study.

## **1.2. TRAUMA THEORY AND THE DECOLONIZING TRAUMA THEORY**

As a matter of fact, Caruth paves the ways for programming the trauma studies. Caruth puts emphasis on an important point through her reading of Freud's notable books that the traumatic experience is not an ordinary event, but a notable and shocking one which is accompanied with the unexpectedness of its occurrence. This point has been explained thoroughly by Freud via the well-known example of the clash of the train in which a man can walk apparently without a scratch, but later on, he may suffer from some symptoms due to that shocking moment (Caruth, 1996, p. 6). Freud states that:

It may happen that someone gets away, apparently unharmed, from the spot where he has suffered a shocking accident, for instance a train collision. In the course of the following weeks, however, he develops a series of grave psychical and motor symptoms, which can be ascribed only to his shock or whatever else happened at the time of the accident. He has developed a 'traumatic neurosis'... The time that elapsed between the accident and the first appearance of the symptoms is called the 'incubation period,' a transparent allusion to the pathology of infectious disease.... It is the feature which one might term *latency* (Freud & Strachey, 1961, p. 109).

This example is linked cleverly by Freud to the Jewish monotheism. It highlights the significance of history which is not only passing of the time in a crisis situation, but it resembles the survival that is included only in history, and it is larger than personal experience or a single generation (Caruth, 1996, p. 71). Caruth maintains that Freud

started his theory of trauma by highlighting the fact of ‘bewildering’ which is when the psychotic trauma does not happen as an immediate association to the bodily life-threatening experience. Freud notes that it “works as a rule against the development of a neurosis” (Freud & Strachey, 1961, p. 6). Therefore, the main cause for the trauma is a shock that seems a bodily threat, yet it is, in fact, a spilt in the mind’s experience of time. Freud believes that the traumatic neurosis is “a consequence of an extensive breach being made in the protective shield against stimuli” (1961, p. 24). Caruth argues that the main point that Freud tries to show in this context is the case of the death-confrontation in the traumatic event which is unexpected and too soon to be fully understood by the consciousness (Caruth, 1996, p. 101).

Accordingly, Caruth explains this situation “as the response to an unexpected or overwhelming violent event or events that are not fully grasped as they occur, but return later in repeated flashbacks, nightmares, and other repetitive phenomena” (1996, p. 91). In fact, the idea that lies deep in the theory of trauma is the innate mystery regarding the relationship between psychoanalytical theory and reality. It is not simply the question of mysterious repetition, but the psychological explanation works deep here by listening to the unknown voices which, nevertheless, bear witness (1996, p. 9).

A very interesting example about the new way of listening and seeing from the seat of the trauma theory is found in the French movie *Hiroshima mon amour*. It offers a look on the catastrophic era as well as how a connection between cultures can be established. The film talks about a French girl that her German lover has been killed before couple hours from fleeing with her. Then, the girl was imprisoned, and her family was ashamed because she was in a love relation with a Nazi soldier. After she has been freed, she went to Japan where she met a Japanese man who lost all the members of his family in the catastrophic event of Hiroshima. The movie does not talk about the catastrophe of Hiroshima in a direct sense, but it depicts the survival experience of human being after the catastrophe. What is seen and heard, in this movie *Hiroshima mon amour*, is not capable of being comprehended fully due to the huge number of emotions that may cloud the horizon, but the movie still an important mile stone that bears witness to the catastrophic moments of history (Caruth, 1996, p. 56).

The movie sheds light on “a new mode of seeing and of listening” for the viewers. That new type of “a seeing and a listening from the site of trauma” is capable of working



in that catastrophic time as “a link between cultures” (1996, p. 56). For Caruth, the movie is a very good example that can illustrate her theory of trauma which, according to her view, works as a bridge that links cultures together. Moreover, she asserts that “the language of trauma, and the silence of its mute repetition of suffering, profoundly and imperatively demand” a new approach of listening that definitely gives the permission to dispose of ‘the isolation’ which forced on the two levels the individual and cultural due to the traumatic experience (1996, p. 9). Stef Craps argues that the Japanese man in this movie acts as “an exemplary model of cross-cultural witnessing” (Craps, 2014, p. 48). But Caruth’s sketching of the cross-cultural meetings is potentially highlighting the Euro-centrism. In fact, sailing away from the Eurocentrism needs a dedication.

In her milestone book *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* Caruth provides “a textualist approach” which assures that “all reference is indirect” and in this manner a very exclusive door to history is opened. The issue of history is becoming comprehensible when the reconsideration of references aims at attempting to understand the events, but not suddenly or immediately. History needs a careful and sensitive reader. Resembling Fredric Jameson’s famous aphorism about the question of history that “history is what hurts” (Jameson, 1981, p. 88); Caruth is inclined to read all history with the glasses of trauma. Then, this matter became a devastating practice which might build a shield against any assimilation or expression (Craps, 2010, p. 52). Caruth adopts the Freudian idea of “the indirect referentiality of history”, and she claims that the Freudian perspective can “help us understand our own catastrophic era” (Caruth, 1996, p. 12). Caruth postulates that trauma can pave the way to history by saying that “through the notion of trauma ... we can understand that a rethinking of reference is aimed not at eliminating history but at resituating it in our understanding, that is, at precisely permitting history to arise where immediate understanding may not” (1996, p. 11).

However, the Caruthian view on history has a counterpart by many scholars like Step Craps and Irene Visser. For Craps he refuses this notion on history and postulates that the history of minor groups which is also colored with traumatic events needs to be read in their own conditions and for their own sake (Craps, 2010, pp. 52-53). For Visser, she disagrees strongly with Caruth’s view. She also encourages the critics and scholars who works under the umbrella of the decolonizing trauma theory “to discard Caruth’s emphasis on a new perspective on history when this is predicated on the dissolution of

historical factuality” (Visser, 2015, p. 5). Foggy vision and deceptive understanding will be the results when the critics look to history only through the lens of trauma.

Another matter of importance is the question of dream in the realm of the trauma theory. From Freud’s standpoint, it seems that the seat of trauma that emerges and located in theory is really related to the psychoanalytic dream theory (Caruth, 1996, p. 109). Thus, the reemergence of the traumatic incident in a dream is not a direct connection, but it is an attempt to overcome and grasp what has been happened (1996, p. 62). Traumatic experience is not simply related to dream only, Freud says that “dreams occurring in traumatic neuroses have the characteristic of repeatedly bringing the patient back into the situation of his accident, a situation from which he wakes up in another fright” (Freud & Strachey, 1961, p. 7).

This is clear in the example that is illustrated by Caruth. A father came to sleep in the next room to his recently dead son. In his dream, the father was awakened because he heard his son calling him in a dream and asking him to save his body from the fire of a candle which was about to burn him. At this juncture, Caruth believes that awakening from sleep is the clear response to the words which were whispered in the father's dream. Therefore, the awakening is the opposite of the prerequisite need for facing the death. And the effect of trauma is not initiated from comprehending the death of his son, but also from the incapability of the father to witness. Caruth argues that the question of dream can be viewed from Lacan’s perspective in that “*awakening*, in Lacan’s reading of the dream, *is itself the site of a trauma*, the trauma of the necessity and impossibility of responding to another’s death” (Caruth, 1996, p. 100).

Likewise, the contemporary world is full of traumatic moments and the shadow of violence and injustice clouded all over the world, but the center of discussion was always devoted to the catastrophes taken place in the West particularly the Holocaust and most recently the tragic event of 9/11 in America. At this juncture, the lack of interest in the other tragical episodes from the world history creates another gap. Accordingly, Stef Craps, among other critics, accused the founding texts of trauma of marginalizing and ignoring the other painful histories of the non-Western people. Craps believes that the critics (like Cathy Caruth, Geoffrey Hartman, Shoshana Felman and others) who have established the trauma theory throughout their writings have largely failed to grasp the cross-cultural moments (Craps, 2010), p. 53).

Craps argues that there are some new trends which try to read and investigate trauma as a global thread instead of restricting it to just a European one. The new route of the trauma studies depends on the questions of racial discrimination and class that are deep-rooted in the history of colonialism. Thus, this color of trauma causes a noteworthy challenge to the event-based model of trauma where the Eurocentric is the main color. The urgent need is ‘to decenter the Holocaust’ by skipping it as an opening point which may unintentionally reaffirms its centrality. Many critics argue that the Holocaust was recognized as the most dominant traumatic experience that possessed the majority of the discussion and taken the first pages in research, but now it should be decentered (Craps et al., 2015, p. 909).

Here, Stef Craps calls for expanding the center of discussion of the trauma studies. He argues that it is a required issue of the trauma theory to broaden its scope to encompass all the colors of suffering, the non-Westerners and the minority people in particular. Craps argues that there are some new trends which try to read and investigate trauma as a global thread instead of restricting it to just a European one. He thinks that it is very fair to declare such type of movement as a trend that is confidently established. Nevertheless, this trend, according to Craps’s view, is just at the beginning (Craps et al., 2015, p. 919). Craps also wonders whether it is necessary to start any discussion in the field of trauma with Holocaust which is taking a large scope of the discussion (2015, p. 913).

Accordingly, many critics stress the need of enriching the trauma theory with other fields of social knowledge like anthropology, culture, philosophy and many other fields to be ‘an interdisciplinary approach’. Besides, since trauma theory goes through a transformation according to the postcolonial critique, the most challenging moment now is to relate these insights to the application of the trauma theory. Hence, this step involves “a shift in power from the (Western) metropolitan centers of academe to more localized sites of knowledge” (Andermahr, 2015, p. 503). The traumatic experiences which were the products of violence in the daily standard experiences of life like all types of abuse, racism, social discrimination, sexual harassment, and other prejudices were not considered as traumatic by those who adopted the event-based model. In fact, these moments are supposedly discussed within the realm of the trauma theory, but they were out of flavor. For this reason, many critics in this field suggest that the dominated event-based model of trauma needs to be modified.

Moreover, it is necessary to reconsider the affinity between trauma and recovery. The notion of recovery in the realm of trauma theory need to be revisited (Roca Lizarazu et al., 2018, p. 11). Besides, the racial-based model of trauma is deep-rooted in history of the worldwide systems of colonial practices like slavery. Therefore, Andermahr Sonya believes that this color of trauma causes a noteworthy challenge to the event-based model of trauma where the focus is on the Eurocentric event only (Andermahr, 2015, p. 501).

Stef Craps in his book *Postcolonial Witnessing: Trauma Out of Bounds* follows Michael Rothberg in manipulating the metaphoric way in exploring the realm of history in which the focus is on the similarity instead of one distinctive historical event. Craps is not pleased with the metonymical view that tries to put dissimilar historical events next to one another, then the distance among them will be preserved. But he thinks that it will be better if the two views, the metaphoric and metonymic, are combined (Craps et al., 2015, p. 913). Craps also attracts the attention to another color of trauma that lies beyond the flavor of the event-based model. He sheds the light on the question of racism. He believes that racism is not like the ‘structural trauma’ because racism is historically specific. And it is not like the ‘historical trauma’ because it is not limited to one particular event in history (Andermahr, 2015, p. 501).

Rothberg proposes that the problem which some critics like Craps and Buelens are trying to locate is founded in a different site. It lays in the recent misunderstanding of the victim’s trauma. Since the trauma studies leave the comparative study aside and restricted only to Eurocentric framework, this model deforms the histories like the Holocaust. Moreover, it is a warning to replicate the very Eurocentrism which is laying beyond these histories (Rothberg, 2008, p. 227). Bryan Cheyette thinks that new comparative studies will optimistically skip this centralization and avoiding replicate the centralization of the Holocaust by de-centralizing it (Craps et al., 2015, p. 918). Cheyette argues that the Holocaust was recognized as the most dominant traumatic experience that possessed the majority of the discussion, but now “the colonial turn”, as Michael Rothberg names it, has been noticed in the new studies of trauma and it signals the one of the necessary steps in the process of decolonizing the trauma studies (2015, p. 909). Craps agrees with Cheyette on the suggestion that there is a pressing need to develop more comparative research on memory and trauma theory. He adds that it will be very

valuable and inspirational if the diversity of histories could be brought together (2015, p. 913).

Theoretically, the trauma theory is capable of presenting “the very link between cultures” as suggested by Cathy Caruth. However, Rothberg notes that the trauma theory has emerged to depict the new situations that the world is suffering from, but unfortunately, it is still “stuck within Euro-American conceptual and historical frameworks” (Rothberg, 2008, p. 225). So, how can the trauma theory work as a bridge among cultures while it is still stuck with Eurocentric environment? Here, Stef Craps agrees with Rothberg in this issue and suggests that “if trauma theory is to redeem its promise of cross-cultural ethical engagement, the sufferings of those belonging to non-Western or minority cultures must be given due recognition” (Craps, 2014, p. 46). In this case, a wide range of traumatic events which are experienced by people from different spots in the world will be included in the discussion of trauma.

Therefore, Craps believes that the writers like Cathy Caruth, Geoffrey Hartman, Shoshana Felman and others who have established the trauma theory throughout their writings have “largely fail[ed] to live up to this promise of cross-cultural ethical engagement” (Craps, 2010, p. 53). In his later book, Craps asserts this fact again by saying that:

The founding texts of the field (including Caruth’s own work) largely fail to live up to this promise of cross-cultural ethical engagement. They fail on at least three counts: they marginalize or ignore traumatic experiences of non-Western or minority cultures; they tend to take for granted the universal validity of definitions of trauma and recovery that have developed out of the history of Western modernity; and they often favour or even prescribe a modernist aesthetic of fragmentation and aporia as uniquely suited to the task of bearing witness to trauma (Craps, 2014, p. 46).

Many critics noticed this fact and addressed this sense of bias in the trauma theory. For example, Susannah Radstone notes that it is the sufferings of the minority people or what is called as ‘other’ in the West that needs the attention. These sufferings must be investigated and discussed through the trauma theory. In this regard, the trauma theory “supports politicized constructions of those with whom identifications via traumatic sufferings can be forged and those from whom such identifications are withheld” (Radstone, 2007, p. 25). The matter is when one-sided center of the trauma studies investigates the suffering of the Western members only and can have harmful effects on the ethical mission of trauma theory that stands at odds to other sufferers (Craps, 2014, p. 46-7).

Therefore, there was a pressing need to reconsider the sense of the term trauma which had been changed from ‘a physical to a psychic wound’. The term has continued to be considered as a solo shocking blow which likes a sharp knife cutting the character’s defensive shield causing a severe damage to the psyche. Stef Craps is not convincing with the definition of trauma as “an event outside the range of usual human experience” (Craps, 2010, p. 54). Craps believes that all attempts to define the trauma are “not scientifically neutral but culturally specific” (2010, p. 54). In the case where adequate account is needed, these definitions need to be ‘revised’ or ‘modified’ in order not to re-colonizing the psychosomatic hurt which was imposed on the oppressed. For this reason, there is an urgent need to expand the understanding of the term trauma and a shift is needed to move the concept of trauma “from sudden, unexpected catastrophic events that happen to people in socially dominant positions to encompass ongoing, everyday forms of violence and oppression affecting subordinate groups” (2010, p. 54).

The traumatic experiences which were the products of violence outside the daily standard experiences like all types of abuse, racism, social discrimination, sexual harassment, and other prejudices are not considered traumatic by those who adopted the event-based model. For this reason, Brown suggests that the dominated event-based model of trauma needs to be modified and the concept of trauma needs to reconsider. She added the idea of ‘insidious trauma’, which is a concept suggested by her co-worker Maria Root so as to address “the traumatogenic effects of oppression that are not necessarily overtly violent or threatening to bodily wellbeing at the given moment but that do violence to the soul and spirit” (2010, p. 55).

Therefore, in the last few years, new approaches to trauma theory have been established to meet the needs of the ongoing developments around the world as well as to include as much as possible the cases that were neglected in the old model. For that reason, the project of the trauma theory tends to be more bendable and ‘pluralistic’. The most famous colors in the last ten years of this field are “pluralisation and diversification” (Roca Lizarazu et al., 2018, p. 3). Afterward, it is not only expanding the focus of the trauma theory, but it is necessary to acknowledge the traumas of the other minority people or the non-Western for their sake (Craps, 2014, p. 48). Craps notes that the narrow and limited focus of the trauma studies on the singular personal’s psychological state will ignore the conditions that allow the traumatic abuse. Undeniably, “the individualization of social suffering encourages the idea that recovery

from the traumas affecting the members of marginalized groups is basically a matter of the individual gaining linguistic control over his or her pain” (Craps, 2010, p. 55).

In the course of narrowing the focus only to include the troubles of the personal psyche, the other problems that stimulate the traumatic experience like racism, political repression, and even the economic setbacks will be dropped in the dark corner and lacking investigation. These kinds of problems, mainly those emerged from political or economic situations need to be medicalized and the people who were involved in these sorts can be ‘pathologized’ in terms of being victims without agency. In other words, they are sufferers from a disease which is possible to be cured by psychosomatic counseling. Craps thinks that “the failure to situate these problems in their larger historical context can thus lead to psychological recovery being privileged over the transformation of a wounding political, social, or economic system” (Craps, 2014, p. 50). In this manner, a program can be adopted to medicalize the victims of these traumatic experiences. However, the recovery in the old model of trauma is out of consideration in the sense that the critics of the event-based model do not believe in the capability of the human being of recovering from a traumatic experience. Some other scholars still following the old modal of the trauma theory and still believing that trauma is the result of only a single unexpected calamitous event.

Decolonizing trauma theory, the new model, is not only expanding the scope or widening the focus, but also it is critically groping and revising the dominant conceptions of the trauma and recovery. Michael Rothberg thinks that the new direction needs to be named “decolonizing trauma studies” (Rothberg, 2008, p. 226), because decolonizing means moving beyond the Eurocentricism. The Minority or the non-Western groups are important to be included in the trauma studies because they bear witness to the painful histories. The openness to non-Western systems of belief, rituals, and ceremonies is to engage with the trauma studies and have the objectives of redirecting the studies of trauma. Thus, the relation between the decolonizing trauma project and the postcolonial literary studies is well-built (Visser, 2015, p. 1).

Similarly, Sonya Andermahr notes that the decolonizing trauma theory counts the suffering of the minorities and non-Western societies which are roughly defined as the group of people outside the continents of Europe and North America. Hence, since the old model of the trauma theory produced various views about the association

between the psychological agonies and their cultural manifestations, many postcolonial scholars, like Stef Craps and Iren Visser, noted that the theory failed to fulfill its ethical promise of embracing the cross-cultural crisis. For that reason, it was seen as “a narrowly Western canon of trauma literature has in effect emerged, one which privileges the suffering of white Europeans, and neglects the specificity of non-Western and minority cultural traumas” (Andermahr, 2015, p. 500).

The decolonizing trauma theory comes as a reaction to the lack of interest of the old model of trauma in the minority people’s traumatic experiences. Thus, the reading in the field of the decolonized trauma needs “a recognition of the centrality of oral modes of narrative and their ritual function in indigenous communities” (Visser, 2015, p. 10). In response to trauma which assures the relation of the local system of beliefs and rituals to the understanding of the situation in which the traumatic experience took place and away from the centrism of the Western knowledge and proficiency, Visser believes that

“Normativity is reminiscent of Eurocentric or even colonialist tendencies to impose Western notions of religion-as-superstition on non-Western literary texts. The secular West sees itself as superior ... to the non-secular non-West” (2015, p. 11).

Irene Visser warns that the decolonizing trauma studies should be aware of the cultural bias that is rooted in the secular west and was the cause behind all the prejudices. In the secular thinking, the questions of religion or spirituality are abandoned. The West is clearly contrasted with the rest or the ‘non-West’ in terms of being less civilized, backward, and even requires enlightenment. Consequently, the decolonizing trauma studies must be aware of the deep-seated notion that the West is superior to the rest and the first step to decolonize the trauma studies is to demolish this prejudice and necessarily gives enough space to the discussion on the issues of spirituality and religion (2015, p. 11). Visser also warns from the obstruction that is needed to be taken into consideration. She suggests that “a turn towards an engagement with spirituality may vitalize the work of criticism in postcolonial trauma studies ... the arrogant denial of spirituality in the West has also led to a sense of emptiness and dissatisfaction” (2015, p. 12).

As a matter of fact, postcolonialism avoids the question of secularization because the aboriginal modes of viewing trauma in narratives repetitively embrace the prominence of spirituality and religion that are the neglected parts in the ideology of the poststructuralist theory. Consequently, the examination and searching for the vital



function of the natives' system of belief and its engagement with the cases of trauma can construct a firm step in the process of decolonizing the trauma studies (Visser, 2015, p. 15). Interestingly, the decolonizing trauma project may contain touches of ambiguity, hybridity, and complicity despite the fact that it enterprisingly constructed a theoretical model. Twined with the postcolonial studies, the trauma studies became able to confront the “globally connected world”. This “two-pronged approach” adds the flavors of ethics and politics as well (Rothberg, 2008, p. 232).

Michael Rothberg's milestone essay *Decolonizing Trauma Studies: A Response*, published in 2008, is regarded as the first spark for the Decolonizing Trauma Theory. It is a call for redirection the course of the trauma studies. Rothberg highlights the view that the event-based trauma theory, as being Eurocentric and has too-narrow focus on Freudian psychoanalysis in addition to its deconstructionist approach blocks other approaches to interfere with the trauma studies (Visser, 2015, p. 3). The influence of this essay is vital by redirecting the studies of the trauma away from the ‘Eurocentric tendencies’ as well as its dependence on the ‘Freudian psychoanalysis’. Moreover, it paved the ways to the explorations in different fields of knowledge like anthropology via its debate on the cases of trauma. The openness is the new method that is adopted in the decolonizing trauma theory (2015, p. 15). Rothberg says that “we may want to break out of the isolation imposed by physical, psychic, and epistemological violence. We may need to wander amidst multiple ruins and practice an archeology of the comparative imagination” (Rothberg, 2008, p. 233).

Rothberg believes that the Eurocentric base of trauma theory, as initially considered by Caruth, was invalid to work together with the postcolonial theory and for that reason the trauma theory was in a serious need for a new direction. Rothberg states that if the trauma theory continued to be “tied to a narrow Eurocentric framework, it distorts the histories it addresses (such as the Holocaust) and threatens to reproduce the very Eurocentrism that lies behind those histories” (Rothberg, 2008, p. 227). Similarly, Irene Visser argues that Eurocentrism as being the vital component of the Caruth's theory of trauma indicates that the focus is bound for event-based form of trauma and in this case, it does not match for the long-sustained processes of the colonialism (2015, p. 3). The old model of trauma theory, as Rothberg's believes, takes for granted “the completed past of a singular event—while colonial and postcolonial traumas persist into the present” (Rothberg, 2008, p. 230).

On the same stream of thoughts, Rothberg believes in the capability of putting different histories that contain extreme violence together. He argues that the ‘collective memories’ of the apparently different histories like the Holocaust, colonialism, and slavery are correlated and not ‘separable’. Earlier, Rothberg defines the concept of the multidirectional memory in his book, *Multidirectional Memory*. He suggests looking at memory “as multidirectional: as subject to ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing; as productive and not private” and “this interaction of different historical memories illustrates the productive, intercultural dynamic that I call multidirectional memory” (Rothberg, 2009, p. 3). This is very clear in his approach to deal with the question of memory. Rothberg says that “my own approach focuses on the multidirectionality of collective memory” (Rothberg, 2008, p. 230).

Clearly, Rothberg’s approach is focusing on the ‘multidirectionality of collective memory’. Nevertheless, some other scholars adopt ‘incommensurability’ and ‘translation’ so as to denote to that space which is lying in-between (2008, P. 230). Rothberg argues that many postcolonial works are devoted to ‘local conditions’ and they are indicative to the variety of forms that the colonialism took and to the different colors of influence that it left in the colonized communities. The problem with the ‘canonical’ trauma theory is that it lends itself to be reduced to a single event only, while ‘postcolonial trauma’, as Rothberg named, is continued to the present. Besides, the change of focus from “psychic reality to economic and political materialities” is adopted by many scholars and critics (Rothberg, 2008, p. 230).

In relating psychoanalysis to trauma with a deconstructive inspection on the topic of the ‘indeterminacies of representation’ that has taken place in the examination of cultural artifacts which bear witness to the history with traumatic events can be possible, as Cathy Caruth suggests, to get admission into the traumatic events and challenge any kind of comprehension or representation (Craps, 2010, p. 52). The most central and shared point among the critics, as Rothberg suggests, is the psychoanalytic approach of the trauma studies. This approach enfolds individualization and psychoanalytic models will cover the territory of ‘the collective violence’. However, the fine readings of the postcolonial texts in the *Postcolonial Trauma Novels* surprisingly are ‘character-based’. Therefore, Rothberg declares that when the attention is attracted to the question of “the collective trauma and the material conditions of global modernity, the alternative

methodology developed here too often remains resolutely individualist” (Rothberg, 2008, p. 230).

Moreover, Rothberg discusses the need to increase the area of search to include everyday kinds of traumatic violence because the trauma studies in accordance with the event-based model were concentrating mainly on psychoanalysis only. He says that the trauma theory “needs to globalize itself more thoroughly and responsibly holds true for many prevailing theoretical tendencies” (Rothberg, 2008, p. 226) and in the process of decolonizing the trauma studies, “we need to be careful about repeating the dead ends of earlier debates and reproducing the terms and frameworks that we set out to disable” (2008, p. 226). Thus, Rothberg constructs ‘a differentiated approach’ in his theory of the decolonizing trauma (2008, p. 232). In truth, the project of decolonizing the studies of trauma means ‘discarding’ many conceptions and ideas from the old model. Moreover, this project involves expansion. Irene Visser suggests that the expansion needs to be taken place in the colonial cases where the notions of ‘complicity, agency and guilt’ can be tackled after they were neglected by the old model of the trauma theory. These areas are still ‘unexplored’ and “the postcolonial literature often dramatizes conflicted traumatic memories of individual and collective complicity with hegemonic systems of oppression” (Visser, 2015, pp. 9-10).

Generally, many postcolonial scholars, especially after the publication of Rothberg’s essay in 2008, started to neglect the Freudian view along with the deconstructionist approach in their studies. They tend to prefer sociological and anthropological theories instead (Visser, 2015, p. 8). These scholars believe that a sociological approach to the trauma theory will provide sufficient answers to the questions of specificity or comprehensiveness to be adopted in the postcolonial studies. It means that the project of decolonizing trauma theory has pushed the studies outside the circles of the Eurocentric and psychological realms. Moreover, the postcolonial trauma theory paves the way for new roads that can relate a variety of directions to be trodden like the sociology and the anthropology. Visser agrees with Erikson on the importance of sociology that is “well-travelled conceptual ground” to support the belief of trauma as collective (2015, p. 9).

There was a general appreciation by the postcolonial scholars who think that this Rothberg’s model of trauma theory can help them hugely to understand and interpret

trauma in different ways and enable the studies to encompass more different cultural and historical experiences. For example, Stef Craps criticizes what he names as “the Caruthian theory” by stating that if studies in trauma “have any hope of redeeming its promise of ethical effectiveness” (Craps, 2010, p. 53), it will be very crucial to take into consideration the social and historic associations. In the present day, the project of decolonizing trauma studies, as many scholars agreed upon, comes to the point where the postcolonial studies are granted a central place under the umbrella term of the trauma scholarships along with the process of encompassing different cultural and historical moments from “a broad range of national literatures in postcolonial literary studies, and the Eurocentric, event-based model of original trauma theory has now, in 2015, been discarded” (Visser, 2015, p. 4).

Jeffrey C. Alexander argues that the collective trauma in the realm of the decolonizing trauma theory is the outcome of the sociocultural narrating practices of the traumatic experiences. Therefore, narrative acts as a major component of the ‘trauma process’; a process that provides a narrative form and meaning to the harmful situations which are thought to cause a severe harm to the collective identity (Visser, 2015, p. 9). Along with the postcolonial point of view, the trauma process that involves narrative is found in the history of the colonialism and the postcolonialism. Colonialism is definitely a chief component of the trauma processes. Irene Visser says that the postcolonial narrative “is a major contributor to the socio-cultural construction of trauma that constitutes the trauma process.... Postcolonial fiction characteristically dramatizes the notion that the trauma of colonialism can and must be addressed” (2015, p. 9).

Visser explains that the development in ‘the postcolonial trauma studies’, as she named it, makes the theory “more comprehensive” and permits “more cultural specificity” than Caruth’s theory do. Moreover, this new direction of the trauma theory allowed many methods to be included when they were out of the flavor in the psychological-based trauma theory. It is a very essential step in the process of decolonizing the trauma theory. Indeed, it made “a far-reaching reconfiguration of the original theory, which was from the start firmly grounded in Freudian psychoanalysis and poststructuralist deconstruction” (2015, p. 4). Here, Rothberg suggests that the postcolonial literary studies need to give emphasis to the social structure and the interference of “the Symbolic in the ‘missed encounter’ with the Real” if they want to include trauma in their studies (Rothberg, 2008, p. 231).

Stef Craps focuses on the postcolonial novels written by writers who are interested to speak to the Western people by making the cultural issues as the central points. Moreover, these writers pay a huge attention to the Western thoughts and trying hard to critique them by noting that it is not appropriate to impose the Western frameworks on postcolonial ones, in despite of that fact, these postcolonial writers forget to present an alternative framework. Craps believes that when these criticizing points are demolished, the time will be appropriate for scrutinizing the ideas of suffering and recovery as well as all the forms of expression that can bear witness away from the canon of the Western Trauma (Roca Lizarazu et al., 2018, p. 3).

Irene Visser believes that it is necessary to question the Western system of thought and give more space to the non-Western system of belief in addition to accept the aboriginal rituals of healing and recovery so as to reach its aim of being inclusive. (Visser, 2015, p. 13). Therefore, in the present time, the term trauma becomes more broadly used to express and explain the responses to any type of shocking event without restriction to a place or time, in addition to laying the bases of steering the treatment post the traumatic experience (Craps, 2014, p. 48). Craps thinks that the trauma studies are in need to be “more inclusive and culturally sensitive by acknowledging the sufferings of non-Western and minority groups more fully, for their own sake, and on their own terms” (Craps, 2014, p. 50).

Sonya Andermahr goes further in saying that “it concerns the relationship between individual and collective traumas when we are discussing non-western and minority cultural groups” (Craps et al., 2015, p. 906). Craps thinks that it is essential to investigate the manners by which how the non-western communities or minority groups of people look to culture in terms of bearing witness to the agonizing histories. Definitely, this approach needs a special knowledge and a complete understanding of the culture and language of the other, the ways of expression that they use, beliefs, and their notions on the question of suffering and recovery (2015, p. 909). Craps explains this point of interest further by noting that “decolonizing trauma studies is not just about expanding the scope, broadening the focus, but also about critically examining and revising dominant conceptions of trauma and recovery” (2015, p. 906).

The decolonizing trauma theory problematizes the old trauma theory’s approach to narrative, the deconstructionist one, which fails to touch the value of the narrative due

to its main aesthetics of ‘the indeterminacy’ and ‘the impossibility of meaning’. In fact, it was a controversial issue to the literary scholars because Caruth’s irresolvable contradicted aphorism rejects the belief in “the therapeutic and recuperative value of narrative” (Visser, 2015, p. 7). This belief becomes a priority in the new model of trauma. Visser adds that the “early trauma theory’s deconstructionist notions of the impossibility of truthfulness or accuracy in narrative were initially presented as inherent in the theory’s ethical orientation, which demanded an empathetic connectivity in the reception of trauma narratives” (2015, p. 7). For Caruth, trauma cannot be ‘verbalized’ or ‘understood’ and this is clear in her often quoted saying: “the most direct seeing of a violent event may occur as an absolute inability to know it” (Caruth, 1996, pp. 91-92). Visser thinks that Caruth’s reason behind this problem is attributed to the “limitations of human expression” (Visser, 2015, p. 7) where the accurate and decisive meaning of any traumatic experience is negated due to the lack of understanding or the flawed way of using the language to narrate it. Yet, Caruth goes further than the limitation of the human expression by suggesting that the vocal expression of trauma causes a betrayal to the understanding and even offend the traumatic memory (Visser, 2015, p. 7).

From the very beginning of the trauma theory, the ‘unsayability’ was the only accepted belief at that time. However, Judith Herman, psychiatrist, was the counterpart for this belief and her views were pervaded in her book, *Trauma and Recovery* published in 1992. In opposing to Caruth’s believes, Herman thinks that narrative possesses a therapeutic and effectual power in treating the victims of the traumatic experiences. Herman maintains that narrative of traumatic experience can facilitate the healing and recovery because it is an organized and oriented verbal account laying in a historical content (Visser, 2015, p. 7). On the opposite shore to Herman’s view, Caruth’s perspective is located. For Caruth, narrative of trauma leads only to the increasing of the “indeterminacy, denying the possibility of resolution and recovery”; while Herman believes that the narrative of the trauma is “therapeutic, enabling psychic integration and eventual resolution of trauma” (Visser, 2015, p. 7). Many examples about the possibility of healing and recovery are found in the postcolonial narratives which afford colorful stories that help to maintain the belief that narrating the traumatic experience leads to enhancement.

For example, the main elements of trauma in Toni Morrison’s novel *Home* are guilt and shame. Being traumatized and protagonist of the novel, Frank Money narrates

his tale to a nameless writer who may stand for the reader of this novel. Gradually, through the process of narrating, the layers of hurt are revealed. The hurt was deep and related to a very shocking traumatic experience in the days of war when he shot a youthful girl directly in the face. This experience was hovering his thinking and rendering enormously in his thoughts. With the therapeutic power of the narrative, Frank becomes capable of being reconnected with this agonizing memory by facing his guilt and shame (2015, p. 10).

In light of this novel, another query comes to surface which is the perpetrators' trauma. Rothberg agrees on the notion that perpetrators may suffer also from the traumatic event. He says that "perpetrators can also be traumatized by their participation in extreme violence" (Rothberg, 2008, p. 231). American Vietnam veterans are good example to this kind of trauma. Moreover, there is a general tendency to integrate the word victim with the term 'traumatized person', but this integration contain 'a conceptual error'. Firstly, the word victim can be understood as not been traumatized because the traumatized person is either killed and the dead person is out of consideration since "the dead are not traumatized" (Rothberg, 2008, p. 231). In other words, trauma entails a mode of living and it also involves the anguish of the survivals. Or because 'victimization' does not generate that sort of disruption which trauma should mean so as to have conceptual meaning. Secondly, not all the traumatized persons are victims. Being a traumatized person is not of a necessity to be that sort of moral principal accumulates to it (2008, p. 231).

Moreover, the shift of focus is also redirected to perpetrator trauma instead of the victimhood trauma. Indeed, the new tendency in the trauma studies is not limited to the individual's experience as a victim, but also to include the perpetrator's experience too in addition to the other types and groups of people who are involved in traumatic histories. However, the idea of the perpetrator's trauma as sufferer from the traumatic event is controversial because most of the attention is directed to the victimhood trauma (Craps et al., 2015, p. 914). The move is becoming more clearly in terms of dropping out the standard aesthetics of trauma and adopting the realism and the popular-cultural sorts to bear witness to the traumatic experiences. The shift is clear, not only in aesthetics and modes, but also in expanding the focus to include not only the trauma of the victim but the perpetrator's trauma as well. Nonetheless, the idea of the perpetrator trauma

remained notorious due to “the habitual conflation of trauma and victimhood” (Roca Lizarazu et al., 2018, p. 3).

However, till the recent years, the trauma studies are regularly colored by a Caruth’s notions of ‘belatedness’ and ‘afterward Ness’ in which the belatedness is considered as an important element of trauma and the afterward Ness is considered as an element of the traumatic memory. In the present days, these notions are being reconsidered due the effects developed after the 9/11 in America as well as a response to the calls for decolonizing the trauma studies (Craps et al., 2015, p. 917). Craps notes that there is a crucial need to the project of decolonizing the trauma studies due to the increasing global situation where the trauma is the main touch. Hence, neither the deconstructural nor the psychoanalytic method can afford a solution. The new project is aiming to take account of the historical and social contexts in which the traumatic narratives are constructed and received. Such a project of study has fruitful advantages like addressing the trauma of the marginalized non-Western group of people; in addition, it challenges the hypothetical legality of the Western trauma model. What’s more is that the project of decolonizing the trauma theory can afford alternatives to prevailing trauma aesthetics; and finally, it concentrates on the underexplored affiliation between the First and Third World traumas (Andermahr, 2015, p. 501).

Derek Summerfield, a psychiatrist writer, claims that there is one important point needs to be marked carefully that the general cross-cultural application of psychoanalytic terms which are developed in the West gives the sense of ‘cultural imperialism’. He harshly accused the humanitarian involvement across the world who try to afford psychosomatic assistance in the cases of international divergence circumstances. Summerfield believes that the psychiatric universalism contains of imperialistic senses due to considering the aboriginal people as second class (Craps, 2014, p. 48). Stef Craps agrees with Derek Summerfield on the view that trauma studies are overloaded with ‘psychological universalism’. Craps argues that it is significant for trauma studies to search outside the European and American framework by focusing mainly to the cases of trauma which are related to the colonialism. But this will not be sufficing the need and will not cover all the cases because this method will create a Western modal that will be applied to other histories that may be destroyed due to this overgeneralization since the model will not fitting the other context and many important detailed will be neglected (Craps et al., 2015, p. 907).



The discussion on the connotation of the word 'West' goes widely. Rothberg asks what the importance that lays behind this word is, and what is the reason behind evoking such Eurocentric concept. The word is pregnant with a high elusive denotation and forcing the sense of racial discrimination. Naoki Sakai explains this term by saying that the word West is neither a geographic terrain with united inhabitants, nor a cultural joint pattern. It is a supposed unity which is in reality "a mythic unity" (Rothberg, 2008, p. 227). Rothberg's argument lies in questioning the word 'West' as being the best servant to the "practical shorthand for unequal power relations" (Rothberg, 2008, p. 227). He maintains that it is very necessary to 'resist' the use of this word and try to find another which is less racial evocative. Rothberg agrees with Sakai on considering the term as racial marker that distinct the West from the Rest. Hence, the project of decolonizing the trauma studies is trying to "demonstrate the internal heterogeneity of Europe, North America, and Australia at the same time that it draws attention to the frequent non-fit between the categories of colonizing nations and those of the societies they have colonized" (Rothberg, 2008, p. 228).

Stef Craps believes that there are signs of change on the part of the trauma theory to be 'more decolonized' and the moving outside the circle of the Euro-centrism is astonishing in the sense that there are many publications in the stock in which the new collections of essays and books pave the way for the researches to move steadily in the field of the decolonizing trauma theory. There are fundamental books which include many essays tackling the question of how it possible to decolonize the trauma studies (Craps et al., 2015, p. 908). Alan Gibbs also thinks that the last few years were bearing a lot of signs on the progress of the studies in this field in terms of new studies are emerged and these signs are denoting clearly that the trauma theory is moving steadily to be more decolonized (2015, p. 910).

As a matter of fact, Stef craps like Rothberg agrees that trauma theory is not the best theory to investigate or examine the problems in the world; it does not have the magical key for comprehending what is going on in the world. Yet, it is one of the best tools. In fact, trauma theory is just another method of enquiry which will be more valuable if it accompanied with other methods, but should not be displaced (2015, p. 920). Michael Rothberg agrees with Crap's views which he proposed them clearly in the preface to his book *The Future of Trauma Theory*. Craps believes that the trauma theory

provides the suitable lens to understand the complex issues better and explain them effectively (Roca Lizarazu et al., 2018, p. 5).

The accusation of the old model of trauma of being West-biased is true because it fails to clarify the non-West trauma cases. Besides, the old model of trauma is restricted to solo-facet, the event theory or the accident model. In other words, it is restricted with the psychoanalytic method of approaching the texts and focusing mainly on the Eurocentric events. In this manner, many other traumatic moments will be neglected and need more investigation. Therefore, a need for a new model is becoming an urgent need. The central point of discussion here is to view Rothberg's proposition as a new method to reorganize trauma. In this way, it will break the chains of old category formed by Caruth and others. The differences between the old model of the trauma theory and the Rothberg's decolonizing trauma theory can be outlined as follows:

Caruth's Trauma Theory is characterized as Eurocentric, Individual, Freudian, Temporal, Deconstructionist, Linguistic, Secular, Unspeakable and Indeterminacy. On the opposite shore, Rothberg's Decolonizing Trauma model is characterized as Non-Western Cultures, Collective, Spatial, Sociological and Anthropological, Material, Spiritual or Religious, Speakable and Therapeutic.

### **1.3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Since the trauma studies were limited to the circles of Eurocentrism and psychoanalysis, many researchers conducted works according to this trend of thought and they moved away from the postcolonial literature. For that reason, few studies investigated the spots of trauma in these novels. But there are other studies that explore different sides of these novels. Most of these studies are either focusing on the traumatic effects that the characters suffer from or trying to analyze the characters' behaviors from a psychological standpoint. Moreover, some other studies try to explore the effects and causes of the crisis of identity that most of the characters in these novels go through.

Ahdaf Soueif, a famous Egyptian writer, presents in her novel *The Map of Love* first published in 1999 a search for the self through three generations which ushered many studies that were trying to land on the most prolific issues, mostly from a postcolonial standpoint. For instance, Joseph Massad (1999) explores the main aesthetic

touches in Soueif's literary works. He maintains that the political dimension is always prominent in her works and the language – politics relationship needs more investigation and scrutinizing. Besides, Soueif finds no barrier in discussing the question of sex and desire. Massad believes that the intercultural dialogue is prevailing Soueif's short stories and novels, especially *The Map of Love*.

Elsayed A. Muhammad (2010) focuses in his dissertation on the analyzing of the encountering between the West and the East in Ahdaf Soueif's novel *The Map of Love*. The discussion highlights the Egyptian feminism in the periods of colonialism as well as the post-colonial era. Different female characters were put under analysis in his study. The cultural structure of the Egyptian society and the British cultural footage are the spot of comparison. Elsayed tried to compare two of Soueif's novels with some other novels from Eastern cultures to land on the British colonial touches in literature.

Yvette Katherine Leboeuf in her thesis entitled *The Diasporic Writer in the Post-colonial Context: The Case of Ahdaf Soueif* (2012) sheds more light on the hybrid politics that take place in Egypt from the perspective of a postcolonial standpoint that is mixed with a diasporic background. Leboeuf believes that Soueif was trying to build 'a deterritorialized diasporic identity' that is depending largely on the incorporation of many aspects like the cultural kinship between the Arabs and the West. Soueif emphasizes this point in most of her writings. Therefore, Leboeuf thinks that Ahdaf Soueif succeeded in using the postcolonial theory of transculturalism to treat the theme of the everlasting colonial sense.

Neda Fekri (2014) tackled the characters as travelers literally and metaphorically in her dissertation about selected novels by Ahdaf Soueif. *The Map of Love* was discussed from the relationship between the characters and the cultural products. The characters are analyzed according to their relation to the cultural bondage. The contact zone is established where the Eastern characters and Western characters are met to analyze a shared heritage. Fekri believes that demolishing the binarism between the characters in terms of East and West is the first step to construct the contact zone.

Dima Ayoub (2015) studied the literary strategies that are employed by some authors and their translators to overcome the questions of language differences, location, and identity. Since Ahdaf Soueif is a bilingual author, the question of translation was not a barrier to her. Moreover, she first wrote this novel in English, and it was her mother

that translated it into Arabic. Nevertheless, the study questions the discursive formation of the Arabic language as impenetrable language. Using the theory of translation with postcolonial theory, the study seeks the para-textual elements like glossaries, notes, dialect and accent. Ayoub believes that these elements are affecting the meaning of the text. The multilingualism was clear in the texts that are studied. The dissertation reached the conclusion that the translation can facilitate an ongoing transit between Arabic and English. The languages are not separated entities.

Fatma Bafrouh (2015) discussed in her thesis the quest for identity in Soueif's *The Map of Love*. In fact, the search of identity colors most of the studies about this novel. Bafrouh celebrates the modification which happened to the Egyptian characters in the eras of colonialism and post-colonialism in which more major characters come to surface. These characters were depicted as being active. She sheds lights on the ways by which the Egyptian identity is exposed to the public in the literary works of Soueif. Bafrouh uses the postcolonial theory to land on the most important subjects matters that are highlighted in this novel. The identity formation and the political problems around the characters are studied under the British occupation to Egypt in this thesis.

Muna Abd-Rabbo (2016) investigates and scrutinizes Soueif's *The Map of Love* from a postmodernist point of view. Muna tries to lay the bases for reading this novel as a postmodernist text which consists of a large range of discourse varieties in terms of tone and characters. She argues that Soueif uses the cross-cultural meeting to hint for the hybrid site in which most of the events of this novel have been created in. Besides, colonialism is brought into the view by the use of different voices and places in the novel. The characters under colonialism are studied. The colonized voice is called for confrontation. Muna tries to find the effects of the colonizers in Egypt in order to name the deep-rooted legacies of the British colonialisation over Egypt clearly.

Nawal Meriem Ouhiba (2017) discussed the construction of the diasporic identities in Ahdaf Soueif's novel, *The Map of Love*. It focuses on the formation of the female characters from the light of the diasporic identity. Being a female character and in the post-colonial era means that the character has double duties. It also discussed the differentiation of these identities according to the modalities that were adopted by the female novelists. The variety on the part of the female characters is discussed in this study. Besides, the analysis of these characters constructs the main body of the study. In

fact, the dissertation depends largely on the postcolonial feminist approach to analyze the life of the female characters.

Ali Allaham (2018) provides a textual analysis to Soueif's novel *The Map of Love* through examining the history of Egypt in the last century. From the political and linguistic angles, he landed on the main issues of colonization by focusing on the British colonization to Egypt. He chases the spirit of the past by taking in consideration the changes in the last century which was under the British colonization. This point is considered, along with the new course of the colonialism, the main approach to analyze and understand colonialism. He tries to highlight the effects of the West colonization on Egypt that planted a hierarchal cultural structure in which the West is superior to the backward East. However, Allaham believes that Soueif was succeeded in breaking this hierarchal chain and she managed to create a third party that comprehend and respect the cultural assembly between the East and the West.

Islam Aly El-Naggar (2019) focuses on the postcolonial traces in three novels; Soueif's *The Map of Love* was one of them. The analysis and inspection of these three novels are processed by adopting Edward Said's 'secular and humanist philology' in dealing with the condition of the post-colonial period. El-Naggar thinks that such type of reading will provide a clear picture on how the themes of agency, human subjectivity, and cultural opposition are mediated and presented in the literary works. In fact, El-Naggar tries to discover the points of strength as well as the limitations in viewing the novel from Said's point of view, especially what is related to the literary form.

Maria Christina (2019) discusses in her thesis the manner in which Soueif had portrait her country Egypt in her novel, *The Map of Love*. Christina uses three lenses to study the depiction of Egypt in Soueif's novel. These three lenses are the myth, the ritual, and the history with cultural suggestion. Through these three ways of analysis, Christina tries to reach the comprehension of how Soueif has portrait her country, Egypt. In fact, Soueif romanticize Egypt in her literary works. Here, Christina postulates that Soueif portraits Egypt as a sacred realm in which the real and the imagined can be mixed together. This conclusion is reached through the investigation of how Soueif succeeded in using Said's Oriental arguments over the relationship between the West and the East

Monica Ali, an English novelist from Bangladeshi origins, brings into the view the crisis of morality and the search for self-identity in her best novel *Brick Lane* first

published in London in 2003. The realization and growth of the characters are depicted beautifully through the arguments among the characters. Therefore, many studies were conducting to shed the light on the characters, mainly the differences between the two main characters; Nazneen and her sister Hasina. The first got married and quickly moved to London with her new but strange husband, while the later ran away with her lover to a different city and causing shame to her family. The themes of parents' obedience and challenging one's fate are standing beyond the human capabilities in which Monica Ali tries to present.

*Brick Lane* was the center of many studies in the previous decade. The studies examine the Nazneen's struggle to mediate the differences between the two different cultures since she was moved suddenly to a new culture milieu due to her swift marriage. Michael Perfect (2008) critically analyzes the novel from a postmodern point of view. He argues that the main concern of the story is not the undermining of the stereotypes, but to highlight the question of adaptation on two levels; the personal as well as the social. Perfect goes further in explaining the use of the stereotypes in this novel by maintaining that the author uses this aspect to emphasize the heroine's final integration with the postmodern English society. As a consequence, Perfect names the novel as 'a multicultural Bildungsroman'.

Angelia Poon (2009) argues that Monica Ali's novel *The Brick Lane* is centered on the question of knowledge and its relation to the migrants' identities. Poon thinks that the heroin, Nazneen, has developed a self and situational knowledge. This knowledge is accumulative in which it was constructed through a long period of time in the sense that everyday experience or a situation adds a piece. Poon believes that the novel is a critique on the hybridity as being the most suitable migrant solution, the heroin's husband is a good example. The main aim of Poon's study is to suggest that the novel is an explanation for the need of knowledge on the part of the immigrant to achieve a recognition that leads to a change of life on both levels; the individual and the general which both can construct one entity.

Junn Iselin Storengen (2010) sheds the lights on Monica Ali as a diasporic novelist in the first place. The search light is directed to her novels from the window of Diaspora theory and the relationship between literature and identity. The arguments are constructed on how the search for identity shapes the characters. The themes of

loneliness, death and life are also discussed in this dissertation. Moreover, the question of fate, especially which is related to woman in the postcolonial era, is brought under investigation via the discussion over the contrasting characters in this novel. Racism and class distinction are also presented in this study. Moreover, the theme of identity-crisis that is highlighted most by the novelist in *The Brick Lane* is carefully treated.

Müzeher Çakmaktepe (2010) discusses the construction of postcolonial criticism with the discussion of immigrants' experiences in Britain. The discussion is directed from a psychological standpoint in which the characters are scrutinized and analyzed in relation to their psychological states. The theme of marginalization alongside with the theme of psychological crisis caused by the sense of homelessness and loneliness are also brought under investigation in this study. The investigation also contains the references to the conflicts among the ethnic and religious groups in addition to the geopolitical developments caused by the displacement and immigration. The thesis depends on the interdisciplinary method of tackling these issues.

Mezinani Ahlam (2016) studies this novel from a different point of view. The discussion is related to the use of silence in Monica Ali's novel, *The Brick Lane*. The thesis tries to see the effects of silence on the female characters and how is the silence affects the formation of identity in this novel. The theme of immigration is discussed also in relation to the act of silence which can be considered as a point of weakness or as a point of power, especially at the end of the novel. In his thesis, Ahlam studies the construction of a postcolonial female character thoroughly with more realistic view along with the act of silence whether it was a point of weakness or a point of empowerment to the female character. He tries to land on the use of the act of silence to the formation of the female characters which they are varied in their goal behind using this act in *The Brick Lane*.

Sourav Kumar Swain (2017) discusses in his dissertation the diasporic strategy in Monica Ali's novel, *The Brick Lane*. The discussion also covers the life of the novelist herself because she was an immigrant and she herself is the emblem of different themes like her characters in *The Brick Lane*. Swain postulates that Monica Ali portrayed her characters and described them in a unique way and in this manner, she gives justice to her characters to be prominent in the realm of postcolonialism. The realistic way of description was not absent from the scenes of the novel. Thus, it was addressed in this

study. The novelist's observations to the Bengali society are reflected clearly in her novel. Swain also discusses the themes of nostalgia, homelessness, identity crisis and race in his dissertation.

Johannie Dieks (2019) studies the question of belonging in Monica Ali's novel, *The Brick Lane*. This theme comes to be the center of discussion in many researches to the importance of this aspect on the lives of the characters as well as the heavy effects on their personalities. Dieks depends on the contrast between the Englishness and cultural identity formation to construct the argument in his study. He also uses different theories to describe the first and second generation of immigrants to the West, Britain in particular. Along with the study of the immigrants in Britain, Dieks also discusses the themes of religion, gender, history and language in his thesis. He postulates that these themes are important and influential elements to the construction of the identity in this novel.

Sermet Melis Baysal (2020) in his study moved further by discussing the possibilities of recoveries from the traumatic experiences. He adopted Caruthian approach although he criticizes some backlashes of this theory which as he thinks fall short to understand some moments like the survival and recovery. Here, some moments of traumatic experience are left without explanation due to the lack of theoretical cover. Thus, Sermet emphasizes the need of a different textual approach to show the traumatic experiences in this novel. In fact, Sermet problematizes the gap that has been created due to the application of the Caruthian theory to this novel which seems not suitable. For that reason, Sermet calls for a reconsideration of Caruthian theory as being unsuitable to cover all the moments of trauma and specially those moments of the recoveries. However, Sermet believes that there is a serious need for more pluralistic or contextualized approach. But he provides none.

Zia Haider Rahman's solo novel *In the Light of What We Know* first published in 2014 explores the memories and put into the view the effects of the history along with the politics. Different perspectives and views about large range of issues within the circles of politics and society are clearly depicted in this novel. Rahman shows how the present moments are haunting by the past. Unfortunately, few studies are conducted to explore the different issues that are presented in this novel. In fact, most of these studies were conducted from a postcolonial or a postmodern point of view. This lack of studies



and scholarly research can be attributed to the nature of the novel which is considered by many critics and reviewers as encyclopedic in the sense that it is very difficult to summarize all the moments of struggle in this novel. Besides, the novel's recent publishing can also be the reason behind the few number of studies that were conducting to fathom this novel.

Tasmia Mayen (2015) analyzes Rahman's novel *In the Light of What We Know* from a very interesting point. The study postulates that Zafar, the main character in this novel, is a transnational character who contributed to the postcolonial literature in general and to the heritage of Bangladesh in particular. The geopolitical map is discussed throughout this thesis. The point that clarifies the nature of Zafar's character is the subjection of the human being to violence. Mayen believes that postcolonial discourse falls short from understanding all the aspects of this novel. The reason is attributed to the nature of this novel in that it lent itself hugely to the philosophy of the terrorism in the post-modern world as Mayen believes. So, the study tries to show how Zafar can be considered as a transnational character in the realm of the post-modern world. Besides, Mayen's treatment of Pakistan as a neo-political force changes the balance of qualification of forces in the East.

Shohana Akter (2015) explores three main concepts; Magical Realism, Memory and Amnesia in her study that covers some diasporic novels in which Rahman's novel was one of them. She discusses this novel from a diasporic point of view focusing mainly on the struggle between memory and amnesia. Akter regards the diasporic memory as involuntary memory. Her argument is that the diasporic man is out of land and being in this situation, the loss is evitable in addition to the sense of rootlessness. The rootlessness makes troubles to the diasporic man on the part of memory which is the tool that relates him to his real identity. Losing the memory means fragmentations. Thus, many diasporic novelists fight hard with memory fearing from losing it, especially that is related to the homeland. The elements of the Magical Realism glue the fragmentations of memory here and create stimuli that coordinate the course of the memory recollection. Akter believes that diasporic narratives are courses to fight the amnesia which is resulted from exile. Besides, she highlights the use of Magical Realism in this novel. She believes that the culture is an ongoing process of selection. This method creates a hierarchal structure in the society. In fact, all of the social elements are tools actively participate in creating memory.

Prattasha Hayat (2017) investigates Rahman's novel, *In the Light of What We Know* from the economic and political stand points. Other themes like class, identity, and individual choice are also grounded for discussion in this thesis. The shift of agency is also noted in this study, especially with the character of Zafar. Hayat postulates that Zafar paves the way for the readers to face their reflections of self-denial. The themes of self-destruction and violence are also discussed in this thesis. The imperfection of the mankind is eluded here and the quest for understanding the life is more than a question. The diasporic treatment of analysis was not absent from this study. The quest of knowledge and the situation of man in the contemporary age is clouded the discussion with special treatment to the theme of reality and man's eagerness for bloodshed.

Rezaul Haque (2022) discusses in his study the interventionist trajectory with special attention to the turmoil between Pakistan and Bangladesh. The representational subversions of this intervention are analyzed. Haque postulates that since Rahman is an immigrant in Britain, his distance from Bangladesh was the main factor in shaping the discussion over the rhetoric of nationalism. Although he is a second-generation immigrant, but he has contributed hugely to the arguments about the general dialogue between Bangladesh and Pakistan. Haque believes that Rahman has initiated a healthy route to the diasporic Bangladeshi literature. Moreover, it is this novel that can build a bridge between these two nations that the history disturbs their relationship due to the bloody war in 1971.

However, all these studies, about the three selected novels, try to shed the light on these novels from Caruthian point of view to provide a postcolonial reading. In fact, all of the previous studies are colored with themes of identity crisis, the search for identity, race, or class discrimination. Some other studies have investigated these novels from psychological point of view in that the crisis of identity is the main route of discussion. For this reason, many other aspects in these novels are neglected and need investigation. In other words, none of these studies, mentioned above, has directed the search light on these novel from the perspective of the decolonizing trauma theory that was afforded by Michael Rothberg in *Decolonizing Trauma Studies: A Response* in 2008. Therefore, this study is conducted to explore and investigate the neglected aspects and most important sites of trauma in the novels. Besides, the systems of belief and the spiritual matters are included within the discussion over the sites of trauma by applying

Rothberg's theory of trauma. Consequently, new readings and understandings to these novels will be presented.

## **2. DECOLONIZING TRAUMA IN AHDAF SOUEIF'S *THE MAP OF LOVE***

### **2.1. AN OVERVIEW OF THE AUTHOR'S LIFE AND WORKS**

The English–Egyptian author Ahdaf Soueif is one of the rare and outstanding women writers who contributed hugely to the world of the English fiction. She is exceptionally sensitive to miserable situations and agonies around her. Besides, history embodies the main vein of her writings. Through her writings she tries to rewrite history or at least highlight the neglected points in history especially those in the previous century. Although there are many moments when she takes the readers back to some historical points, but she never miss to link these moments to the present situations. Although, she was born in Egypt in 1950, but she spent different periods of her early life in England because her mother was studying her Ph. D. in London. After completing her B.A. in Cairo university, Soueif settled in London and had unhappy experience by studying linguistics. Although she succeeded of having Ph.D. from Lancaster university in 1978, but she was not satisfied with it since her dream was to sail in the world of literature (Chambers, 2011, p. 246).

Encouraged by many friends and family members, especially her mother as well as her husband Ian Hamilton (an English critic and writer), she indulged in the literary world by *Aisha* which is her first collection of short stories published in 1983 and nominated for the Guardian Fiction Prize (2011, p. 246). Afterward, her literary career continued with *Sandpiper* published in 1996, and the most recent one *I think of You* published in 2007. She is also the author of two novels: *In the Eye of the Sun* published in 1992 and *The Map of Love* published in 1999. In addition, she wrote many reviews and essays that published in different journals and magazines like *The Guardian*, *Al-Arabi*, *Al-Shoroq* and later on were collected in a book form named *Mezzaterra* published in 2004. In the recent times, she released her new book *Is Cairo: My City; Our Revolution* about the Egyptian Revolution published in 2012. Being sensitive to the real world, Soueif participated actively in the Egyptian Revolution and became the political and observer for the *Guardian Newspaper* (Amin, 2005, p. 128).

In the world of fiction, the most criticized point in her narrative is that she romanticizes the Oriental world. She defends her position against this accusation in saying that “it is being unjustly dealt with, unjustly treated, [and] unjustly spoken about” (Edemariam, 2005). Her style is too much similar to that of the Victorian writers. Adopting the Bildungsroman structure in many of her novels, the reader can easily follow the characters’ growth (Amin, 2005, p. 127). Besides, moving smoothly forth and back in time is one the most prevailing touch in her writings. Soueif also uses different voices of narration varied from first person narrator technique into omniscient one. This variety is needed due to the ongoing changes of time and place in the novel.

Soueif mixes the Arabic culture with the English one since she is well informed and lived in both. She is bilingual due to her long living and studying in England. She comments on her reoccurring using of English language, which she described it as “hospitable language”, by saying that it is interesting to “fashion an English that will express an Arab reality” (Abd-Rabbo, 2016, p. 70). What Soueif admits constantly, is that she uses English as her primary means of expression to the extent, she is not capable of writing in Arabic. Therefore, her mother did the translation. She confesses this reality in an interview with Joseph Massad by noting that on some occasions she may read a note or an article and after a while she can remember the thoughts, but she cannot remember the language in which it was written (Soueif & Massad, 1999, p. 87). Consequently, the reader can notice a variety of tongues speaking in her writings due to the hybrid situations that the events taking place as well as the backgrounds of the characters and this is called “Heteroglossia” (Abd-Rabbo, 2016, p. 65).

The Map of Love is a political love story between Anna Winterbourne who is an English widow and a young Egyptian pasha named Sharif al-Baroudi. After the death of her first husband who participated in the war in Sudan, Anna decided to make a tour in the Britain colonial sites. She landed in Egypt by the recommendation of her father-in-law, Sir Charles Winterbourne who has anti-imperial opinions. Anna’s first piece of knowledge about Egypt was when Sir Charles gave her the map of Egypt after her mother’s death. He told her also stories about the British atrocities in Egypt when they – the colonizers – beat Urabi’s revolution and occupied Tel el-kebir. What attracts Anna’s attention most is his voice which was full of anger about their deeds there. Shortly after arriving, Anna was kidnapped accidentally by angry nationalists to force the British Agency to release some Egyptian prisoners. Sharif was informed and he was very

angry and ordered to release her immediately. Sharif pasha condemns this act in saying that: “It is wrong... This is not the way we want to go. It goes in the balance against everything we have tried to do over the last eighteen years. What the British want is to accuse us of fanaticism. If we give them reason, we lose out” (Soueif, 2000, p. 134).

Fortunately, she was heading to Sinai desert and Sharif pasha offers to compensate this mistake by taking her in a trip to the desert. The tour in the desert was Anna’s dream. Through the journey, Sharif and Anna discovered that they have similar way of thinking as well as spirits. After returning, Anna develops a friendship with his sister, Layla, and starts bridging the gaps of cultures between her and Sharif. No long time has been eclipsed before finding themselves, Anna and Sharif Pasha, in compassionate love despite the differences in origin, language, religion, and culture. They got married despite the refusal of the British councilor as well as the British Agency that were stationed in Egypt in the early years of 1900s. One year later, their daughter Nur Al-Hayat was born. Their house, despite of all the difficulties and differences in cultures and traditions, shows the best of the two lovers and it stands for the third space that encompasses the hybrid family. After the assassination of Sharif Basha in 1913, Anna took Nur Al-Hayat and went back to England according to Sharif’s last request.

The novel renders between two different periods, but with the same places. All the events are perfectly interwoven to match the recent events. The novel brings the reader back to the early years of the twentieth century through Anna’s diary and letters. About a century later, Isabel Parkman who lives in New York in the 1990s falls in love with Omar al-Ghamrawi, an Egyptian-Palestinian musician. Isabel found an old trunk full of letters and memos and Omar suggests taking it to Egypt and meet his sister, Amal, there. This old trunk was belonging to her grand grandmother. Isabel and Amal developed a friendship that is similar to Anna and Layla. A second bridge of cultural dialogue was built. Later, they discovered that they are cousins and belong to the same family that lived in Egypt one hundred years ago. Amal works hard to build up the pieces of the story and arrange Anna’s letters chronologically. She was possessed with Anna’s story and lived the moments despite the difference in time. Amal believes that these diaries and memos are a kind of writing that can travel through time. So, Amal feels that “I need to fill in the gaps” (Soueif, 2000, p. 33). Amal wonders after completing the reading of Anna’s diaries and notes: “Who else has read this journal? And when they

read it, did they too feel that it spoke to them? For the sense of Anna speaking to me” (1999, p. 281). She feels that Anna is speaking to her through these diaries and notes.

It is the character of Amal who takes the readers into the past mainly via Anna’s letters and entries. Amal becomes more and more involved with the passing of time in the life of Anna along with the circumstances at that time in Egypt. This love story is paralleled with the relationship between Isabel and Amal’s brother, Omar. These are the two main narrative strands of the novel. For this reason, Soueif was in need to use different genres and different narrative techniques to encompass all the modes of the colonial strategies (Kennedy, 2022, p. 4). The dimensions of the dialogues in this novel are spread through time and space. Besides, the reader is involved in the dialogues and may need to have some moments of thinking to grasp the moment (Abd-Rabbo, 2016, p. 69).

Soueif argues that the problem is “we have wonderful Arabic literature but there is a massive linguistic problem; a literal translation can turn anything into a joke” (Najim, 2001). Accordingly, the imaginative world of her stories comes from the real world, especially the Orientalist world mingled with the Occidental one through putting culturally different characters against each other in her stories. She comments on this issue by saying that *The Map of Love* is her attempt to “give a different perspective to, Western notions about Egypt, about the Arab world, about Islam, and about the veil” (Najim, 2001). She confesses also on her presence in this novel by stating that “Amal’s voice is mine. Sharif Al-Barudi’s political convictions are mine” (Najim, 2001).

Many critics and writers believe that *The Map of Love* is Soueif’s masterpiece. To write in English and published in England is intended to speak for the other about the political issues that matter most. The novel was nominated for the Booker Prize. Radwa Ashur, a famous Egyptian critic and novelist, highlights Soueif’s ability to combine the political matters with the life of the characters in this novel. Ashur says that Soueif’s sensibility “is the sensibility of her generation” (Edemariam, 2005).

## **2.2. THE MAP OF LOVE AS A POSTCOLONIAL CRITIQUE**

As a matter of fact, Soueif was one of the close friends to Edward Said who labeled her as “one of the most extraordinary chroniclers of sexual politics now writing” (Said, 2000, p. 385). She is really up to this nomination. Through her stories, Soueif

mixes sexual desires with power and politics to provide a vivid picture to the ongoing situations. In fact, Soueif and Said both of them stand for the 'in between state' which is a condition when "an Arab with a Western education" (Said, 1994, p. xxvi) grow up with the sense that he/she is a part of "more than one history and more than one group" (1994, p. xxvii). Similar to Edward Said, Soueif was educated in both Britain and Egypt. In the introduction of *Mezzaterra*, her collection of essays and articles, she confesses that she is "a bit of this and a bit of that" (Kennedy, 2022, p. 3). Therefore, it is not shocking that Said admires Soueif's works since both of them share the same background and thoughts.

Soueif brings Arab characters and Western ones together to create a hybrid environment by which she can comment and discuss the political matters without any restraint. The shift in time and place goes smoothly through different female narrating voices like Anna via her diary, Layla via her memos and Amal through her discussion and meditation on Anna's life. It is Amal's work that brought the imperial past to be discussed in the postcolonial present. In fact, Amal stands for the postcolonial voice that interprets and exposes the colonial practices (Abd-Rabbo, 2016, p. 70). Due to the cross-cultural environments in her stories, she uses different types of techniques like stream of consciousness, diaries, letters, notes, flashback, and even some political comments and speeches to provide the necessary context to the story. These layers of narration set the colorful frame for the characters and create the prerequisite environment for the story to be plausible. The complexity of the story is founded in Soueif's unwilling desire to put an end to her characters. Always, there is a further dimension to be explored. Something exceeds the limits of the fictional world of the story (Soueif & Massad, 1999, p. 78).

Despite the difference in time, the touches of colonialism are very clear in the opening and closing years of the twentieth century. What Soueif tries to present through this novel is the notion that the strategies and tactics of the colonial forces are different, but the goal still the same. Therefore, a comparison is inevitable occurred between the old British direct colonial practices and the neocolonial imperial practices acted by America as being the super global power in the West. Soueif comments directly on this issue by saying that:

It must be hard to come to a country so different, a people so different, to take control and insist that everything be done your way. To believe that everything can only be done your



way.... I read the memoirs and the accounts of these long-gone Englishmen, and I think of the officials of the American embassy and agencies today, driving through Cairo in their locked limousines with the smoked-glass windows, opening their doors only when they are safe inside their Marine-guarded compounds (Soueif, 2000, p. 73).

It would be convenient enough to match the American limousines that have ‘smoked-glass windows’ with the Muslim woman veil in the sense that both of them give the freedom to wander in public venues without being teased. This is what happened in this novel when Anna wears the veil and went through the crowd in the train station to join later with Sharif Pasha who will take her into a trip in Sinai desert. She wandered unnoticed and observes some British people who passed her through the train station in Egypt as “bright exotic creatures, walking in a kind of magical space, oblivious to all around them ... while the people, push aside, watched and waited for them to pass” (2000, p. 182).

This division is highlighted by Edward Said in his book *Orientalism*. He asks, “Can one divide human reality... into clearly different cultures, histories, traditions, societies, even races, and survive the consequences humanly?” and he clarifies it further in saying that “I mean to ask whether there is any way of avoiding the hostility expressed by the division, say, of men into ‘us’ (Westerners) and ‘they’ (Orientals)” (Said, 1978, p. 45). Here, Soueif uses different characters to fight this perilous division, not only historical Egyptian ones, but Westerner characters as well. For instance, Anna’s character represents the “idealized Western observer” (Al-Lahham, 2018, p. 19) who works in the novel neutrally to document Egypt endeavor for independence. In this case, she crosses the division of ‘us’ and ‘they’. But the English men in the Agency put a distance that keeps them far from Anna and the natives for unexplained purposes. This act creates the division that Said hints for and warns against. This act has enlarged the gap between the self and the other. Accordingly, Soueif avoids the hostile division of ‘us’ and ‘they’ through creating a hybrid dome to gather Sharif pasha and Anna. Each one of this couple works on his or her own means to dismantle the colonial domination over Egypt.

Anna rejects to be an ordinary British traveler who comes to Egypt only to see monuments. She wants to see Egypt beyond the lenses of the Oriental stereotypes (Kennedy, 2022, p. 6). Anna realizes lately that “at Shephard’s Hotel ... still I am not in Egypt” because she was surrounded by her type of people and “there is something at the heart of it all which eludes me – something – an intimation of which I felt in the

paintings, the conversations in England, and which, now that I am here, seems far, far away from my grasp” (Soueif, 2000, p. 102). Anna refuses the idea that she travels with “Cook’s travelers” to see the desert. Thus, the traveling with Sharif was a living journey into the world of sensations. As a matter of fact, “this anti-Orientalist position is developed further when Anna, dressed incognito as a Muslim/Egyptian woman for the beginning of her journey into the Sinai desert with Sharif” (Kennedy, 2022, p. 9). It suggests that Anna’s character can be seen as a desire to comprehend the Egyptian culture neutrally.

Soueif in *The Map of Love* tries to depict the Westernized Egyptians as well as the Orientalists together and depicts their encounter in Egypt. Sharif is a “Westernized Egyptian nationalist” with aristocratic heritage, and Anna is “an independent-minded Victorian noblewoman” (Abd-Rabbo, 2016, p. 67) with the anti-imperial awareness. Thus, from cultural and personal points of view, these two characters are sharing similar way of thinking, but belong to two different cultures. Moreover, Soueif brought Western female characters, Anna and Isabel, to have experiences in Egypt. This is the process of ‘Egyptianization’ which emerges in the hybrid community. Both of these Western women are eager to know and see the ‘real Egypt’, the one which lies outside the imaginative books and stories.

As far as the character of Sharif Pasha, he acts on the opposite to the disfigured image of the Arabian mores. When he asked Anna: “Weren’t you afraid of me? The wicked Pasha who would lock you up in his harem and do terrible things to you?” she replied, “What terrible things?” here, Sharif Pasha answered cleverly “You should know. They’re in your English stories” (Soueif, 2000, p. 146). Sharif pasha hints for the stereotypical image of Arabs founded in the English literature. Soueif tries hard to correct the disfigured image of the Arabian character in the Western culture. She is acting differently to “enhances this misrepresentation of a devious voluptuous East” (Al-Lahham, 2018, p. 13). In the present time, Soueif presents her intellectual character Amal who talks with Isabel on the question of hybridity and believes that “there must be a way ... of making a space for ourselves where we can make the best of ourselves” (Soueif, 2000, p. 219).

This leads to the notion of ‘contrapuntalism’ which is set by Said to refer to the study of the ‘Overlapping Territories’ and ‘Intertwined Histories’ of the colonialism that

needs revisit the cultural archive “not univocally but contrapuntally, with a simultaneous awareness both of the metropolitan history that is narrated and of those other histories against which (and together with which) the dominating discourse acts” (Said, 1994, p. 51). Kennedy believes that Soueif uses Said’s theory of the contrapuntalism to read the history in which she puts the Eastern text next to the Western ones. Moreover, she tries to show the Egyptian resistance to these colonial practices and compare the situation to the neocolonial practices of the Western power in the middle East, especially Palestine (Kennedy, 2022 p. 5).

The main touch that never been absent from her writings is the Arab-Zionist struggle in Palestine. In this novel, Amal’s mother, Maryam, is from Palestine. Maryam had miscarried twice, and these events stand for the losing of land as well as the displacement of its people. It causes grief and everlasting agony to Maryam and other Arab citizens. It becomes the story that is narrated to the next generations. Soueif is trying to present different interpretations to the dubious questions. Politics is an essential part of her writings and can be regarded as the most influential factor in building the atmosphere in her stories. Being politically active, Soueif established ‘The Palestine Festival of Literature’ which is a touring carnival to celebrate the literary works and only takes place in Palestine’s colonized regions (Chambers, 2011, p. 245).

### **2.3. CONFLICTS OF HISTORY AND POLITICS IN THE NOVEL**

This novel is different from the rest of Soueif’s works in the aspect of including some real historical figures and incidents. Muna Abd-Rabbo argues that “the colonialist tries to erase the very identity of the colonized by citing murky historical references” (Abd-Rabbo, 2016, pp. 65-66). Due to this fact, history was colored with groundless associations and most of it was written by the colonial hand. Thus, Soueif’s uses real historical incidents and characters to empower her argument and gives different interpretations to history. In an interview with Joseph Massad, Soueif clarifies her intention of using real historical incidents in her stories by saying that “everything in *The Map of Love* that’s historical is real, and all the historical characters are real. Slotted within that are my fictional characters” (Soueif & Massad, 1999, pp. 87-88). Examples of using real historical incidents are many like the Entente Cordiale, Denshwai, Muhammad Abdu, Urabi, Boutrous Ghali, Lord Cromer, Kitchener, the Luxor killings, the Israeli-Arab conflict...etc. In fact, Soueif plans to use the past along with the present

in *The Map of Love*. She tries to bring them together by the means of parallelism on both levels, the political and the individual (Abd-Rabbo, 2016, p. 67).

Moreover, Soueif uses different characters with different opinions to discuss the question of history and its effect on the present days. Although some of these characters are fictional, but their voices are similar to the opinions that were available at that time. For instance, Dr. Ramzi believes that the history of Egypt runs deep in the past, but “If we look now at Egypt a hundred years ago, we see that what happened was inevitable” (Soueif, 2000, p. 210). Deena, another character and one of Amal’s friends, speculates that “The British came in at a crucial point in our history. They froze our development: our move towards democracy, towards education, industrialisation, towards modernity” (2000, p. 210). Dr. Yusuf believes that no one can escape the history. But Deena has another opinion that history is capable to be changed because people create history. Deena postulate that problem lays in allowing other people to write or produce our history.

The past of a hundred years ago when Egypt was under the occupation is paralleling the present that is clouded with the neo-colonialisation in different arenas. Using different setting and moving forth and back in time enabled Soueif to give a variety of events that clarifies this parallelism. The past governs the present; ‘the root is the root’. Moreover, Soueif uses her characters to comment on this issue like Anna who wonders “How much is our life governed by the lives and past actions of others?” (Soueif, 2000, p. 423). Said highlights the importance of the past to see the present by saying that “appeals to the past are amongst the commonest strategies in interpretation of the present. What animates such appeal is not only disagreement about what happened in the past and what the past was, but uncertainty whether the past is really past, and concluded, or whether it continues, albeit in different forms, perhaps” (Said, 1994, p. 3). This novel reflects the sufferings that Egyptian people shared and endured through the rout to achieve independence. In fact, this novel stands as a critique in opposition to all types of colonization (Al-Lahham, 2018, p. 10). In *The Map of Love*, “the post-colonial subjects carry both histories as scars – of humiliating wounds – and liberation becomes a more contested issue than independence” (ÇIRÇIR, 2019, p. 141).

The political critique goes hand by hand with the discussion of history and through different stages, firstly, by the national character of the novel, Sharif pasha.

Politics occupied all of his thinking and causes him some traumatic nightmares. Even when Sharif decided to divorce politics for the sake of a peaceful life, politics refuses to leave him alone. In her entry, Layla asks the deep-seated question in Sharif's life: "Could we have lived our lives ignoring politics?" (Soueif, 2000, p. 429). Secondly, the author puts into the front the British people who opposed the colonial practices of the British Empire in the middle east, namely via the characters of Sir Charles Winterbourne and Anna. And most importantly, the critique focuses mainly on Lord Cromer's practices in Egypt (Kennedy, 2022, p. 5).

Said also remarked on Cromer's ill strategy of controlling over Egypt. Cromer's thinking was lacking the real understanding of the Orient. Said says "How much 'serious consideration' the ruler ought to give proposals from the subject race was illustrated in Cromer's total opposition to Egyptian nationalism. Free native institutions, the absence of foreign occupation, a self-sustaining national sovereignty... were consistently rejected by Cromer" (Said, 1978, p. 37). And Soueif agrees with Said on that blind imperialist thinking of Cromer. She depicts Cromer as an Oriental antagonist in her novel. Criticism was heavily directed on Lord Cromer's practices in Egypt especially in the domains of agriculture, industry, and taxation. In the novel, the letter that was written by Sharif Pasha to criticize Cromer's policies in Egypt at that time before Sharif's death establishes a new canon of resistance to the colonial acts in this novel. It represents the anti-colonialist tendency that has been emerged among the elite of the Egyptian nationalists and it is also the writing back to Empire.

Even the epigraphs that Soueif places at the beginning of each chapter, most of them are delivering political views at a given moment of history. These epigraphs work as another tool of criticizing the colonizer's short perspective about the history of Egypt like the opening epigraph of the novel in which the previous Egyptian president, Gamal Abd El-Nasser gives a speech criticizing the imperial ignorant views about Egypt especially the period between 1900 - 1914. "It is strange that this period when the Colonialists and their collaborators thought everything was quiet — was one of the most fertile in Egypt's history. A great examination of the self-took place, and a great recharging of energy in preparation for a new Renaissance" (Soueif, 2000, p. 12). The most important epigraph is lunched by Lord Cromer in chapter twenty-five, "The want of gratitude displayed by a nation to its alien benefactors is almost as old as history itself" (2000, p. 368). In this chapter, the Egyptian farmers suffer the British injustice

after the Denshwai incident that leads to Cromer's resignation. Many sayings by national and politician writers are decorated the chapters that lie before and after this chapter like Negib Azoury, Mustafa Kamel, Arwa Salih, and Boutros Ghali. These sayings by those real-life characters document the "historical Egyptian resistance to the British colonizers" (Kennedy, 2022, p. 17).

#### **2.4. THE TRAUMATIZING MOMENTS IN THE NOVEL**

Rothberg's approach to decolonizing the Trauma studies is depending largely on the role of the multidirectional memory. Earlier, in Chapter One, Rothberg's definition of the Multidirectional memory was mentioned in which he considers it as "subject to ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing; as productive and not private.... This interaction of different historical memories illustrates the productive, intercultural dynamic that I call multidirectional memory" (Rothberg, 2009, p. 3). He developed his theory further by specifying the work of the Multidirectional Memory as "to draw attention to the dynamic transfers that pace between diverse places and times during the act of remembrance" (Rothberg, 2009, p. 11). In fact, the act of remembrance, as Rothberg believes, "cuts across and binds together diverse spatial, temporal and cultural sites" (2009, p. 11)

From this point, it comes to be crystal clear that the work the multidirectional memory is not 'private' or stagnant. It involves unending transactions and intercultural mixing. Therefore, the postcolonial works are good soil to dig for the multidirectional memory which is the main tool of decolonizing the trauma studies. Rothberg argues that many postcolonial works are devoted to "local conditions", and they are indicative to the variety of forms that the colonialism took and to the different colors of influence that it left in the colonialized communities. He calls for thinking "about the relationship between different social groups' histories of victimization" (2009, p. 2) that is, in fact, the main role of the 'collective memory'. He defines the collective memory as the relationship that the victimized groups "establish between their past and their present circumstances" (2009, p. 2). Soueif in *The Map of Love* never missed any occasion when linking the shared past to the ongoing present is possible. Thus, this novel can work as a practical example to Rothberg's theory in that it contains the moments of painful history that are rooted firmly in the memory of the native people who were colonized. These painful memories are mixed brilliantly with different strands of the narrative.

For instance, in Tawasi (the village in upper Egypt which witnessed the love story of Sharif and Anna) Amal rests on the memories of these lovers with the diaries and journal written by Anna between her hands. On the wall is the portrait of Sharif Pasha with “his dark eyes look back at me and behind them lie El-Tel Kebir and Umm Durman and Denshwai” (Soueif, 2000, p. 402). History is provoked by the portrait on the wall which contains a clear indication to the history of Egypt. In that portrait, three places of battles are mentioned ‘El-Tel el-Kebir’, ‘Umm Durman’ and ‘Denshwai’. The first stands for the revolution of Urabi which was suppressed by the British forces and caused a bloody massacre. The second is the emblem of atrocities acted by the British forces in Sudan in which Anna’s first husband, Edward, took part. The last is the Egyptian wound that cannot be healed or concealed. The symbolism lies in putting all of these catastrophes in one portrait and Sharif image is in the front as if it denotes that these catastrophes are the Sharif’s wounds as well as the burdens that caused him to be troubled all the years of his short life. This is a clear indication to the work of the multidirectional memory in this novel in the sense that this portrait contains different moments of pain from different historical and spatial spots.

Said believes that “there can be no escapes from history” (Said, 1994, p. 21). Said explicates the value of history as a shared memory among millions of people in which it is not restricted with itself, but it intrudes into the lives and the reality of the present to these people who hold it as a memory. In this novel, the trauma is connected with the imperialism in which the colonial past via Anna is related to the postcolonial present through Amal. Amal provides the necessary pieces of information by shedding light on the related moments in history. As being the main narrator, Amal becomes the facilitator and mediator of the story and the collector of its threads. Amal says, “I’m putting together the whole picture and I know everything that happened and wasn’t written down” (Soueif, 2000, p. 128).

The most important point in process of decolonizing trauma studies is all the moments of suffering in the history of the colonized people along with their systems of belief and rituals needed to be encompassed. Rothberg reminds the need to increase the area of search to include “everyday forms of traumatizing violence” (Rothberg, 2008, p. 226). In fact, the project of decolonizing the studies of trauma involves expansion to encompass all of these traumatized moments in the lives of the people all over the world, not the Westerners only. Thus, Rothberg believes that trauma theory “needs to globalize

itself more thoroughly and responsibly holds true for many prevailing theoretical tendencies” (2008, p. 226). In truth, the modern history of Egypt is a good ground to start with, because it is rich with moment that depicts the agony and pain through the life of the Egyptians under the colonizer’s supremacy in the last century.

Rothberg’s model of trauma theory can help hugely to understand and interpret trauma in different ways and enable the studies to encompass more different cultural and historical experiences. Therefore, Rothberg suggests that the postcolonial literary studies need to give emphasis to the social structure and the interference of “the Symbolic in the missed encounter with the Real” if they want to include trauma in their studies (2008, p. 231). In *The Map of Love*, the moments when the encounter with the real are many and varied. When Anna reached Egypt, she stood on the same shore that her husband stood before. Edward was landed here before he headed to the battle. She speculates that “for four years ago he [Edward] made this very journey and saw the same shore that I have seen today and disembarked at the very port. The waves breaking against the sea wall beneath my window are not the waves he listened to, but their sound cannot be too dissimilar” (Soueif, 2000, pp. 65- 66).

What Edward had witnessed in Africa is in fact a type of terror that plants horrible ideas in his mind. He was traumatized by the horrible scenes there and the injustice of British forces that have done in Africa. After his death, his father Sir Charles clarifies the pejorative occurrences that the British army has caused to Sudan and now Egypt. The trauma is not affecting the colonized only, but the colonizer as well. This is clear in Anna’s entry when she says: “he is angered equally by the doings of Kitchener in South Africa ... It is very hard, listening to him, not to feel caught up in a terrible time of brutality and even he is helpless — save for letters to *The Times* — to do anything but wait for history to run its course” (2000, p. 45). After this conversation with her father-in-law, Anna started to comprehend the amount of brutality that caused by the British army in Sudan and the main cause behind her husband's trauma. She prays “Sweet Mary, Mother of God, I pray for my husband’s soul as I pray for the souls of all the men who were joined in that terrible event” (2000, p. 40). It is very clear now the amount of brutality that the colonized people in Africa were suffering from. The traumatic experience is not related to the Westerners only, but the people of Africa, particularly in Sudan, who are in need to deliver a voice. This voice was neglected by old model of trauma because it does not belong to the Westerner people. Irene Visser



clarifies this point in suggesting that the expansion needs to be taken place in the colonial cases where the notions of “complicity, agency, and guilt” can be tackled after being neglected by the old model of the trauma theory. These areas are still ‘unexplored’ and “the postcolonial literature often dramatizes conflicted traumatic memories of individual and collective complicity with hegemonic systems of oppression” (Visser, 2015, pp. 9-10).

Here, Soueif explains these neglected subjects like guilt through Anna’s position after Edward been back from Africa in that Anna was “helpless to help” and the fear is fuelling the atmosphere: “A fear that she would fail him in death as she had in life.... A happy man would not leave his home and go seeking death in the desert. A well-loved man would not die with horrors eating silently, secretly at his mind. If she had loved him better, perhaps he would not have needed to go to the Sudan” (Soueif, 2000, p. 46). Anna blames herself because she failed to prevent him from going to this absurd war. Indeed, it was an absurd war and Sir Charles, Anna’s father-in-law, affirms this fact by commenting and confessing directly about the brutality of the colonial deeds in Africa, “the British Empire had done so much harm to so many people ... and then it would be too late to say or do anything” (2000, p. 23). This confession comes from the colonizer’s side, although it was too late. It suggests that the amount of brutality exceeded the limits if there is any. And, of course, this is accompanied with pain and agony on the colonized side, the native people in Sudan. The question that comes to surface here reads like this; is it not too much important to direct the trauma studies to such atrocities? In other words, why is it not documented and given a voice as much as the Holocaust? Here, Soueif takes the lead and gives voice to such atrocity through Anna who documented the atrocities of the Omdurman War, and it was Amal who exposed it to the public. Amal delivers to the reader the hard times when the British atrocities in Sudan were acted: “The papers are full of it: an army of 7,000 British and 20,000 Egyptian soldiers loses 48 men and kills 11,000 of the Dervishes” (2000, p. 40).

In truth, the Omdurman War is one of the most painful memories in Africa. It took place in Sudan acted by the Britain Empire. It is the wound that cannot be healed. It is not only a simple battle, but also a massacre in which eleven thousands of native people were killed. Humanity was lost and no traces to be found. It is Rothberg’s theory of the decolonizing trauma that give space to such non-Westerner catastrophes to be tackled and being scrutinizing via the work of the shared memory that the colonized

native people hold as a scar and the colonizers as a spot of shame as Sir Charles confessed.

What is more astonishing is that Egypt had to pay the cost for this war. Through Anna's investigation, the readers notice the miserable reality behind this war in which Kitchener's battalion defiled the Mahdi's tomb, Muhammed Ahmad, and Charles G. Gordon took his head to make the skull as inkpot to be used later on in the process of writing history. This savage deed stands for the collective wound that the colonizer has done to the colonized and affected the community which was regarding Mahdi as a national and religious symbol. The British force, instead of develop Africa, had demolished what Mahdi had built and lasted for a century before the arrival of the British army. A very noticeable opinion is discussed by Ayse Circir who considers this novel as a piece of mourning and grief. She says Soueif is showing the Omdurman war as:

a painful memory for the contemporary Arabs and the references to it repeatedly appear in the novel. The War is a moment of collective mourning for the Egyptians and the Sudanese .... After witnessing the atrocities of the post-colonial state, Amal thinks that they hold on to grief fearing that its lifting will be betrayal. Grief and mourning become memorial practices in the novel and the motor of the story is mourning (ÇIRÇIR, 2019, p. 142).

In effect, trauma here is spoken and expressed through mourning and grief. It is not like Edward's trauma in which he was keeping silence until his death. Being collective mourning means a shared memory among the non-Westerners. Rothberg's approach to decolonizing the traumatic studies is depending mainly on the "multidirectionality of collective memory" (Rothberg, 2008, p. 230). It is suiting the situation here in terms of the collective memory is working actively in the history of the Sudanese native people and shaped their identity. Moreover, by putting the colonizer's troubled history, like Edward's trauma due to his participation in the Omdurman War, alongside with the colonized traumatic experience, like what Kitchener's battalion had done in Sudan especially Charles G. Gordon who took his head to make the skull as inkpot, it comes what Rothberg calls the multidirectional memory. The work of the multidirectional memory allows some acts of solidarity by which some moments founded in the historical memory work as a medium to construct new political identities (Rothberg, 2009, p. 11). Accordingly, multidirectional memory works as "a productive tool to bring to the fore and understand other histories of suffering which have not been so central to trauma and memory studies" (Pérez Zapata, 2015, p. 532). In this case, the trauma studies are decolonized to encompass all the painful moments in the history that

were neglected due to the concentration of the old model on the Westerners' trauma only, namely the Holocaust.

Beatriz Pérez Zapata attracts the attention to the issue of 'situatedness'. She believes that the project of decolonizing the trauma studies lays in comprehending the idea that trauma is "context and experience specific and, in turn, it forces them to reflect on their own situatedness within particular cultural and socio-economic contexts.... Therefore, the decolonization of trauma studies can be partly achieved by recognizing the privilege from which trauma is observed and experienced" (Pérez Zapata, 2015, p. 528). The trauma that is caused by this war, the Omdurman War, is observed and experienced by the colonizer's side who confesses all of the injustice and atrocities practiced to the native people. Anna's first husband has contributed to this war for the sake of serving his country, but he returned with a shock that leads him to death. His father, Sir Charles, attributed the death of his son to the savage deeds that the British soldiers have done in Sudan. It is the perpetrator's trauma that Edward cannot behold or comprehend. It represents the 'colonial guilt' in this novel (ÇIRÇIR, 2019, p. 141).

Rothberg's notion of the multidirectional memory entails the combination of "two or more disturbing memories that work dialogically to bring together different histories of suffering" (Pérez Zapata, 2015, p. 529). This is depending mainly on the "ethics of comparison that can distinguish politically productive forms of memory from those that lead to competition, appropriation and trivialization" (Rothberg, 2011, p. 525). The disturbing memories are many in this novel, but the most important incidents are the atrocities of Omdurman war in Sudan and the Denshwai incident in Egypt. Besides, the Palestine ongoing struggle for independence is running behind the scenes and emerges only whenever a possible moment of comparison is available. Soueif cleverly combines these incidents in her novel in which the heroine, Anna, is related to the first two, while the narrator, Amal, is related to them all.

In reality, this incident, the Omdurman war, is the banner of brutality practiced by the colonizers. Kennedy believes that the butchery of the Mehdi's men is the main cause behind Edward's trauma (Kennedy, 2022, p. 11). This traumatic experience is also discussed between Anna and Sharif pasha when Anna first came to Egypt:

'You have been very unhappy,' he said.

'Yes,' I said. 'He did not need to die like that.'

‘Like what?’

‘Troubled. Not at peace.’

‘But he did what he believed in, surely? He believed he should fight for his Empire.’

‘It was an unjust war.’

‘But he did not know that.’

‘I think – I believe he knew. But he knew too late. And it killed him.’ (Soueif, 2000, p. 201)

After their marriage, the couple spends beautiful days together. The happiness was fueling the atmosphere. But out their door, the ugly face of politics was waiting eagerly to disturb this happiness. Politics did not give them the time to enjoy. So, Anna was not capable to bring peace to her second husband, Sharif pasha, because both of them were politically active and involved with colonialism but on different sides. Sharif was politically active; consequently, she could not bring him peace. He was agitated most of the time because his private life mixed hugely with the public one and this affects him most. Out of his generous soul, he was wishing to share the happiness of his private life with all of the native people in Egypt (2000, p. 340).

The story takes the reader back in date to the love story of Sharif and Anna, but on the same time it takes him/her also to see the future by the project of Isabel on how people see the next millennium. The outcome of Isabel’s project is “It will get worse. We’re headed for an age of Israeli supremacy in the whole area. An Israeli empire” (2000, p. 209). These facts are mirrored also in the discussion between Amal and Isabel which includes also the American and Israeli practices in the Arabian world, especially at the end of the twentieth century (Kennedy, 2022, pp. 4-5). New strategies of imperialism are emerged. This fact is explained by Said who says that “in our time, direct colonialism has largely ended; imperialism... lingers where it has always been, in a kind of general cultural sphere as well as in specific political, ideological, economic and social practices” (Said, 2000, p. 9).

Amal’s count on her early life and her eagerness to the past represents the work of memory. The use of memory is very clear in this novel through the character of Amal. But, near the end of the novel, the bar between the past and the present is crossed. Stef Craps, a postcolonial theorist, comments on the everlasting effects of trauma that crosses the boundaries between the past and the present by saying that these two distinct periods of time “are imbricated in one another, as the past continues to structure the present”

(Craps, 2013, p. 71). Trauma demolishes the time bar between the past and the present by viewing the injustice then and now together at the same time.

In truth, many people are killed and injured in Egypt, not only in Sudan, but no one sheds light on these incidents. These incidents are the shared memory, and they are important to the history of Egypt in terms of affecting the lives of people in the present time. The memory shapes the present identity of the narrator, Amal, according to Rothberg's notion of memory which "is the past made present" (Rothberg, 2009, p. 3). In fact, Rothberg believes that "memory is closely aligned with identity" (2009, p. 4). And lots of "commentators also believe that a direct line runs between remembrance of the past and the formation of identity in the present" (2009, p. 3). For that reason, Soueif rejects the highlighting of Holocaust as the only prime catastrophe while the other miseries are neglected and out of sunshine. The Holocaust is de-centering other histories. Zapata argues that the Holocaust, works as "a screen memory" by which it conceals other traumatic histories. The point of importance here is that the Holocaust or other atrocities in the West should not conceal the public view from the atrocities acted by the Britain in the Middle East. As far as the Great Britain is concerned, Dan Stone and many other critics believe that the current focus on the Holocaust in the West works as 'a screen memory' and hides the ugly past of the Western imperialism (Pérez Zapata, 2015, p. 530). However, for Michael Rothberg, the 'screen memory' can also be multidirectional because he believes that it can "hides and reveals that which has been suppressed" at the same time (Rothberg, 2009, p. 14).

Although *The Map of Love* is contextually limited and culturally specific, but it comments directly on hierarchy of the memory and trauma studies which traditionally puts the Holocaust in the leading position while the other histories kept silenced. This novel uses the notion of the multidirectional memory by promoting the Egyptian struggle for independence and the injustice that the native people were suffering from the British imperial act in the previous century. The Denshwai incident is a good example to be uncovered here. Indeed, the Denshwai incident is one of the most bloody and grief-stricken memory in the history of Egypt. This painful incident was due to the savageness of the British soldiers practiced over the poor Egyptian farmers who were oppressed and killed with cold blood by the colonizers. The Denshwai incident is emerged to surface by the portrait firstly and later on through Anna's entries. Amal is always ready to read what Anna had written a century ago. Here, Soueif gives a grave

concentration to this incident in order to attract the public attention to this painful incident, which is remembered by the Egyptian people, but not known by the other.

This incident occurred about a century ago when some British soldiers near a town called Tantah were trying to shoot some pigeons near one of the Egyptian villages. Denshwai was known for having a lot of pigeons. Supposedly, they had to inform the Umdah, the boss of the village, before they come according to the law in that time. They sent a message and did not wait for the replay and since the Umdah was not in the village at that day, the problem happened. The soldiers started shooting near the houses of the farmers and one of the elder men asked them to go shooting somewhere away from the houses. The soldiers refused. One of the bullets hit a store in which the farmers keep their wheat and fire broke out in that store. The owner and his wife ran and tried to beat the British soldiers, but one of the rifles went off and injured the woman. The other farmers thought that the woman has died thus they attacked the soldiers and beat them with sticks. Two more officers came for help and shoot the people and five of them fall in this act. As a result, the policemen joined the farmers and start beating the British soldiers. Noticing that the farmer's wife was not dead, the farmers calmed, and the elder men mediate the situation and released the soldiers. During this act, two other soldiers were running to the camp to ask for reinforcement, but one of them had fainted due to the high temperature of June and died after few hours that day. British force arrived and arrested some villagers who were accused of murdering a British officer and they were presented for trial.

Sharif pasha, since he was a lawyer, asked to defend the villagers in this case, but his request was declined. The sentence was pitiless and vindictive. According to the decree of the court, four farmers have to be hanged. Two other farmers got life-prison with hard labor. The rest of the farmers got different sentences varied from seven to fifteen years of imprisonment. The most spiteful item of the decree is to hang these four farmers immediately and in same place of the incident, Denshwai itself (Soueif, 2000, p. 388). Though the rest of the prisoners were released at the end of 1907, but the memory of this accident is still hovering at the atmosphere of Egypt in general and that village in particular. The British barbarity cannot be forgotten. This is clear in the novel when Sharif pasha and his close friends were sitting and their hearts beat with pain and agony for the brutality and savagery acted by the British side on the poor people of Denshwai. Their eyes were full with tears "they make no effort to wipe away the tears

that fall silently down their faces” (2000, p. 388). The whole country was in shock at that time in which the colonizer controls the life of the native people in Egypt. The colonizer freely executes the death penalty on the colonized. After a short time of contemplation, low and sad voices broke the silence, Ahmad Hilmi says: “It was barbaric” (2000, p. 389) and he asks are they still calling themselves civilized? The gallows were set in the middle of the town. The people were rushing to watch, but in silence. The soldiers hung the first man and left him dangling for a while, then hung the second in the same manner. The colonizer left them to be watched by their families and children. The last one to be hanged was Yusuf Saleem, he was a young guy with twenty two years only. When he walked to the gallows, he cursed the colonizer “‘God’s curse on the unjust!’ And then they hanged him” (2000, p. 389)

The main point that Soueif expresses here is her intention to release this hidden fact to the public that was occupied with the slogans of humanity and civilization. Since this novel was released first in English and published in England, the target is the English people. Moreover, Soueif tries to create solidarity by exposing the hidden facts to the public opinion. Therefore, a new reading to the history of Egypt creates a new solidarity. Rothberg comes along with this proposition when he discusses the role of the multidirectional memory by saying that “when the productive, intercultural dynamic of multidirectional memory is explicitly claimed ... it has the potential to create new forms of solidarity and new visions of justice” (Rothberg, 2009, p. 5).

As a result, a move need to be made and the voice of agony must be delivered. The elite had to articulate these brutalities and convey the reality of the British savageness to the public opinion. The move is to direct the public opinion to what had been happened in Denshwai. Thus, they agreed on delivering their articles and writings to the newspapers all over the world for the sake of exposing the atrocities that were acted here. Husni Bey al-Ghamrawi believes that the Denshwai incident and the brutality of the British forces acted on the poor people will lead to throw Cromer from the Agency and Sharif pasha affirmed this belief. Sharif pasha thinks of publishing these atrocities abroad: “*L’Egypte* is read abroad. *The Manchester Guardian* has already taken the matter up... We shall get it published in England. If the case is publicised enough, people will press for questions to be asked in Parliament and the Irish will take it up.... We may not end the Occupation, but we will get rid of Cromer” (2000, p. 389).

Anna uses her connection in the West to deliver the voice and views of the Eastern problems. The Western public opinion is the target. It is a necessary step to deliver the voice of agony to the world and this is what Anna and Sharif have done. Sharif wrote a letter which was translated into French by his sister, Layla and into English by his wife, Anna. They had sent it to Mr. James Barrington, a close friend of Anna and Sir Charles. Mr. James will use his connection to get the letter published in England and France (2000, p. 425). What adds bitterness to this calamity is that the colonizer prevented the families of the victims to bury their hanged men and no condolence is allowed to be held. Even grieving upon the dead men was not allowed: “The people were not even allowed to bury their dead. The police carted them away. They are forbidden to open their houses for condolences. They cannot even grieve” (2000, p. 390). This is the history that is full with bitterness and agony. Here, Sharif pasha takes an action and decided to open his house for condolences for three days and asks his friends to spread this word, but without speeches, just reciting the Quran. What is important is that “no demonstration is needed in this time” (2000, p. 390). Later on, and after exposing this tragic incident to the public, they have succeeded of forcing Lord Cromer to resignation.

About a century later from the Denshwai incident, a similar incident has occurred. The bombing of the tourists’ bus in Cairo brings the scene of terror to the front page again. This time, some tourists were killed and some others were injured in Luxor in Cairo in 1997. The police were hectic and accused the fundamentalists of the bombing. This incident gives the license to the government to prison people without any evidence to be provided (Kennedy, 2022, p. 6). In Cairo, the security procedures were stiffened and they checked everyone. Amal, in her way to Tawasi with Isabel, was stopped by the police many times. And in each time, the policemen asked Amal to take care because they do not want the American to be harmed; “Look after her. We don’t want foreign blood spilled here” (Soueif, 2000, p. 157). Amal was angry and said, “Does she look like she’s kidnapped?” (2000, p. 161). Amal outraged due to the ongoing demands of the police to take care of Isabel. One of the police officers asks Amal “Why are you taking her with you? ... You know what will happen if an American is harmed” (2000, p. 161). Weirdly, the life of the foreigner is more precious than that of the native. This is due to the ill balance of power in the world in which America comes to be the



superpower and has the heavy hand in all the regions all over the world. This deed reflects the neo-colonialism that Soueif and many others abhor most.

Therefore, a serious situation is hovering over the scene and even the farmers of Tawasi were accused of being terrorists. More than seventeen farmers belong to Amal's people were arrested and uncle El-Ma'ati was one of them. The old man uncle El-Ma'ati is one of the elder farmers in this village and he kept the house of Al-Ghamrawi, Amal's ancestor's house. In fact, this character is a crucial one that gives the direct lively critique to the condition of life in modern age. Strangely, he was captured with other men from the village simply because "Everybody is a suspect" (2000, p. 399). His life is full with miseries and this incident completed the calamity. His family came into apart when he lost his elder son in the war of 1967. And for his daughter, she lost her husband who was killed by the Islamists. Uncle El-Ma'ati explains to Amal how the government restricted the procedures in the village and how the new condition affects the life of the farmers and poor people: "It's just tightening up on people. The government's hand is heavy. And now, of course, there will be more problems" (2000, p. 121).

After arriving to the village, Amal took her British passport and went to the police station in which the farmers where imprisoned. Thus, she was allowed to enter while the other local women were shut outside. Amal tried to release the arrested farmers, but her attempt goes in vain. Her friend, Tareq el-Atiyya, succeeded because he has more relations and connections in the government. Being helpless and stressed, Amal takes refuge in the past by talking to her grandfather, Sharif Pasha "You see? You see, ya Sharif Basha? ... oh, how I want to be in his arms" (2000, p. 402). Kennedy argues that due to the strong connection with Anna through her letters and diaries in which she explains Sharif pasha brilliantly, Amal develops "a sexual fantasy about Sharif al-Baroudi" (Kennedy, 2022, p. 10) and such a fantasy is clearly related to the oppression in the postcolonial era in which Amal was suffering from. Kennedy brilliantly puts the different incidents like the oppression practiced by the Egyptian government in 1997, the battle of Urabi Basha in Tel-el-kebir in 1882 and the Denshwai incident in 1906 together to complete the notion and clearly see the big picture that is suggested in this novel (2022, p. 10). Indeed, it is very clear that there is an identical relationship between the colonizer's policies and practices in the past with the subjugation practices by the Egyptian government on its own people in the present time. Although the stories are different, but the native people always are the scapegoats. It is

unsurprisingly true to propose that Soueif connects the Luxor incident to the Denshwai incident to highlight the point that history is repeating itself, but with different disguise. It is obvious that the government that is supposed to protect people, harm them instead.

The most important point here is that these events are appearing again and again in the novel, especially the incident of Al-Denshwai which resulted in the death and wounding of many villagers and arresting a hundred of the local farmer people. It appears in Anna's letters and diaries, Layla's accounts and articles, Sharif's speeches and discussion with his friends, and it was precisely described by Husni Bey al-Ghamrawi as the most powerful reason behind Cromer's resignation. This troubling history that is shared by the Egyptians is the real version of the past that needs to investigate again and reproduce to the world by the natives who are the witnesses on history, and not the history which was written by the colonizers. If truth is being told, the British presence in Egypt caused poignant moments in history. These shared moments of agony and pain lived with the native people and affecting their views and identity.

In his book, *The Multidirectional Memory*, Rothberg focuses on "social actors bring multiple traumatic pasts into a heterogeneous and changing post-WWII present" (Rothberg, 2009, p. 4). Here, in this novel, the traumatic past is affecting the present on both levels; the individual and the national. Soueif cleverly shows how these 'social actors' work behind the scenes and aroused by the traumatic past. The suffering of widows and the orphaned children of this minority group of people needs documentation. The traumatic experience that these villagers went through is worthy to be discussed and bring to the surface. In fact, "the presence of the British officers makes the history of the country a shared and a painful memory" (ÇIRÇIR, 2019, p. 151). Thus, Soueif tries to articulate these moment of the agonized past and brings into view the traumatic experiences that the native people still remember.

Near the end of the novel, the assassination of Sharif pasha brings a cry that occupies the horizon of the novel. Anna's cry sounded louder this time to attract the attention to the injustice and brutality of the murderers. Layla describes that moment by saying:

I will never know how she knew. I heard her cry before .... I heard Anna's cry. A great, long cry that rang through the house and sent a shiver through my body ... 'No,' she cried — and it was an English 'no' — she was running along the courtyard, stumbling. 'No ... No ...' And

then I heard the sounds outside. The wheels, the shouts, the stamping and then the banging at the door.... the men's voices saying one thing: 'El-Basha, el-Basha ...' I saw the blood.... Three bullets. Two in his stomach and one in his back (Soueif, 2000, pp. 454-455).

At that moment, Sharif pasha asked Anna to be the same strong women that he knew: "Hush. You have to be brave now. For Nur. Remember your promise" (2000, p. 457). And when Anna expressed her wish to stay in Egypt, he refused and asked her to take Nur and go back to Britain because he does not want them to suffer here again. "And so he dies. And Amal, who has known the ending all along, yet has loved him like his mother, like his sister, like his wife, mourns him with fresh grief. She reads and rereads Anna's last entry: I have tried, as well as I could, to tell her. But she cannot — or will not — understand and give up hope. She waits for him constantly" (2000, p. 462)

Sharif's life was distinctive in which it was colored with sacrifice and hope for Egypt's freedom. This is the traumatic reality that hover his thinking and even his personal life. Anna watches Sharif closely and was worried about his safety because he was politically active. It was Sharif who fights deadly for the independence of Egypt. If Sharif pasha was living abroad, "He would be a man without a purpose; for his purpose, his vocation, is Egypt" (Soueif, 2000, p. 347). He wishes to have a parliament and a national constitution. In his endeavor to achieve his dream, he was murdered. His death leaves the files opened and no decisive act is shown after his death about the act of liberation from the colonizers.

Like Layla's concern over her brother Sharif Pasha, Amal is also occupied by fear on her brother Omar who is politically active too. And like Anna's cry over Sharif assassination, Amal released a similar cry over Omar's likely death; "Omar! she cries out loud. My brother" (2000, p. 467). The cry hints that Omar is killed like Sharif for the same reasons. The cry is a sign of the agony and a shocking traumatic event in which Amal can hear it rendering in both periods of time; in the past, by Anna's cry when Sharif Pasha was killed, and in the present, by the women of the village when the police arrested their husbands and fathers; "great crying and wailing" (2000, p. 397). This cry is the shared traumatic memory that relates all of the characters in this novel. The cry becomes the symbol of refusing the injustice. The cry and mourning is only means of articulation that the native people have to denote for the traumatic events. Rothberg's theory of the decolonizing trauma is suiting the situation here since he always stresses the need to increase the area of exploration to embrace "everyday forms of traumatizing

violence” (Rothberg, 2008, p. 226). He believes that expanding the area of the study to encompass all of these traumatized moments in the lives of the people all over the world is a prerequisite need.

It was the emptiness and pain that relate Amal to Anna, they start from their losses: Amal lost her husband and sons who lived out of her reach, and Anna lost her first husband who was traumatized by the savageness of war in Sudan in which he took part and causes him a severe mental decline. History, again, unites the colonizer and the colonized in the space they shared as well as in the agony of the remembrance. History, for Amal, is the way to investigate the death of the ancestors and it may also foreshadow the death of her brother Omar whose death is likely on the same way of Sharif’s. Anna’s country, the colonizer, arouses agonized memories in Amal’s country, the colonized as Amal reconstruct the history of her ancestors. Therefore, Amal decided to go to Tawasi to be united with the past of her ancestors in the old house and to arouse her sons' interest to visit it when they come to Egypt.

Amal shares Anna’s agony and pain and she reflects on the modern life and how the injustice occurs everywhere in the world. Media affirms the brutality in the postcolonial time in which the injustice is continuing and the corruption is spreading all over the Arab world: “land expropriations... Iraqi children dying and Palestinian homes demolished, fresh news of gun battles in Upper Egypt...” (Soueif, 2000, p. 101). In the sitting room, Amal picks up a newspaper and reads the latest news in the boiling world. Miseries are all over the world. Crisis are in all the regions which were or are still under occupation. These are non-Western agonies, or they can be called the middle East holocausts. Amal again refers to this political turmoil and injustice in the world at the end of the novel. The headlines that appeared on the screen of her computer are:

Security Council demands Israel cancel Project Greater Jerusalem — European Parliament rejects report on Islamic Fundamentalism threat — Beirut demonstrations demand release of Arab prisoners from Israeli jails — Algerian journalists in protest demonstrations — Israeli reservists refuse to confront Palestinian civilians — Famine in Sudan — Bomb alert in American embassy — 3 killed in fundamentalist confrontation in Upper Egypt (2000, pp. 432-433).

Soueif considers closely the state of affairs in the last decade of the previous century in that turmoil was covering the globe. Soueif provides her political comments through her central character Amal. And through the newspaper, Amal reflects what’s going on. Newspaper is appearing whenever a necessary hint to the political situation is

needed. Like when Amal for the second time, reads a newspaper which was loaded with anxiety and tension: “Sudan should not be partitioned. Clinton vows to avenge America on Ben Laden. Albright threatens action against Iraq. Torture in Palestinian jails ... *a terrible time of brutality and we – Amal edits – are helpless to do anything but wait for history to run its course*” (Soueif, 2000, p. 464; *Italics in the original*).

One of the most crucial idiosyncratic thought is to think that a specific identity, history, or culture is unique and ultimately true while negating the other. It is out of rationality to separate or hide any traumatic incident from the general stream of history. In doing so it will “potentially create a hierarchy of suffering (which is morally offensive) and removes that suffering from the field of historical agency (which is both morally and intellectually suspect)” (Rothberg, 2009, p. 9). Here, in this novel, Soueif sheds the light on the traumatic history of Egypt as well as Sudan. The bloodiest spots are those of the Omdurman battle in Sudan and the Denshwai incident in Egypt. But, the novel includes also many other issues around the history of Egypt, the Arab world and the middle East in general. These are forgotten incidents and they are necessary to be exposed like Lord Cromer’s strategies in Egypt, the question of war against Iraq, the cause of Palestinian in which many houses of the native people were demolished for the sake of expansion of the Israeli colonies, the security case of gun clash in upper Egypt, and the list may go long but never ends. Exposing these hidden events in the history and bring them back to the front page is one of Soueif’s aims to inform the world to attract the attention to the forgotten history which is full with traumatic experiences that are still affecting the present. Rothberg’s model of trauma that focuses mainly on the multidirectional memory is useful because it allows the other histories to be viewed and studied in similar manner to the Holocaust. Besides, the Holocaust should not be worked as a screen memory and hide the other atrocities, but it should reveals in the same technique these hidden atrocities. In effect, Rothberg’s model of the multidirectional memory “supposes that the overlap and interference of memories help constitute the public sphere as well as the various individual and collective subjects that articulate themselves in it” (Rothberg, 2006, p. 162).

To conclude, this chapter analyzed and explained Soueif’s *The Map of Love* according to Rothberg’s theory of the decolonizing trauma. It started first with the author’s life which is full with political activism. Then the argument was directed to show how the novel can be seen as a postcolonial critique. Besides, the questions of

history and politics were discussed within the world of the novel. These parts are required to establish the general frame of thought and pave the way to the application of Rothberg's theory. Basically, the discussion part of this chapter is the main part and consists of the main argument that attempted to analyze this novel from Rothberg's theory by shedding more light on the main tool of the decolonizing trauma which is the work of the multidirectional memory. Soueif saved no efforts in exposing the hidden atrocities in the past, not only in Egypt, but also in Sudan. Bringing together the painful moments of the history and relate them to the present was Soueif's exposure of her skills. In fact, the shared history among the Egyptian people can construct the collective memory that Soueif visited so often. This leads the speculation to view this novel from the decolonizing trauma theory because the novel is not promoting the Holocaust as the only traumatic event in the world. With Rothberg's theory of the decolonizing trauma, the reader can feel and initiate a new solidarity with the suffering and agonies of people from different spaces and places. Traumatic event causes pain and troubled memory to people regardless the questions of time and place. This is the expansion that Rothberg calls for and built his theory on.

### 3. DECOLONIZING TRAUMA IN MONICA ALI'S *THE BRICK LANE*

#### 3.1. AN OVERVIEW OF THE AUTHOR'S LIFE AND WORKS

Monica Ali is a British-Bangladeshi writer. She comes from a hybrid family in that her father was Bangladeshi and her mother was English. Her father, Hatem Ali, is a Bangladeshi immigrant who came to London to complete his study in 1965. He fell in love with a British girl named Joyce whom he had met in a dance party. They got married and moved to Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh. Their daughter, Monica, was born there in 1967. After four years of infancy in Bangladesh, Monica was moved to England with her parents and raised up according to her mother's culture. The main reason of going back to England was the civil war in Bangladesh (Hasan, 2005, p. 668). In fact, The Liberation War in 1971 is the most terrifying point in the history of Bangladesh in which mass executions and bloodbaths are the main traits (Fathima & Prajapati, 2021, p. 256). When she arrived to England at the age of four, the family dwelt in Greater Manchester, and then Monica had to move to Oxford to complete her study at the Oxford University (Hasan, 2005, p. 668). The writer's hybrid origin seems to be a credential to portrait both sides of the immigrants' life in London. Therefore, in public and media, Monica Ali is known as a British-Asian writer.

From the first spark, Ali has been praised by many critics like Natasha Walter who thinks that it is a rare thing for a writer, right from the beginning of her career, to find her own voice (Walter, n.d.). Ali has occupied a front seat in the realm of English literature due to her masterpiece *The Brick Lane* which came to publication in 2003. Comes swiftly into the lights, she was named by the *Granta* journal as one of "Britain's 20 Best Young Novelists" (Gorra, 2003). This was due to her epic novel *The Brick Lane* that was "shortlisted for Man Booker Prize for Fiction" (Gorra, 2003). Ali brings into the view the crisis of morality and the search for identity through the arguments among the characters in her novels.

*Brick Lane*, Ali's first novel, is an epic saga that discusses the living conditions of the Bangladeshi immigrants. Through this novel, she explores the immigrants' experiences in London. It was adopted by the cinematic dominion and a film was released in 2007. Her second novel, *The Alentejo Blue*, takes the Portugal as the setting

place for most of the events and it was published in 2006. *In the Kitchen* is her third novel which comes into lights in 2009. The fourth one is *The Untold Story* which was released in 2011 ([www.Britishcouncil.org](http://www.Britishcouncil.org)). Surprising the readers one more time, Ali's talent is demonstrated in *The Untold Story* in which she changed the route and sent her fans to a small village in America. There, a woman with mysterious traits from overseas has relished the quiet life. The secret lies in her faked death in order to escape the life of being a British royal member. Undeniably, this suggests and hints indirectly to the mysterious death of Princess Diana. As a consequence, this novel attracts the attention of the press as well as the public grind ([www.independent.ie](http://www.independent.ie)). Ali's latest novel is *The Love Marriage* which was released for publication in 2022. It powerfully comments on the multicultural constituents of the modern British society, but still 'wildly entertaining'. Not only in Britain, Ali's voice reached different spots in the world and her works were translated into twenty-six languages ([www.monicaali.com](http://www.monicaali.com)).

In *Brick Lane*, the dominated theme of fate in the human world, along with the risk to opposing it, runs deep in the veins of the story. This theme is even highlighted in the opening epigraph from Heraclitus that reads: "A man's character is his fate" (Ali, 2003). The question of fate is discussed thoroughly in this novel. In the review by Michael Gorra to the *New York Times*, he argues that the theme of fate fuels the text with the sense of complexity that goes beyond the basic binary oppositions. Therefore, the questions that come to surface are "Do we, can we, control our own lives?" (Gorra, 2003).

For many readers and critics, Ali's fiction is obviously depending on the journalistic views rather than the emotional engagement. Nonetheless, Ali's fiction is still praiseworthy: it is "an ambitious book from a writer not content to revisit familiar territory. She takes risks that don't always succeed ... but it's a serious and intelligent" (Merritt, 2009). In essence, Ali is the author who takes the burden to expose the various facets of the immigrants' living conditions. *The Brick Lane* is a good example for this endeavour. She deals with the characters that go through different colors of trauma to provide the full picture about the society in which the immigrant may find him/herself in. In *Brick Lane*, "a person undergoes stages of trauma while playing his/her role and finds itself shaded with the process of unexpected developments in the nation or society unwelcoming multiple syndromes" (Fathima & Prajapati, 2021, p. 262).



The setting of *The Brick Lane* takes place in a finicky area in the east of London, and it repeatedly switches to Dhaka in Bangladesh. It starts with the uneasy birth of Nazneen, the key character in the novel. After a short introduction, most of the events are occurred after her marriage. It was an arranged and traditional marriage when she was 18 years only. She has to go directly with her unappealing husband to England which is out of her acquaintance. Her husband, Chanu, is older than her about forty years. He is not handsome and has a frog-like face. Knowing nothing about England and knowing only two words from the English language, she was swiftly married and taken to London. As far as Hasina, her younger and only sister, she eloped with her lover. Hasina remained in Bangladesh but keeps in touch with her sister by letters. This corresponding between the sisters adds another dimension to the story. Geraldine Bedell postulates that the coming of news from home keeps the conditions of Bangladesh in Nazneen's mind. In effect, these letters create a dreadful image about the living situation in Bangladesh (Bedell, 2003).

Nazneen represents the first drive that is characterized as a traditional and obedient Bangladeshi woman. She is supposed to accompany her eccentric husband to London. Then, after been living in London for a sufficient time, she managed to cope with the society and developed a higher sense of self-realization to the extent she became autonomous. Due to the letters from her unfortunate sister, Nazneen decided to stay in Britain in order to be away from the miseries of the traditional life of the woman in Bangladesh. At the end of the novel, the writer seems delighted in directing her heroine to discover her own agency. She is not any more that simple Bengali wife, or the mother as Karim thinks. Even when the councilor visits her and asks her whether it is difficult to cope with the life in London, she replies with "no" and this answer made the councilor feels "disappointed" (Ali, 2004, p. 406).

Hasina represents the second drive in that she is the icon of the rebellious person. The readers can easily see the troubled life she had. By disobeying her father and eloped with her boyfriend to have 'a love marriage', she faces the opposite of her dreams. She was abandoned by her family first. Then, her boyfriend treated her too badly to the extent she decided to leave him. Later on, she was abused sexually by a series of men whom she was in contact with. Finally, she was enforced to work as a prostitute. Hasina with a glimpse of hope, she received a marriage proposal from a man named Ahmed, but she told him that: "I am a low woman. I have nothing. I am all that I have. I can give you

nothing” (Ali, 2004, p. 122). It is not only a religious question, but it is a question of ethics which were destabilized. While Hasina goes steadily into defenseless and socially abandoned situation, Nazneen continues to gain power and liberation to the extent she becomes “startled by her own agency” (2004, p. 16). Hasina, near the end of the novel, was dismissed from the garment factory. This act is representing the rejection of society to her. As far as Nazneen is concerned, she was accepted by the society, although it was culturally different, and she launched into the life by adapting the hard times as a means for “emancipation and independence” (Perfect, 2008, p. 119).

Within the development of the events, the two sisters diverge largely. Nazneen chooses to leave both of the men in her life, Chanu, her unappealing husband, and Karim, her illegitimate lover. On the working level, Nazneen started new business with Razia at the garment factory in London which represents a prospect for emancipation and autonomy. In fact, Ali constructs the character of Nazneen in a similar way to her own living since she shares the two cultures: the English and the Bangladeshi. It is clear that the writer has limited acquaintance with the Bengali tradition since she spent most of her life in London. Thus, she uses Bengali words and some Bengali traditional food to strengthen her arguments on the Bengali style of living. In fact, some Bengali traditions are firmly rooted and accompanied the immigrants to London. On the part of the women, most of them are lacking education and supposed to be only simple housewives (Nilsson & Ahlin, 2010, p. 8).

The character of Nazneen possesses many traits of the Bengali female character within the constructed Bengali social stand. Her husband’s refusal of going out alone represents his commitment to the Bengali traditions even if they were living in London. Chanu questioned her, “Why should you go out? ... If you go out, ten people will say, I saw her walking on the street. And I will look like a fool.... Coming here you are not missing anything, only broadening your horizons” (Ali, 2004, p. 45). Such words come to be an exposure to Chanu’s real mode of thinking even if he was educated and lives in London. Still the roots affect the mode of thinking and defining the character of a person (Nilsson & Ahlin, 2010, p. 11). The novelist discusses the situations of Bengali women in both places London and Bangladesh by presenting two different images: namely Nazneen and her sister, Hasina. It is Hasina who pushes Nazneen to experience the love and live differently and independently. Ali creates a sort of community in *Brick Lane* that is similar to a real Bangladesh society to comment freely and criticizes indirectly

some critical issues, namely the Bengali women's state of living (Nilsson & Ahlin, 2010, p. 22).

However, some negative reviews are launched to criticize *The Brick Lane*. For instance, Ali was accused of vilify the Bangladeshi Islamic community due to her depicting of adultery that happened between her religious protagonist, Nazneen and the God-conscious character, Karim. Hasan Mahmudul states that "Ali presents a microcosm of Muslim social space and portrays it as full of insidious sexual indulgences.... Ali represents Muslims faith as shaky, which can be forgotten about for momentary sexual pleasure" (Hasan, 2005, p. 670). For the same reason, the council of Sylhet Welfare and Development which represents the Bangladeshi immigrants in England has registered a complaint against the writer due to her ill representation of the Bengali community in London. The council regards Ali's reading to the Bangladeshi culture is shallow and out of reality. Nevertheless, the complaint was dismissed according to the plea that fact and fiction are two distinct worlds. In truth, the novel is linked so tidily to the life and situation of immigrants and no chance is left to pardon the relation of the novel to the reality of the Bangladeshi community in London (2005, p. 672).

Similarly, Ali was accused of promoting unfamiliar stereotypes of Bengali characters in both of the areas; London and Bangladesh. As a reaction to such accusation, Ali feels the "burden of representation" that her novel tries to depict only one case in which a Bengali family faces multiple discrimination and it is not necessary to think that the novel stands for a whole Bengali community. However, Michael Perfect believes that the novel is vigorously titillating such burdensome representation and no chance for doubt. Even the title, *The Brick Lane*, promotes the readers' thinking about the unveiling of a community that was out of sight. Perfect believes that the writer uses stereotypes in order to give further emphasis to her main character, Nazneen, who succeeded at the end in achieving the integration. Perfect goes further in the discussion and he thinks that the "depiction of Hasina's life has been accused of propagating rather than challenging stereotypical notions of the oppression of women in postcolonial Islamic societies" (Perfect, 2008, p. 112). While such accusations of promoting stereotypical characters are left open for discussion, the novel is also hinting in many occasions to constructions of the otherness.

Some other reviews on this novel expressed some sort of anxiety due to the depiction of Hasina who eloped with her boyfriend. Even when Nazneen lived in London, Hasina's letters keep Nazneen in the Bengali mood. Many other reviewers are worried about the fact that Hasina stands for a stereotype of a Bengali girl. She is simply another color of girls that chooses to live freely. Therefore, the misfortune is waiting her at every juncture of her life due to her disobeying and rebellious character. Therefore, she was abused sexually by many men who come across her life. Hasina was aware of her condition. Indeed, even when Hasina found a sanctuary place in which she worked as a servant, she could not get remedy of oppression in her life. Therefore, she ran off again with the cook (2008, p. 111).

On the part of Nazneen's character, she is different from her husband, Chanu. Perfect argues that Nazneen did not drop her identity, instead she discovered it and strengthened it further (2008, p. 119). Chanu is expected at the beginning of the novel to be a Westernized person, but actually he is the victim of the Western cultural hegemony. He realizes the social discrimination and was criticizing the blind social bigotry: "to the white person, [we] are all the same: dirty little monkeys all in the same monkey clan ... But these [white] people are uneducated. Illiterate. Close-minded. Without ambition" (Ali, 2003, p. 28). He clearly uses the expressions of 'we' and 'they' to highlight the question of his inability to integrate with this community (Nilsson & Ahlin, 2010, p. 9). This is matching Edward Said's perception of 'us' and 'they'.

Natasha Walter interviewed Pola Uddin who is the solo Bangladeshi woman in the House of Lords. Uddin thinks that this novel should be treated as book of fiction only. Some violent reactions to the novel, like the protestor Abdus Salique who promised to burn the novel in public venue to prevent filming it, are not authentic representatives to the Bengali community. In fact, these voices are not the only appealing ones that one should listen to. Walter believes that "people on the left should not feel that in order to support marginalised communities in their fight for more social justice we have to align ourselves with their most reactionary elements" (Walter, 2006).

### 3.2. THE BRICK LANE AS A POSTCOLONIAL CRITIQUE

The postcolonial sense in this novel sprung from the attempt to construct the cultural identity of the immigrants which is highlighted most. Edward Said explains the magnitude and the difficulty of maintaining the identity on the part of the immigrants. Said says that “identity—who are we where are we from and what are we—is hard to maintain for the refugee” (Said, 1998). The cultural identity is a prerequisite need and one of the enforced themes that the characters from different origins must deal with. Yet, different views are allowed in this domain. Here, Nazneen and Chanu have different views about the cultural identity and for this reason their endeavors to construct their new identities are different (MA & ZHANG, n.d., p. 471).

Ulrike Tancke believes that the identity of an immigrant is customarily flooded with traumatic experiences and the immigrant is always in challenge to cope with these traumatic experiences (Tancke, 2011, p. 1). Tancke is suggesting that trauma is the most significant part in constructing the identity politics and it is the main threat too. Similarly, Susan J. Brison says that trauma “undoes the self by breaking the ongoing narrative, severing the connections among remembered past, lived present, and anticipated future” (Brison, 1999, p. 41). In this novel, the dislocation that Nazneen senses when she moved to London “goes beyond the obvious culture clash between Britain and Bangladesh: it is a clash of philosophies” (Tancke, 2011, p. 6). This firm fact is mentioned also and clearly exposed by Zadie Smith in her best novel *The White Teeth*: “It’s something to do with that experience of moving from West to East or East to West or from island to island. Even when you arrive, you’re still going back and forth; ... There’s no proper term for it—original sin seems too harsh; maybe original trauma would be better” (Smith, 2000, p. 152; Italics in the original).

Away from constructing the appealing cultural identities, “the original trauma at the core of the glocal reality repeats itself in a fundamental sense, creating pain and suffering—new variants of trauma—as it is being worked through” (Tancke, 2011, pp. 11-12). Here, East London is the dwelling area for the immigrants, specially the Bengali ones. Different from other areas in London, this district was hardly accepted by the native people in England. The community in this area was mainly constructed from the Bengali refugees lived with their own traditions and trying to build a new village that is

similar to their home, Bangladesh. Besides, the Western hegemony seems to be the barrier that isolates this community from integration.

Alternatively, Homi Bhabha suggests building a third space for those immigrants and he supports his theory with the notion of hybridity. He thinks the 'third space' is the solution. It is any spot in which cultural integration can take place (Bhabha, 1996). It means that the immigrants can indulge in the Western way of life without losing their identity. In this manner, the Bengali immigrants could construct their cultural identities in the East of London, but not necessarily to be in conflict with the cultural hegemony (Ling & Zhang, 2018, p. 472). To be indulged in the western society is a matter of adapting. The outcomes expose the fact that the difference in the cultural background is the main aspect of establishing the identity. For this reason, Nazneen succeeded in this endeavor and decided to remain in London while her husband has failed and decided to go back home (2018, p. 472). Not only Nazneen, but most of the characters, in addition to the author herself, are marching along the path to build their identities. The path is full with experiences and situations that can be labeled as traumatic. Each one longs for a recovered identity (Fathima & Prajapati, 2021, p. 261).

Said believes that the superiority of the Western culture is a prevailing notion. Thus, the prejudice is rooted deeply in the communities where the immigrants live. In spite of the development on the part of humanities, but this prejudice still exists. There is no escape from this poignant fact. The white people have the privilege while the immigrants still trying to assimilate themselves with the Western community (Said, 1978). Therefore, the homesickness is the escaping mood for those who failed in the incorporation with the Western society; Chanu is a good example in this novel. What's more is that being a woman from different culture and country means double colonization, namely the society and husband (Roy, 2019, p. 158). As a result, the incorporation of these women in the western communities is harder and one step further. Said sheds light on the fact that the Eastern woman has no voice by her own. It is the brother if the father was dead or the husband if she was married who speaks for her and gives voice (Said, 1978, p. 6). When Nazneen requested her husband to learn English, he went off in puffs and says "where's the need any way" (Ali, 2003, p. 37). At this juncture, Chanu gives no weight for Nazneen's desires and pay no attention to her opinions to be her only voice in London (Nilsson, 2010, p. 13).

Fanon sheds the light on another barrier of integration with the Western communities, simply the language. He believes that language has a main role in constructing the identity and facilitates the route for integration. Fanon says that “a man who has a language consequently possesses the world expressed and implied by that language.... Mastery of language affords remarkable power” (Fanon, 1967, p. 18). Indeed, the mastery of the other’s language facilitates the integration with the other’s society. “To speak a language is to take on a world, a culture” (1967, p. 38). Clearly, learning English is one of Nazneen’s techniques to achieve independence and social recognition (Perfect, 2008, p. 112). On the contrary, the lack of language results in the lack of communication and this leads to isolation. Nazneen spent the first years of her living in London in isolation due to her lack of the English language. She “could say two things in English: sorry and thank you. She could spend another day alone” (Ali, 2003, p. 19). This refers clearly to the negative effects of lacking of the language. And through her argument, Ali shows this fact that the immigrants have to learn the language if they want to integrate with the Western community (Nilsson, 2010, p. 2). On the part of the native language for the immigrants it is also important to be maintained simply because it is the “symbol of cultural identity... the bond which links the past and the future and also functions as the carrier of culture” (Ling & Zhang, 2018, p. 472).

The political and economical dimensions are very crucial to the immigrants in the western societies. Due to the novelist’s background, she interestingly depicts the lives and conditions of the Bengali women to attract the attention to the question of immigrants in general. Besides, the novelist tries to expose the other face of the Bengali immigrants’ life in London in order to land on the main points of clash between the two civilizations namely the West and the East. The main factors which affect the constructing of the cultural identity to the immigrants are the economic and the political ones. Being one of the immigrants, the protagonist Nazneen comes to be the point of connection in which the British values meet the Bengali culture. Other different characters, like Karim and Chanu, are also used by the novelist to highlight the question of integration from a political side. The modernization of these two characters, Karim and Chanu, is the writer’s main ambition (Ling & Zhang, 2018, p. 473). Yet, they come short on the road to this goal because both of them have failed and retreated home.

The question of modernization along with the Western education is also working as points of argument in this novel. Ali discusses these notions through the character of

Chanu who is an immigrant with a degree and supposedly he can survive in London, but at the final chapters of the novel, Chanu retreated and worked as a taxi driver before deciding to go home. On the part of Karim, he was depicted as a modern man, but finally ends as an extremist. To tell the truth, Ali was largely influenced by Said and she herself is the product of Western education, although she was born to upper class Bengali family. She is surly influenced by the western education more than by her Bangladeshi origin (Nilsson, 2010, pp. 14-15).

### **3.3. THE TRAUMATIZING MOMENTS IN *THE BRICK LANE***

Today, the argument is not limited in scope to the relationship between Holocaust and other moments that are directly or not related to it. Instead, it is expanded to cover the colonialism, racism and the current Palestine cause too (Rothberg, 2022, p. 1316). Michael Rothberg calls for thinking “about the relationship between different social groups’ histories of victimization” (Rothberg, 2009, p. 2) that is, in fact, the main role of the ‘collective memory’ which he defines as the affiliation that the victimized people “establish between their past and their present circumstances” (Rothberg, 2009, p. 2). The main point of discussion in the realm of the collective memory is the multidirectional memory which looks for the interaction of the Holocaust memory along with the colonisation and slavery across the differences in space and place (Rothberg, 2022, p. 1319). One of the most important points in the process of decolonizing the trauma studies is that all moments of suffering in the history of the colonized people along with their systems of belief and rituals have to be encompassed. Rothberg reminds the scholars of the need to increase the area of search to include “everyday forms of traumatizing violence” (Rothberg, 2008, p. 226).

In this novel, the different moments of pain and agony that are endured by the female characters in this novel varied. It is not the pain of the white people’s prejudice, rather it is the pain of the Bengali women who suppressed and tortured according to the values and tradition of the Bangladeshi community. Each culture has its own rules and beliefs. And in the name of these rules and beliefs, many people (female characters in particular) were tormented. Susan J. Brison comments on the role of culture and society in the process of violence flourishing especially against women. She believes that “the traumatic event is experienced as culturally embedded (or framed), is remembered as such (in both traumatic and narrative memory), and is shaped and reshaped in memory



over time according , at least in part, to how others in the survivor’s culture respond” (Brison, 1999, p. 42). Besides, shame and guilt are the main traits that hover in the horizon of such society. For instance, if a girl escapes from her family with a lover, shame will be attached to her family like Hasina’s case. Thus, a severe punishment is acted. When Hasina eloped for the first time, Nazneen keeps wondering about what might be happened to her in this brutal world. Her sister Hasina is gone and she may not see her again, but for Nazneen, “it was not even a thought. It was a feeling, a stab in the lungs” (Ali, 2003, p. 20).

This color of injustice comes under the umbrella term of the ‘violence against women’. It was defined by the UN decree no. 48/104 as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life” (WHO, 2005, p. 4). In fact, this type of violence is connected firmly with mental disorder that many women are suffering from. World Health Organization (WHO) had reported that the violence is the essential factor to poor mental health especially with women in the third world countries like Bangladesh. In truth, any type of violence “has a far deeper impact than the immediate harm caused. It has devastating consequences for the women who experience it, and a traumatic effect on those who witness it, particularly children” (WHO, 2005, p. Vii).

The Bangladeshi society is a male-dominated society and women are blamed for anything that may go wrong in the matrimonial life. Moreover, the parents are facing a strong social pressure to marry their daughters off when they are still teens (Islam et al., 2018, p. 4). Thus, these girls are exposed to domestic violence by their husbands and since they are too young to comprehend the life and its burden, they are usually endured their husband’s fits of anger which usually end with beating. The violence that women are facing is in fact the main reason behind developing some mental diseases. Strangely, the society is so tolerant with the persons who beat and, on the other hand, it is so defective with the patients with mental disorder (Islam et al., 2018, p. 5). Women are enduring rape, violence, and physical abuse. They are also tortured with nightmares that shut them off from the normal life (Fathima & Prajapati, 2021, p. 260).

The physical violence plays a major role in affecting the women’s mentality and leads to trauma. Verbal abuse and negative remarks are also important to be noted

because these remarks are kept in the minds and may develop into mental disorder. Some researchers in this domain have revealed that the “social violence or social humiliation stemmed from social politics and injustice as a precipitator in mental illness” (Islam et al., 2018, p. 7). On the part of treatment, violence is also one of the tactics and it comes with certain beliefs that women can be treated with beating. It is very weirdly to see the treatment is involving beating. Consequently, the trauma is the only fruit of this violence (2018, p. 8).

For a woman from rural areas in Bangladesh, the nothingness is the main title of her life. She has nothing to do, nothing to act upon, and nothing to plan for. But, she has the right to weep or cry. Amma, Nazneen’s mother, says “I don’t want anything from this life ... I ask for nothing. I expect nothing” (Ali, 2003, p. 75). Waiting the fate to run its course is another option if she is prevented from crying. After Hasina’s elopement, Nazneen has nothing to do and “it was just a matter of waiting, as Amma always said.... Just wait and see, that's all we can do” (2003, p. 36). Amma always finds solace with these words and the crying is her best means of expression in times “when floods threatened, when Abba disappeared and stayed away for days at a time. She cried because crying was called for, but she accepted it, whatever it was” (2003, p. 36).

Different studies and surveys have been conducted to measure the amount of violence acted by male partners on the female personages in Bangladesh. United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) considers Bangladesh as the fourth country in which the violence against women takes a higher percentage (Sarker & Yesmin, 2013, p. 78). Recently, Bangladesh is one of the countries that labeled with highest rate of violence against women. It is about 50 to 70 percent of the Bengali women are experiencing violence from their male partners every year. Colors of violence are varied from physical to psychological and sexual abuse. The most dangerous physical violence is the acid attack in which throwing acid on the faces of women causes very severe damages and deforming the face. These acts of violence are supported by the patriarchal dynamics of the society in Bangladesh (2013, p. 74).

Asma Fathima and Prajapati try to highlight the effects of the violence and warn against neglecting the facts resulting from such deeds. She argues that any “attempt to discern violence and its effect often lead people towards frustration, despair, anger, hatred, depression and trauma” (Fathima & Prajapati, 2020, p. 655). Domestic violence

is another face for the same coin. It is adopted and supported by the patriarchic society in Bangladesh which gives the right to husbands to beat their wives. Psychiatrists explain that the effects of violence can be varied and leads to mental illness. For instance, in the case of depression the anxiety can be easily swift and hurried. This state of mind is facilitating other mental diseases to come into surface (Islam et al, 2018, p. 9). But, the most threatening case of violence is the acid throwing (Fathima & Prajapati, 2020, p. 658).

Another color of suffering that a Bengali woman has to undergo is the decision of marriage. The girl is married swiftly when she is only teen and has no right to choose her husband. Some girls are taken from school to be married even when they are still too small. Manirul Islam and other researchers believe that violence directed to women starts normally from marrying off the girls when they are still teens (Islam et al, 2018, p. 10). Ali exposes this reality in her novel by presenting a story of a school girl who was sent home to get married and was not even given the chance to complete her exams in the school. Razia tells Nazneen that “they have sent her back... to be married and to live in the village.... She is sixteen. She begged them to let her stay and take her exams” (Ali, 2003, p. 38). The core of the problem is when girls are married when they are just teen, they face domestic violence and they are not mature enough to resist. Fathima and Prajapati believe that such case of violence is one of the main causes for destroying personalities of the women and “directs them toward trauma” (Fathima & Prajapati, 2020, p. 660).

If the girls are not sent into arranged marriages, they may live under the threats and promises of tortures practiced by fathers or the dominated male figure in the family. Violence affects the children too. In fact, when the child grows, these acts of violence are affecting his personality so badly and normally causing some behavioral disorder or trauma. Thus, “the great majority of child victims suffering from dreadful memories appear to have haunting life even after their growth” (2020, p. 662). A clear situation that reflects this truth is presented in this novel when Chanu keeps threatening his daughters, chiefly Shahana and this leads her to think of running away instead of going back to Bangladesh because she is aware that she will be socially restricted and it is very expected to be deprived from completing her education there. Chanu shouts “I am going to break every bone in her body.... I’ll dip her head in boiling fat and throw her out of that window” (Ali, 2003, p. 127). And in another day, Chanu repeated his threats

indirectly to Shahana through the little daughter, Bibi; “Tell your sister ... that I am going to tie her up and cut out her tongue. Tell the memsahib that when I have skinned her alive she will not be looking so pleased with herself” (2003, p. 143). This is the most dreadful thing that may grow with the child and causes him or her some psychological problems. It may be reflected on his or her personality when he or she grows up. Of course, the personality will be colored with aggression and disobedience. And that what’s happened at the end of the novel when Shahana escaped at the night of leaving to Bangladesh.

The writer presents different colors of trauma in this novel in which the list starts from the sense of lost to the violence against women. Nazneen once upon time got lost in London. She realizes and feels the sense of lost and remembered her sister Hasina who got lost in this ugly world years ago. Though the situation is different, but the sense of lost is still the same. Like Hasina, Nazneen “could not simply go home.... Poor Hasina. Nazneen wept.... It could not help Hasina for Nazneen to be lost. And it could not give Nazneen any idea what Hasina was suffering” (Ali, 2003, p. 46). The situation is doubled colonized for Nazneen because she is a Bengali woman and got lost in London where she has only two words for communication. Thus, like her mother, she takes solace in crying and shedding tears.

Women’s most gratifying instrument for relief is weeping or crying. This fact is repeated many times in *Brick Lane* as if it was meant to enforce the idea that women are having nothing to do and the only thing they have is to weep and cry, but in silence. On the part of the women in Bangladesh, the causes for grief are varied. For instance, Amma may prove her point of view, but what was not clear for Nazneen is the source of her mother’s suffering. “We will suffer in silence.... In silence, said Amma.... What were they suffering? Nazneen wanted to ask” but she couldn’t (Ali, 2003, p. 75). Nazneen’s auntie, Mumtaz, is too despaired and when she come to visit “she had clung to Amma when she arrived and the two of them wept so long and so hard that Nazneen feared that someone had died” (2003, p. 76). The conversation between Amma and Mumtaz approves only one reality that they are suffering women and they have nothing to do to change this fact. “We are just women. What can we do?” (2003, p. 76). They seem to accept this fact and set to see the fate runs its course. Their conversation continues and Nazneen was hiding in hope to hear the main cause of their grieving. Definitely, the source of this woe is the fact they are helpless women. At that moment, Nazneen hopes

that the years of her age are many enough to go through such experience. She “longed to be enriched by this hardship ... and begin to wear this suffering that was as rich and layered and deeply coloured as the saris which enfolded Amma’s troubled bones” (2003, p. 76).

Nazneen reaches this state after several years when her son died in one of the hospitals in London. She dreamed of her dead mother who came to her for consolation and reminded her that she is a woman now and this fact means she has to suffer and weep in this injustice world, simply because she is a woman. “When you were a little girl, you used to ask me, ‘Amma, why do you cry?’ My baby, do you know now? ... This is what women have to bear” (2003, p. 231). However, her mother blamed Nazneen for interfering between her son and his fate because she brought him to the hospital. For this reason, Nazneen has to suffer because of her choice (PP, 2019, p. 158). Amma says to Nazneen “when you stood between your son and his Fate, you robbed him of any chance... Now say this to yourself, and say it out loud, ‘I killed my son. I killed my son.’ ‘No!’ screamed Nazneen” (Ali, 2003, p. 317).

Even the dream of her mother is a nightmare instead of being a store of relief. Nazneen at that moment was traumatized and her mental power seems to be collapsed. Before going back to Bangladesh, Nazneen once again dreamed of her mother who reminds her of Ruku, Nazneen’s dead son. Nazneen saw a vision of her mother who comes through the door and warns her that “you should remember one thing at least. Your son. You seem to have forgotten him” (Ali, 2003, p. 316). The memory of her dead son is agitated every time by her mother. The vision of her mother always discusses and reminds Nazneen of Ruku. The memory of the loved ones is tearing the heart and distorting the thoughts. Therefore, Nazneen’s mental health was on the edge of collapse. “Traumatic memories are intrusive, triggered by things reminiscent of the traumatic event and carrying a strong, sometimes overwhelming emotional charge” (Brison, 1999, p. 45). That’s why Nazneen was suffering from these memories. Brison believes that the only means of recovering for such case is to control these memories. “In order to recover, a trauma survivor needs to be able to regain control over traumatic memories” (1999, p. 45).

As a firm fact, the condition of woman in the third world countries is always colored with pain and agony. It always comes with burdens. Suffering and humiliating

are the normal traits that the women have to endure. However, Hasina has a different opinion from her mother who always escapes the confrontation by postulating that they are women and they have nothing to do. Hasina thinks that she is not like her mother who is just waiting or suffering around. She believes that her mother was wrong in many ways. Her mother acts only at the end of her life, and her act was religiously forbidden (Ali, 2003, p. 318). Hasina told her sister, Nazneen, a secret that she had hid for a long time. The secret is that Hasina had witnessed her mother's suicide. Relinquished herself to death, definitely Amma reached the point when she can endure the life no more. The ongoing suffering has led Amma to think of committing suicide, although she was named as saint by her husband. "Such a saint, Abba said. And then she died, and in dying proved life unpredictable and beyond control" (2003, p. 36). The human being has limits of patience and once the person exceeded these limits, no reasonable act is expected. For that reason, the novelist always depicts Amma in a state of grieving and crying (PP, 2019, p. 158). Hasina tells Nazneen the details of this tragic event that traumatizes Hasina for a long time. When she was a child, Hasina was following her mother's steps. When Amma was alone, she took one of the spears and tried it, and then she took the second one and laid it back on the stocks. She fixed the spear in the sacks of gain in the store and she fell on it. A groan was uttered. Not out of pain, but out of the injustice life. Hasina ran away "never go again to look" (Ali, 2003, p. 319).

Another color of suffering that the Bengali women have to endure, delivered by Hasina to Nazneen, is the women as workers in the factories. In her letter, Hasina describes one of the women workers in the garment factory in Bangladesh. She told her sister that one of the elder workers is called Renu. She was enforced to marry when she was 15 years old only. Her husband was an old man who died after few months. Her life seems to stop at that point; the rest is dedicated to suffering. Here, Renu describes her miserable life that is full only with pain. "My life! My life! Over at fifteen. Might as well be Hindu. His grave was big enough for two. Why I did not jump in? ... Anyone say anything they like because I am woman alone. I put here on earth to suffer. I am waiting and suffering" (2003, p. 109).

The women who work in the garment factory suffered from another problem which is the social prejudice. The society talks badly about them although these women are working hard for their living. But, the gossiping is the main business of the people in Bangladesh and the working women are the victims. For example, the people have

called them as Garment Girls. Zainab, a working woman, vilifies the gossiping about the women in the factory. She says “one hundred and fifty girls in one factory getting pregnant. This is kind of thing people say. Who going to stop them?” (2003, p. 111). Another woman is suffering the brutality of her husband. He gives her beating everyday and no one can stop him. This is because she works in the factory and supplies her children with the necessary needs. Aleyas is another woman who is hard working and for this reason, she got bonus which was a beautiful sari. But, her husband suspected that she was in an affair with a man in the factory. Thus, she takes beating every day. When she came to the factory, she was suffering a severe pain due to the beating that she takes. “Foot come all big like marrow and little finger broken. Bending over her stomach give trouble” (2003, p. 112). Her husband promises to keep beating her until she confesses the name of her lover. This not only a personal case of Aleyas, different other women are suffering the beating of their husbands. It was a normal habit and no one seems to object this deed. Another victim is taking beating twice a day. When she heard Aleyas’s story, she protests “Thank God for one rib only broken. When my husband beat he make sure to break all bones” (2003, p. 124).

In another letter by Hasina to Nazneen, she expresses her sad feelings and sympathetic attitude to those women who work in Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh. Working all the daylong with spades and axes, they got little payments, usually in wheat. Hasina says that she was sitting and looking at the street when she sensed a big wave of pain goes through her body due to the view of the working women. Here, Hasina narrates a dreadful sight that she had seen in Dhaka; “the women have big spade and long handle axe. Some carrying basket of stones on shoulder. All thin like sticks.... These women go bare head. And sun is red like a hell.... Then they finish the work and lining up for pay. They getting pay in wheat” (2003, p. 123).

Beatriz Pérez Zapata attracts the attention to the notion of ‘situatedness’. She believes that the process of decolonizing the trauma studies depends on comprehending the idea that trauma is “context and experience specific and, in turn, it forces them to reflect on their own situatedness within particular cultural and socio-economic contexts.... Therefore, the decolonization of trauma studies can be partly achieved by recognizing the privilege from which trauma is observed and experienced” (Zapata, 2015, p. 528). This is applicable in this novel by the means that trauma is being perceived from the site of the Bangladeshi condition of living throughout Hasina’s letters. These

letters show how miserable is the life of a woman in Bangladesh. Suffering all the daylong in working and take beating from husband at night is the main routine. Such pessimistic view about the living condition of women in Bangladesh creates a fearful image in Nazneen's mind. Thus, she decided to stay in England. In fact, the role of Hasina's letters is a 'device' that functions to convince Nazneen of staying in London. Although Hasina's letters are full with spelling and grammatical mistakes, but the message in each letter is crystal clear. Michael Perfect says that it is "with Hasina's unending subjugation making her sister determined not to be simply left to her fate" (Perfect, 2008, p. 115). The horror of her sister's life made Nazneen take such type of decision which transferred her from a submissive woman into a self-governing one. As a result, "the plane left tomorrow and she would not be on it" (Ali, 2003, P. 320). Her decision is affected clearly by Hasina's letters and the horrible life up there.

Since the decolonizing trauma approach involves expansion to include all the moments of suffering all over the world, the novel gives a survey about the horrible and dreadful circumstances that the people endure in different places of the modern world. Different indications are given to depict the lives of those deprived people in different location of this world. It is Karim who senses these agonies and he tries to deliver their voices to the world. In one of his visits to Nazneen, Karim explains to her the suffering of other people outside Britain and how the world is going on up there. He said "Do you know about our brothers in Egypt? ... The oppression, the jailings, the cowardly American-loving government" (2003, p. 186). When he comes for a second time, he tells her about another crime against humanity; it was "about the orphan children in refugee camps in Gaza. He was moved and Nazneen watched ... his eyes became watery" (2003, p. 196). In the same way, he picked up a magazine where lied on the table and searched for the right page. He reads from the magazine, and then he concluded that "there is one crime against humanity in this last decade of the millennium that exceeds all others in magnitude, cruelty, and portent. It is the US forced sanctions against the twenty million people of Iraq" (2003, p. 203).

It is the immigrant who senses and articulates the agonies of the other people around the world; Karim is a good example here. But in articulating these agonies and sufferings, he exposes himself for the rejection mainly from the society in which he lives. It is considered as bringing memories of violence to the new dwelling place. Rothberg says that "immigrants bring new memories—including memories of



violence—to their new homes” (Rothberg, 2022, p. 1321). Many scholars support Rothberg’s thesis by discussing this fact like Doughan (2022), Catlin (2022), Younes and Blaas (2022) and they postulate that giving voice to this multidirectionality in the public sphere means social suicide, particularly if the voice is uttered by Muslim or a person of color (Rothberg, 2022, p. 1322). In other words, the articulation is a sensitive issue. Rothberg believes that the “articulations of the lived multidirectionality experienced by migrant communities—the very communities frequently tarred as uninterested in the Holocaust and even as fundamentally anti-Semitic” (Rothberg, 2022, p. 1326).

Irene Visser clarifies this point further by postulating that the decolonizing trauma involves expanding the area of studies. The expansion needs to be taken place in the colonial cases where the notions of ‘complicity, agency, and guilt’ can be tackled after being neglected by the old model of the trauma theory. These areas are still ‘unexplored’ and “the postcolonial literature often dramatizes conflicted traumatic memories of individual and collective complicity with hegemonic systems of oppression” (Visser, 2015, pp. 9-10). Accordingly, multidirectional memory works as “a productive tool to bring to the fore and understand other histories of suffering which have not been so central to trauma and memory studies” (Zapata, 2015, p. 532). In this case, the trauma studies are decolonized to encompass all the painful moments in the history that were neglected due to the concentration of the old model on the Westerners’ trauma only, namely the Holocaust.

The core of the problem is when trauma refuses the narrative integration. In other words, “pain and guilt have to be acknowledged and lived with rather than be wholly overcome” (Tancke, 2011, p. 8). The novel seeks the power that the narrative provides to facilitate the reconstruction of the traumatized character. Nazneen succeeded in reconstructing her traumatized self and goes through metamorphosis phases to reach the point where she is capable of making decisions by herself. In fact, “piecing together a self requires a working through, or remastering of, the traumatic memory that involves going from being the medium or object of someone else’s (the torturer’s) speech to being the subject of one’s own” (Brison, 1999, p. 48). This is true when she becomes a decision maker and it was her call to leave her husband Chanu for his unending torturing speech. The traumatic memory is transformed into articulated narrative to be integrated lately with the survivor’s realization of self. Although Ulrike Tancke (2011, p. 11) perceives

this endeavor as failure, but the character of Nazneen in this novel achieved this transformation at the end of the novel when the plane is leaving to Bangladesh tonight and she will not be on it.

In this novel, the light is shed also on very painful incidents and ugly deeds that have no connection with humanity and breaks all the rules of the human rights. Strangely, this type of deed goes smoothly in the Bangladeshi community without conviction. It is the Acid Attacks on women in Bangladesh. Many women suffer the deformed faces and limbs due to acid attacks. Most of these crimes are acted either by a hateful husband or a cruel brother. Acid attack is the most dangerous and prevailing color of violence against women in Bangladesh. The outcome is dreadful because the “Sulfuric acid able to burn through skin, muscle and bone” (Sarker and Yesmin, 2013, p. 80). Therefore, different organizations had been established in Bangladesh to support and help the acid victims for example the Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF) which made a statistic inspection about this crime and declared that “244 women and 25 children were assaulted with acid from 1 January to 3 December 2003” (2013, p. 80). Sarker and Yesmin discuss the fact that most of the victims are women who experienced domestic violence and these women suffer from “great mental trauma” (2013, p. 87). According to this reality, the Bangladeshi Government in 2002 performed Acid Crime Prevention Act as well as Acid Control Act. Moreover, there has been (CPS) center which is established to verify the cases. However, most of the victim women willingly or not are enforced to drop the compliant due to the fear from the attackers or to preserve their personal safety. For that reason, no accurate statistics can be made because most of these crimes are not registered (Fathima & Prajapati, 2020, pp. 661-662).

The story of Monju, a poor Bengali woman, is a good example of this type of violence. The writer noticeably sympathizes incredibly with such dreadful attacks on Bengali women. In the world of this novel, Hasina in one of her letters to her sister Nazneen explains the case of Monju who became the emblem of victims of the acid throwing. The reason is that her husband desired to sell the son. When she refused, he deformed her face and the little son too with acid. Being a friend of Monju, Hasina told her Mistress, Mrs. Lovely, about Monju’s tragic incident. Hasina says that Monju was thirteen years old when she got married and had a baby. When the father wanted to sell the baby Monju refused. For this reason, the husband threw acid on her to deform her face and the baby too. Monju requests the money to be paid for the baby's operations

(Ali, 2003, p. 239). Even Hasina finds no way except to denote all of her money along with the money that has been sent by Nazneen for the sake of treating Monju and her baby. Hasina comes to the hospital so often and her witnessing is narrated to Nazneen and the readers too: “It hurt the nose to smell her. It hurt the eye to see her. Most it hurt the heart to know her” (2003, p. 240). Being a mother, all of Monju’s thinking was how to save more money for the operation of her little son Khurshed. She can only whisper and powerless to move, but “all she think is how to get more for the boy. This eat into her more painful than acid” (2003, p. 240).

This painful accident causes trauma to the mother and witnessing persons too. The traumatic experience that the poor Monju went through is so dreadful that any person can feel the agony and definitely sympathizes with her tragic experience. When Hasina told this story to Mrs. Lovely, she feels a severe pain goes through her veins. Hasina says “I go again to College Hospital.... No money now for Monju drugs. Praise Allah most time she go unconscious” (2003, p. 243). What a tragic experience that this poor woman has to undergo and what a dreadful pain that she has to endure. In her last letter about Monju, Hasina explains that “Acid melt cheekbone and nose and one eye. Other eye damage only with pain and very hate.... Monju sister has take Khurshed in village. Boy has not seen the mother. She will not allow. ‘Promise me.’ She say every time I go. Promise me the boy get his operation.... What to do?” (2003, p. 277). Being a witness, Hasina reacts and thinks of a project to help the victims of the acid attacks with the help of Mrs. Lovely who donates a lot. Hasina narrates:

Even face is melt still you see how it change her. She close[d] good eye and rest for while... Is like give feast to starving man. When she open eye she say something I cannot hear. I must put ear against mouth.... I look inside the good eye and see she must speak or have no peace.... She whisper from very small mouth hole nearly close up now. These secret things will kill us. Do you have any secret? You want to tell to me? I keep it safe for you! (2003, p. 297).

In her last moments in this life, Monju wanted to talk and speak about her secrets and agonies which were eating her from inside more than the acid. Revealing the hidden thoughts and pain is one of the main touches of the new model of trauma theory which believes that pain is speakable. Different from the Caruthian model of trauma which denied any chance of speaking out the pain and agony of the traumatized persons, Rothberg’s model believes in the capacity of the traumatized persons of speaking and releasing the hidden pain. The survivor from any traumatic experience is unique in that he/she is the only person who can define and interpret his/her life precisely. Susan Brison

believes that narrating traumatic memories to other who are capable of listening and understanding is therapeutic and facilitates the way to recovery. Hence, the women's miseries are hidden torments. Accordingly, it is "therapeutic to bear witness in the presence of others who heard and believed" (Brison, 1999, p. 46). Women's struggles to be in terms with the male dominance are stretched along their lives that colored with scars and wounds physically and spiritually. What Monju has to bear through her short life is the hidden voice of the torment that should be cast loudly. "The heart pouring out words by Monju seemed more painful on its revelation" (Fathima & Prajapati, 2021, p. 260). Monju's life cut short, and her death affects the witness too badly. Hasina tells Nazneen that she went to the hospital in the next day to tell her good news, "But that day sister my friend is gone" (Ali, 2003, p. 298).

These moments of suffering on the part of the Bangladeshi women are the shared history. Most importantly here is the fact that narrating the pain of other entails unquestionable a comparison with the troubling history of other. The story of Monju along with the story of Amma's suicide and of course with suffering of Nazneen and Hasina, though they are living in different worlds, create the big picture that is suitably titled the violence against women. Hence, Rothberg's concept of the multidirectional memory which is the main bone for decolonizing trauma entails the combination of "two or more disturbing memories that work dialogically to bring together different histories of suffering" (Zapata, 2015, p. 529).

These tragic events and atrocities are called to the front to be discussed and at the same time they stand for the troubling memories of the female characters who are mostly either traumatized or narrating the experience of other traumatized female characters. Thus, it is worthy enough to call these experiences as traumatic due to the ugliness of the deed and the everlasting pain on the part of the victims who are mostly women living in poor countries like Bangladesh. These are the traumatic experiences of the minority people who were neglected and not included in the search by old model of trauma. The new model of trauma highlights such cases and encompassing them in their domain of search. Rothberg focuses on "social actors bring multiple traumatic pasts into a heterogeneous and changing post-WWII present" (Rothberg, 2009, p. 4).

Another example from the real life is the story of Rumana which represents the highest moment of male violence practices against Bengali women. The importance of

this real story from the history of Bangladesh is to support and verify Ali's claim and presentation of these traumatized women in her novel, especially Monju's tragic story. Here, fact and fiction are different faces for the same coin. The case of Rumana Manjoor is well known in Bangladesh. She was a university instructor and went in a Fulbright scholarship to complete her study in Canada. When she came back to Bangladesh in May, a tragic event was waiting her. She thought that she can work on her thesis at home to be near her family and her five years old daughter. Out of her consideration, her husband accused her of cheating him. This accusation was strongly rejected by Rumana. According to her claim, the real reason of this accusation was he rejected the idea that his wife will be a professor. To stop her from completing her education, he reacted violently and tortured her for more than half an hour. Then he blinded her sight by scraping her eyes. Besides, he deformed her face with punches and bites. In fact, this barbarian deed had shaken the whole nation and motivated the society to support Rumana (Sarker and Yesmin, 2013, p. 78).

The stream of thoughts is continued in this novel. The novelist seems to hold the burden of exposing every single event that may affect the lives of the minority people tragically. She comes across the catastrophe of 11 September. It is another point of pain in the modern history in which many innocent people were killed and many other were injured. The world took days to cover the news of this tragedy. People all over the world were watching the discussions and analysis about this accident. Nazneen was watching T.V., and she saw a very big cloud of black smoke comes from one of the towers. Then, another plane came with slow motion and hit the other tower (Ali, 2003, p. 265). The world paid immense attention to this catastrophe. "The world wept and sent money" (2003, p. 302). But the other face of this catastrophe is creating another catastrophe in different places in the world. The hidden fact is that "America is taking her revenge and our brothers are being killed. Their children die with them. They are not any more or less innocent. But the world does not mourn them" (2003, p. 302).

The consequences of this catastrophe are affecting the whole world. In one of the meetings of the Bengali immigrants, this issue and its effects on the lives of the Muslims in the Western communities was discussed. Nonetheless, some facts were hidden from the public opinion and neglected by media. One of the girls who were attending the meeting highlighted these facts. The girl gazed at Karim directly when she speaks. She says "on that day thirty-five thousand children also died through hunger.... What do we

know about this tragedy? ... Victims: thirty-five thousand. Location: the poorest countries in the world. Special news reports: none. Appeals for the victims and their families: none. Messages from Heads of State: none. Candlelight vigils: none. Minutes' silence: none. Calls for the perpetrators to be called to justice ... None" (Ali, 2003, p. 303). It is shocking information that has been concealed from the public.

The point of importance here is that the catastrophe of 9/11 is tragic, but it should not conceal other tragic events in the lives of the minority people. The case that is mentioned by the girl is worthy to be noted. In another meeting that gathered the Bengali immigrants to discuss their problems and in particular the social discrimination that they suffer from, the questioner mentioned a very sensitive issue. "If the UN participates in such genocidal sanctions backed by the threat of military violence – and if the people of the world fail to prevent such conduct – the violence, terror and human misery of the new millennium will exceed anything we have known. This is what the former US Attorney General says" (2003, p. 203).

In fact, the catastrophe of 9/11 is like the Holocaust in the sense that both of them are de-centering other histories. Zapata argues that the Holocaust, works like 'a screen memory' with the intention of concealing other traumatic histories. The point of importance here is that the Holocaust or other atrocities like the catastrophe of 9/11 in the West should not conceal the public view from the other atrocities acted by the West in different areas like the East. The catastrophe of 9/11 gives the legitimated excuse to attack other countries. The focus on the Holocaust in the Western community is a way to conceal and hide the ugly past of the British Empire (Zapata, 2015, p. 530).

In this novel, one of the British atrocities acted in the East is narrated by Chanu to his daughters. He tells them how Bangladesh was suffering the famine due to the British control on the grains. This point of pain in the history of Bangladesh was documented through paintings. The paintings expose the dark side of the British Empire to the world. Chanu says that there is a famous painter from Bangladesh. He was named Zainul Abedin. Due to his artistic touches, his paintings were shown around the world. He was given many awards and prizes. The main subject of his painting is the ordinary people of Bangladesh. In his paintings, the life and death are shown as they are in the reality. Then, Chanu reports the most horrible fact that was documented by this painter:

He painted the famine which came to our country in 1942 and '43. These famous paintings hang now in a museum in Dhaka... In the famine, there was life and there was death. The

people of Bangladesh died and the crows and the vultures lived. ... The child who is too weak to walk or even to crawl, and the fat, black crows – how patiently they wait by the child for their next feast... Three million people died because of starvation.... While the crows and vultures stripped our bones, the British, our rulers, exported grain from the country. This is something that you cannot imagine, but now that you know it, you will never forget (Ali, 2003, p. 267).

Such a painful moment in the history of Bangladesh definitely cannot and will not be forgotten. It should be exposed and delivered to the public opinion, because this moment had affected their lives considerably and it was the source of pain and death to loads of the native people. Such incident caused by the colonizer should be brought to the sunlight as seriously as the Holocaust. Besides, the Holocaust should not conceal the other painful history of the minority people. It is an urgent need to engage the studies with the other traumatic histories of the minority people and not only engaging with the miseries of the white people. Accordingly, the Holocaust should not be promoted as the only misery of the human being that the world needs to weep at.

Furthermore, violence on the part of the weak partner is flourishing in the communities that lack hope and anticipation. Here, the colonized community is a good soil for different colors of violence. Jürgen Habermas, the German philosopher, confesses the fact that the ‘colonial crimes’ are recently brought under examination and search due to the new tendencies (Rothberg, 2022, p. 1321). The shift of focus from the Holocaust to the colonial crimes which are called back to be shown in the studies of memory has its weight. It frees other neglected and frozen moments of suffering in the history of the colonized people. Habermas believes also that the focus on one singular event like the Holocaust should not freeze the other historical event that are important to other people and construct their native identity, the colonial past as an example (Rothberg, 2022, p. 1321). In the project of decolonizing trauma studies, the expansion to encompass all of these traumatized moments in the lives of the people all over the world is needed most.

On the part of remembering, it is a painful experience because it involves the pull of the past that is colored with dehumanizing practices acted by the colonizer who tried to eliminate the cultural identity of the colonized subjects. Moreover, the recovering from these remembered moments is not impossible. Linda Tuhiwai Smith believes that “both healing and transformation become crucial strategies in any approach which asks a community to remember what they may have decided unconsciously or consciously to forget” (L. T. Smith, 1999, p. 146). The process of remembering is not directed to

bringing back the golden past. Rather, it exclusively directed to those moments of pain in the past and how the aboriginal people react to these moments. Nevertheless, the painful past can be talked through, but there are also many gaps and silences that are not covered and left without any explanation to what had been happened aftermath this painful moment (1999, p. 146).

To conclude, different moments of pain and suffering are represented in this novel. The list may start from the condition of the Bangladeshi women and the violence against women and ends with the sense of Islamophobia that was increased after the 9/11 attack. Besides, different journeys to the past come to affirm the strokes of trauma in the lives of the main characters. The traumatic moments in this novel are documented by presenting historical facts in the world of fiction. Such situations are vividly portrayed in this novel through the experiences of the Bengali women who suffered a lot. Clearly, Nazneen, in her searching and establishing of her identity, she often comes across moments of frustration that leads her to traumatic backlashes. For instance, at the same night in which they supposed to leave to Bangladesh, Nazneen's daughter escaped. That night was so violent due to the demonstration which turned to be so violent to the extent clashes with the police have taken place. Nazneen acted and searched for her lost daughter amid the riot. This night is indeed a traumatic experience. Nazneen was exposed to varied traumatic experiences of the Bengali women. She was also informed about the tragic moments that are awaiting her if she returns home through Hasina's letters that created a sense of phobia. Despite this fact, the narrative of Ali is always opening new horizons to her characters by presenting different possible solutions without losing the touches of love and tenderness. In effect, Rothberg's model of trauma theory can help hugely to understand and interpret trauma in different situations and colors and enable the studies to encompass more different traumatic experiences. In fact, this is purpose of the new model of trauma in which decolonizing trauma studies need to encompass all the painful histories of the other.



## **4. DECOLONIZING TRAUMA IN ZIA HAIDER RAHMAN'S *IN THE LIGHT OF WHAT WE KNOW***

### **4.1. AN OVERVIEW OF THE AUTHOR'S LIFE AND WORKS**

Zia Haider Rahman is an English writer and journalist. He is a Western writer with Eastern roots. He was born in Sylhet which is a rural area in Bangladesh in 1969. Although he was born in Bangladesh, but he is like other writers who came to Britain and succeeded in gaining esteem places in the English literature. He spent the childhood in the most dangerous part of the world at the time when turmoil and civil upheavals led into the Liberation War that broke up in 1971 in Bangladesh. This gives him the suitable background to discuss the problems on the other side of the world, namely the East. In fact, he was not born in the capital city of Bangladesh, Dhaka. But in a rustic village that is named Sylhet. He escaped with his family to England after the Liberation war (Wood, 2014).

The geopolitical conflict was mainly between the eastern part and the western part of Pakistan. This conflict ended with more than three million people killed and more than ten million people refugees in addition to many other people who were enforced to be displaced. Self-exiled people who run from bitterness of the war are also counted. The author's family fled the ethnic and social discrimination and came to England before the independence of Bangladesh was stated after nine months of war. Being raised in Britain, Rahman attended the British schools where he outshined and succeeded in obtaining a place at the Oxford University to study mathematics. Due to his outstanding success, he engaged in different studies with Yale, Cambridge, and Munich universities, Rahman gained a widespread knowledge as well as experience. Then he occupied the job of an investment banker in New York before indulging in studying law that moved him into the corporate of the human rights domain as a lawyer. He worked for Transparency International which is one of the Non-governmental Organization (NGO) that monitors and publicizes the political and development corruption as an anti-corruption activist ([www.literature.britishcouncil.org](http://www.literature.britishcouncil.org)).

*In the Light of What We Know* is Rahman's debut novel published in 2014. It covers most of the ongoing varied problems in the world like the shadow of the bloody history of Bangladesh War for independence, the geopolitical struggles, the post 9/11

situation, the question of war in Afghanistan and Iraq, Islamophobia, exile and homelessness, the global financial setback in 2008, and many other historical or political episodes. These issues are blended with love, philosophy, search for identity, homelessness and exile, science, law, literature and etc. The novel set off in 2008 after the financial crisis, but the reader is taken back and forth in time (del Valle Alcalá, 2021, p. 252). Moreover, no limited location can encompass this novel because the events are distributed through different cities like London, New York, Kabul, Islamabad, Oxford, Princeton and Sylhet ([www.edbookfest.co.uk](http://www.edbookfest.co.uk)).

*In the Light of What We Know* took unexpected widespread reputation. Many critical praises have been devoted to this novel. For example, it was listed in 2014 for the Guardian First Book Award, Goldsmiths Prize. In 2015, the novel won the Folio Prize. Many other prizes were dedicated for this novel like *New Yorker Best Books* and the *Specsavers National Book Award* ([www.literature.britishcouncil.org](http://www.literature.britishcouncil.org)). The novel was sincerely “a novel of its time” (Rabbani, 2015). Therefore, it also received outstanding reviews in different prestigious publication like *The Guardian*, *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times* and the list continues. These reviews are praising the author's remarkable capability to include the huge variety of events that are spread widely in time and place (Green, 2014).

The novel goes around a wearisome relationship between two old friends: Zafar and the unnamed narrator. For unstated reasons, the author keeps the narrator nameless. The narrator was born for an esteemed family and his grandfather was the Pakistani ambassador in America. Moreover, his parents were professors at Oxford. The unnamed narrator was born in Princeton in England. On the part of Zafar, he was born in Bangladesh “a corner of that corner of the world” (Rahman, 2014, p. 494). He is an emigrant from a village in rural Bangladesh and he came to England when he was five years old. His parents are peasants. Zafar is a Bangladeshi, but he was raised in London. The coincidence had brought them together in studying mathematics at Oxford. The unnamed narrator did not recognize Zafar at first when he appeared after many years at his door foot. Zafar was “a brown-skinned man, haggard and gaunt, the ridges of his cheekbones set above an unkempt beard” (Rahman, 2014, p. 3).

The starting point of the novel is 2008, when the global financial crisis was at its peak. Undeniably, through the world of fiction, the novel measures the foot of the

globalization on the modern man. Zafar has a lot of in common characteristics with the author himself. Both of them come from the same village of Sylhet in Bangladesh. Both of them take the same course of life in moving to London and studying at Oxford. It is Zafar's roots that are much similar to the author himself (Wood, 2014). On the other hand, Zafar and the unnamed narrator share the same field of study as well as work, although Zafar later on directed his attention to law and became a human rights lawyer. Their academic company in Oxford University for studying mathematics is contrasted sharply with their backgrounds. Zafar comes from a family that is entitled with poverty in which his father worked as a bus driver in the morning and a waiter at night. The parents of the unnamed narrator were professors at Oxford. It is in the final chapters of the novel where the Zafar's real biological father was exposed. He was the soldier that raped his mother at the civil war in 1971. He was raised by his uncle who brought him to England. When Zafar came to the narrator's house, the latter was going through really hard times. He was in the middle of the divorce processes as well as losing his job too due to the inclination of mortgage-backed guarantees and the financial setback in 2008. In transcribing Zafar's tragic life, the narrator was trying to overcome his difficulties too (Iftakhar, 2016, p. 100).

The novel lies heavily on the conversation between Zafar and the unnamed narrator (Thakur, 2021, p. 110). Through their conversations, the past was disclosed via flashbacks and the work of memory. What affected Zafar's sanity most was his relationship with Emily, the British aristocratic girl. The narrator summarizes the whole thing in saying that it is "the story of the breaking of nations, war in the twenty-first century, marriage into the English aristocracy, and the mathematics of love" (Rahman, 2014, p. 4). Similarly, James Wood sees this novel as "the story he tells of his rise and fall – supplemented, so the narrator tells us, by extracts from Zafar's notebooks – forms the bulk of the novel" (Wood, 2014).

#### **4.2. POSTCOLONIALISM AND THE NEW IMPERIALISM**

In the mid of this weird life, the hidden impacts of the postcolonial tactics and the imperial stratagems still run deep. Rahman was not away from these tactics and he is fully aware of them due to his ethnical and religious backgrounds. Thus, in his novel, he depicts the postcolonial methods vividly and more accurately than what is delivered through media. In fact, media creates a deformed image about the East in general in

attempt to provide the legal cover for the West's involvement in the East. Zafar believes that “everything seen by the West is seen through the West” (Rahman, 2014, p. 223). Besides, Zafar’s feelings of bitterness about Emily (his girlfriend) and England, is twisted against the Western Organizations working in Afghanistan which were new face of the Western Imperialism as he thought. Zafar despises the presence of Westerners like Emily and her colleagues in the East and believes that they were here to play the old game: “the game of Empire and Ego” (Rahman, 2014, p. 222). James Wood considers Emily as the ‘liberal Orientalist’ and Zafar, in his desperate yearning for her, as ‘erotic Occidentalism’ (Wood, 2014).

One of the most vital questions in the postcolonial writing is the question of exile. It is surmounting Zafar clearly in this novel in the sense that he is the self-exiled character who belongs to nowhere. Zafar is “an exile, a refugee, if not from war, then of war, but also an exile from blood” (Rahman, 2014, p. 47). The novel is seen as a negotiation on the themes of exile and belongingness especially after the catastrophes of 9/11 and the financial crisis in 2008 in the world (Thakur, 2021, p. 108). Zafar represents that type of homelessness which is classified as “being paradigmatic of exile in our times” (Thakur, 2021, p. 109). Said defines the impact of exile on the immigrant people as:

Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted.... The achievements of exile are permanently undermined by the loss of something left behind forever (Said, 2001, p. 159).

The exile was affecting the narrator’s father too. The narrator’s mother told the narrator that once upon time when she had met his father, he was looking tireless from distancing. He questioned the Pakistani army violence in 1971. This cost him lost on the part of his political relations and on the part of friends and family too. The narrator's father is also suffered from the sense of guilt and for this reason, he was self-exiled. In all cases, there is a burden that the emigrant has to bear, it is “a burden of guilt” (Rahman, 2014, p. 10). The sense of exile creates a state of anger on the part of Zafar who never finds home. England was cold in receiving him and Bangladesh was cold too in sending him out. Edward Said thinks that isolation and displacement are able to produce a type of ‘narcissistic Masochism’ that rejects all the efforts of “amelioration, acculturation and community. ... The exile can make a fetish of exile, a practice that distances him or her

from all connections and commitments” (Said, 2001, p. 189). The state of being narcissistic is discussed here as a symptom of the traumatized character. Without doubt, Zafar is at the peak of this state due to the sense of exile, homelessness, and lost.

There were two betrayals in Zafar’s life. The first is in Oxford, when he met Emily who was lively and socially impeccable. At that time, he was too hungry for belonging. They become a couple, but unfortunately asymmetrical one. She treated him coldly and never introduced him to her friends. Zafar notices that she has never said sorry to him in along their relationship. James Wood postulates that Emily is in fact the Englishness that cannot be possessed by Zafar. And like Emily who has not uttered the word ‘sorry’; England has never give him ‘welcome’ (Wood, 2014). The second betrayal is depicted by the author who tries to bring two contrasted metaphors together like ‘home’ and ‘exile’. The question here is that can Zafar, in his yearning for Emily, abolish this dichotomy? His quest to reach the safe spot where his mind would be in peace is never accomplished because he was trying to bring the opposites together. This ambivalence is clear in his saying that “I hated Emily for the same reasons I loved her” (Rahman, 2014, p. 379). In fact, the Hampton-Wyverns did not welcome Zafar as a new member of the family. Emily works accordingly in which she treated him snobbishly. When he proposes for the first time, she released a cynical laugh without saying a word. Zafar was left swaying between acceptance and rejection, so he does not propose for her again. But, when they met again in Afghanistan, where they work as agents in support of rehabilitation acts for AfDARI organization, Emily proposes to Zafar and he accepted at once.

James Wood addresses the question of homelessness and the sense of lost in that he believes that the “tragic homelessness, connected to the ancient sentence of banishment” (Wood, 2014). Relying on the frame works of Said’s and Lukacs’, Wood found that there is a new approach of the postcolonial writing “that moves between, and powerfully treats, questions of homelessness, displacement, emigration, voluntary or economic migration” (Wood, 2014). As far as the belonging is concerned, Britain never welcomes him. Zafar promises that “If an immigration officer at Heathrow had ever said Welcome home, – I would have given my life for England ... I could kill for an England like that” (Rahman, 2014, p. 98). Zafar is really obsessed with the bitter notion of

belonging to Britain (Iftakhar, 2016, p. 101). He hopes to be rooted from his past by belonging to Britain that never welcomes him.

Zafar's homelessness and his sense of lost in the matrix of the modern world with all the conspiracies around him make him uncomfortable with anxiety. Definitely, these situations are clear touches of a traumatized man. Since it is not a trauma of Westerner, the world turns a blind eye to such type of torments. Many contemporary novels are counted for bearing witness to the complexities of the identity especially after 9/11 attack. This new trend of fiction contributes hugely in the process of reshaping the hegemonic discourse with colors of ethical traits and in more comprehensive way. Fiction can elucidate the prejudice, suffering, and inequality by narrating other's life stories. In that manner, the argument can find a decent place in the academic studies as well as the human solidarity. However, this novel is still colored with the sense of pessimism (Keeble & Annesley, 2021, p. 81).

#### **4.3. THE TRAUMATIZING MEMORY IN THE NOVEL**

The novel focuses on Zafar's troubled life. It starts in 2008 when Zafar visits once again his college mate, the unnamed narrator in Princeton, Britain. Zafar appears on his door foot wretched and broken. Since the narrator was in hard times at that moment, he asserts that "Zafar's reappearance came as a relief and diversion" (Rahman, 2014, p. 16). The novel is consisting of different fractions and pieces taken from Zafar's life. These are recollected and arranged with footnotes and references by the nameless narrator. Zafar's lifetime is the spine of this novel. He only retells his experiences and troubles. Zafar refuses also to write his story, and it is his friend, the unnamed narrator, who takes the burden of writing down these interrelated parts of his life fearing from amnesia that may erase his friend's mentality since his state of mind is not in a good condition. The narrator adds footnotes and references to document these stories and adds the flavor of authenticity to the narrative. The narrator fights hard to keep his narrative authentic. As far as the novelist is concerned, he takes the look on the story line from a different spot by which he succeeded of adding real touches to the novel. In fact, the novel is "a melting pot of ideas. This novel can be called a memoir, a realist novel, a surrealist novel, or a historiography of the contemporary world" (AKTER, 2015, p. 13).

It is clear that the recalling of memories is main engine that drives and shapes Zafar's character. Memories and flashbacks serve as a comfortable cushion for his mentality that seems to be discomfited. The narrator distances himself from the tormenting moments in Zafar's life physically to "subdue trauma. This U-turn of storyline in a way, distances the narrator from the trauma of the event" (AKTER, 2015, p. 14). The author's views and attitudes about the role of memory are delivered directly by saying that: "Memory is not static but a thing in motion, and because we are passengers without a frame of reference, the motion is imperceptible, so that at any given point in time, all we have is a set of memories, a thing of the instantaneous present and not of the past" (Rahman, 2014, p. 424). This comes along with Michael Rothberg's notion of memory Rothberg calls for thinking "about the relationship between different social groups' histories of victimization" (Rothberg, 2009, p. 2) which is the main role of the 'collective memory' that he defines as the affiliation that the victimized people "establish between their past and their present circumstances" (2009, p. 2).

In the present time, the lights are directed to the decolonizing trauma studies which focus on the suffering of the others. It calls for expanding the search light and not limiting the studies with the Holocaust only. The cases of trauma within the scoop of colonialism and racism are needed to be addressed (Rothberg, 2022, p. 1316). The history of the other is also important to be disclosed. However, in some part of this novel, the memories cannot cover all areas of the characters' discussions. There are still some gaps and huge void in the scattered memories and these gaps cannot be filled with the narrator's footnotes and references. Thus, the narrator makes use of some academic theories and projections to fill in the lapses of the memory. For instance, he suggests the Peter's Projection in which the map demonstrates proportional sizes of the territories. "Here, Africa does not look smaller than Greenland. The map is a projection of a person and it is a projection of territorial might. The popularization of Mercator's projection reflects the idea of the hegemony of the academia" (AKTER, 2015, p. 14).

The method of narration in this novel lends itself hugely to Zafar's monologue that creates, in most parts of the novel, a stream of consciousness. This technique of narration helps to fathom the inner world of the character. Some part of the Zafar's narration seems to be a self-reflection especially when he uses Gödel's theorem of Incompleteness that answers some irresolvable questions in his life. When Zafar struggle

to find meaning for some issues in his life, the Incomplete Theorem provides him with some answers which suggesting that perfection has no place in the world of mortals (AKTER, 2015, p. 20). In some other parts of the novel, Zafar fights hard to bring back the memories of his beautiful village. He instinctively remembers the silky coconut leaves shinning under the moonlight. This proves the involuntary work of memory. But, the moonlight also brings another image which is so terrible to Zafar. He remembers the traumatic train accident there when the train falls from the bridge and smashed into the water which was glittered by the moon light (2015, p. 19). Alex Clark, *The Guardian* reviewer, believes that “his childhood is traumatic and dramatic” (Clark, 2014).

The train trip across Bangladesh is one of the most vital and effectual episodes in Zafar’s life. It presses intensely on Zafar’s mind. When he was just a teen, he had to travel to Bangladesh to spend sometimes in his native land and visit somebody in particular (later on was identified as his biological mother). Zafar travelled across the country by train and the emotions were mixed. He sensed that this land is “neither home nor foreign to me” (Rahman, 2014, p. 54). But, for Zafar, “those years in Bangladesh were all in all years of tranquility. They did indeed begin with horror and end with pain” (2014, p. 54).

In that trip to Sylhet, Zafar befriends a boy travelling with his parents on the same train and the boy seems from the locals and they exchanged some fruits and gum. Reaching a dangerously-structured bridge, Zafar calculated the weights of the train and decided to walk down the bridge on foot because he figured it out that the bridge cannot behold the weight of the train. He was right when he saw the carriages of the train fall steeply and loudly into the water and he did not see that boy again. There, he stood with silence for a moment and tried to mediate the accident, but then he walked to his village on foot. Leaving behind the train sank in the river, but the image of the train collapsing in the water under the moon light leaves him not. The extensive narrative of this moment also contains digressions and mediations. Susan J. Brison comments on the nature of recalling back traumatic memories in saying that “traumatic memories are intrusive, triggered by things reminiscent of the traumatic event and carrying a strong, sometimes overwhelming emotional charge” (Brison, 1999, p. 45).



It also questions how a specific moment of time, measured in decimal, can be narrated through long pages. The span of time at the memorized moment is very short, but the narration of this moment takes several pages. This is because the afflicted person is trying to mediate, speculate and think over what had been happen at that given moment (Wood, 2014). This symptom is one of the traumatic characteristics that the traumatized persons suffer from. Zafar affirms this fact of time slowing at the moment of thinking of or mediating about the traumatic event and he relates it to the work of memory. Thus, Zafar spends pages to narrate the train accident. Shohana Akter believes that Zafar's attempt was meant to save him from the effect of the trauma. Zafar's stream of consciousness and his defined description of the train traumatic accident are approving the slowing of time at the moment of catastrophe (Akter, 2015, p. 21). The author also uses Zafar's traumatized character to comment on this issue. Zafar says that time seems to slow down "at moments of crisis, stress, or anxiety. Time slows down, we think, during a car crash or when a person falls from a great height into a net ... The experience of time slowing down is now understood as a function of the creation of memories" (Rahman, 2014, p. 71). Zafar mediates that:

if I close my eyes, I can hear the sounds again: the groan, the creak and snap of girders buckling, the high-pitched whistle of wires flying, the crash of a carriage hitting the tower, ... and then the sound of water, not a splash but as if the growling torrent had leaped up and crunched the falling carriage in its teeth (Rahman, 2014, p. 74).

After many years, he came back to work in Bangladesh. He was supervising some contracts and some files of corruption. One of the contracts was to maintain a bridge. He remembered that tragic accident when he was just a boy coming back home. Zafar says that "I had crossed that same river not far from where these new bridges now stood. And I remembered that as a boy all those years ago, a quarter of a century it was now, I had made my way across that river, and I thought of that other boy" (2014, p. 442). At this moment, Zafar is facing again the same location where he has a traumatic memory about. There is no escape of remembering that traumatic memory. In the realm of the decolonizing trauma studies, the recovering is possible and the only means of recovering is to control these memories. Brison believes "in order to recover, a trauma survivor needs to be able to regain control over traumatic memories" (Brison, 1999, p. 45). Hence, it is Zafar's job to face and control these memories. Therefore, he rejected the project of the new bridge due to the smell of corruption that was spread at that time. Moreover, Zafar was trying to prevent the train accidents because these accidents are

causing severe and dreadful memories in the minds of the poor native people which Rothberg calls them 'collective memory'. The author uses Zafar's voice to deliver this collective painful memory.

Indeed, most of the narration time, Zafar sails in the ocean of memories, especially that part which is related to Sylhet. The unnamed narrator also supported him with his notes and remarks. Accordingly, the structure of the story cannot fall apart (Akter, 2015, p. 21). Zafar's narrative is handling the stereotype of the mysterious foreigner whose history is full with missing episodes. He always shifts careers and locations. Thus, his narration focuses on some episodes and neglects others. When he became an adult, he changed into a calm but withdrawn character. Nevertheless, he sometimes leaps out of his character to be completely violent. Zafar makes a confession too about the heavy shadow of his childhood on his grown up personality. He believes that "childhood poverty looms over one's whole life" (Rahman, 2014, p. 341). In fact, Zafar exposes his position from the act of memory which he could overcome half of them, the half that is related to childhood. But he questions the redemption of the other part which is related to adulthood. He declares that "Memoirs are stories of redemption ... half of them about a tragic childhood finally overcome ... I have nothing against memoirs, but what if there's no redemption to speak of?" (Rahman, 2014, p. 279).

The author relies heavily on Zafar's narration to his memories which he shares some with his native people, expect the narrator of course. Besides, Zafar fights hard with his memories that try to spring up and hide no more. He confesses this fact in saying that "a memory inside me was trying to wrestle its way through to consciousness" (2014, p. 80). The move into the conscious realm means that there is a will of releasing that memory by speaking. The speaking ability of traumatic memory is one of the main traits of the decolonizing traumatic theory which believes strongly in the matter of speaking out the traumatic memory.

In this novel, it is not only Zafar who wants to speak. Other characters also share their painful memories that come along with Zafar's ones and shape the big picture. For example, in one of the evening when Zafar and the narrator were at home, the narrator's father confesses what he had hidden for long time to them. The history is revisited again. The collective painful memory that no escape can be afford in attempt of not mentioning

it was the war of 1971. The narrator's father thinks it was "the butchery in full swing" (2014, p. 198). They talked about the East in general and its troubled history. The narrator remarks that his father was working as a critic to the Pakistani forces that assigned to suppress the rebellious East of Pakistan. Despite the fact that his father has no will to apologize about his past, the narrator sensed "a note of regret in his voice" (2014, p. 198). Speaking out the injustice and the suffering of the indigenous people was the only way to escape the guilt. The narrator continues:

My father was talking as if talking were necessary, and perhaps Zafar had understood this.... Under Operation Searchlight, my father continued, every Hindu and every potential opposition element in Dhaka was to be killed. Journalists and lawyers were systematically hunted down. Doctors and engineers were killed, academics and other professionals.... Many others also did (2014, p. 198).

The narrator's father explained that the war was immoral. Although he was Pakistani, but he refused the military suppression that causes many painful memories to the native people. His refusal causes him some troubles and he lost some connections. The narrator's mother also believes in the injustice of the war. She comments on the difficulties that they faced due to their position from war: "I'm afraid to say we were shunned by Pakistanis in Princeton and New York. We received threatening letters ... But, she continued, your father knew he had to speak out" (Rahman, 2014, p. 199). In articulating these agonies and sufferings, he exposes himself for the rejection mainly from the community which he belongs to. He was even rejected by the Pakistani citizens who lived in Britain. This case is considered as bringing memories of violence to the new dwelling place. Rothberg says that "immigrants bring new memories – including memories of violence – to their new homes" (Rothberg, 2022, p. 1321). Rothberg believes that the "articulations of the lived multidirectionality experienced by migrant communities – the very communities frequently tarred as uninterested in the Holocaust and even as fundamentally anti-Semitic" (2022, p. 1326). The narrator continues the narration about the tragical effects of the war.

In 1971, West Pakistan sought to suppress what it saw as rebellion in the East. My father and mother, then recently arrived in the U.S., opposed the militarism of the West Pakistani junta and made their feelings known to fellow Pakistanis in Princeton and farther afield... I must say, to recall those days caused visible discomfort.... The war of 1971 and the holocaust of West Pakistan's conduct in East Pakistan, his criticism of his homeland, the ostracism and then my parents' disengagement (Rahman, 2014, pp. 196-197)

The author seriously deals with the question of war that resulted in declaring Bangladesh as an independent country from Pakistan. This result comes with blood and

painful events that cause painful memories on both sides. The author uses the narrator's voice to deliver the idea that this war is similar to Holocaust. Therefore, it is a serious need to be highlighted and discussed in the studies of trauma as similar as the Holocaust. Irene Visser clarifies this point further by postulating that the decolonizing trauma involves expanding the area of studies. The expansion needs to be taken place in the colonial cases where the notions of 'complicity, agency, and guilt' can be tackled after being neglected by the old model of the trauma theory. These areas are still 'unexplored' and "the postcolonial literature often dramatizes conflicted traumatic memories of individual and collective complicity with hegemonic systems of oppression" (Visser, 2015, p. 9-10). Accordingly, multidirectional memory works as "a productive tool to bring to the fore and understand other histories of suffering which have not been so central to trauma and memory studies" (Zapata, 2015, p. 532). In this case, the trauma studies are decolonized to encompass all the painful moments in the history that were neglected due to the concentration of the old model on the Westerners' trauma only, namely the Holocaust.

Zafar is fully aware about this fact because he was really "a mixture of hurt and yearning and aggression" (Iftakhar, 2016, p. 101). He was too interested exposing facts about the bloody history of Bangladesh. What is more is that Zafar, himself is the product of that bloody history. It has been delivered indirectly that his biological father is the Pakistani soldier that raped his biological mother who was the young sister of the man who raised him as his son London. For that reason, Zafar feels detached from them. Zafar says, "the people whom I called my mother and my father were not my biological parent" (Rahman, 2014, p. 41). The time that he had spent with them, caused a sense of 'emotional gulf' between Zafar and them. He confesses that "when I consider the various ways I am separated from my parents, the ways they seem alien to me and I to them, I fear that others might consider the same and that they, too, will conclude that I am an unfeasible human being ... but a deeper anxiety about who I am" (2014, p. 432).

The shadow of Liberation War in Bangladesh in 1971 is highlighted strongly in this novel. It has been reported that during this war, the Pakistani soldiers as well as the supporting militias had raped about four hundred thousand women in Bangladesh in organized operations of "genocidal rape" (Iftakhar, 2016, p. 101). Likewise, the narrator also exposes this hidden fact about Zafar's historical background throughout reading

Zafar's notebook and diaries. It was really a shocking fact that he was the product of a rape. Besides, his biological mother is still living in Sylhet and Zafar visited her once only. All of these hideous ironies in Zafar's past life caused him to be swaying between unbelonging and exile. He is remarkably conscious of being belonging to nowhere (Thakur, 2021, p. 110). Thus, he eagerly fights to free himself from the old chains of history. Zafar is traumatized by his painful past and his over thinking about his condition led him to mental collapse. In consequence, the narrator refers to Zafar's condition as being "a human being fleeing ghosts while chasing shadows" (Rahman, 2014, p. 16). It is not the trauma of the white man, but it is the trauma of one of the immigrants who are lost in the mid of hurricanes of the modern life.

Rahman also exposes the hidden history and clarifies the American dirty politics in the Liberation War in Bangladesh. When the Pakistani army began a demoralizing attack against the rebellious Bengalis, Nixon as well as Kissinger were supporting the Pakistani army. It was "a systematic genocide" acted by the Pakistani army to clean the mutinous people of Bangladesh (Iftakhar, 2016, p. 101). It is worthy to be noted that "for Bangladesh with three million dead, hundreds of thousands of women raped and an entire generation of professionals, its engineers. Its doctors, its thinkers and doers exterminated, that poor country was hobbling on its infant feet" (Rahman, 2014, p. 199). The novel stresses this bloody historical fact. Therefore, it is no wonder if Zafar became a rapist himself due to the voracious violence of his real father. Undeniably, it is shown in the son's deeds, history repeats itself (Keeble & Annesley, 2021, p. 88). The question of time passing and history is similar to Soueif's hypothesis that history repeat itself and it is fair to wait time to run its course.

What had been happened in this war in Bangladesh may create the ghost inside the collective conscious of the Bengali people in general. Besides, the whips of injustice and agony in this war will never be forgotten, women in particular. What adds more calamity to this war is that the Pakistani army acted savagely two days before the ending of the war. The author exposes this fact for the public in a manner of delivering a voice, a voice of agony of those people who were victims in a similar way to those of the Holocaust. The author says that "when Pakistan had no hope of victory, the army carried out one last operation in Dhaka, rooting out as many intellectuals as they could and killing them" (Rahman, 2014, p. 199). That operation was indented to demoralize and

destroy the Bengali community in attempt to erase it culturally and ethically. It was really genocide. Thus, the effect still runs deep in the Bengali community to the extent that “sixty percent of our children are born significantly stunted, physically stunted! Male illiteracy is at forty-one percent, female at seventy percent. Virtually no health care for the poor” (Rahman, 2014, pp. 316-317). These are the traumatic experiences of the minority people who were neglected. The new model of trauma highlights such cases and encompassing them in the domain of search. On the part of remembering, it is a painful experience because it involves the pull of the past that is colored with dehumanizing experiences which disturb the shaping of identity of the traumatized subjects. Moreover, the recovering from these remembered moments is not impossible. Rothberg focuses on “social actors bring multiple traumatic pasts into a heterogeneous and changing post-WWII present” (Rothberg, 2009, p. 4).

In the new era of metafiction, awareness is registered in an attempt to represent or memorialize trauma. The metafiction in this novel is extending the pessimistic sense and questioning the potentials. The articulation of pessimism comes from the shared vision of violence that is spread all over the world in the contemporary time. In effect, the novel “moves away from ‘event-based’ narratives .... As a result, the events they describe are decentred in terms that allow their narratives to focus on the slow violence of world-systems” (Keeble & Annesley, 2021, p. 82). The outcome of this endeavour is a narrative that gives a clear image on the nuanced world. This type of narrative urges some new insights to be emerged and the layers of understanding are peeled.

The author is examining the power of narrative through exposing these complexities in a manner by which the identity of the traumatized person can be shaped and developed. In fact, the author managed to bring the different phases of truth to be articulated (Stavris, 2015, p. 16). Huddersfield suggests that this novel is questioning the limitations of knowledge. Indeed, the question of knowledge and possessing knowledge is undermining the narrative of this novel. Huddersfield assimilates this novel to a map that cannot give a full detailed image due to limitation of space (2015, p. 23). Some layers of the novel are still unfathomed. This is due to the many varied digressions and the incorporation of sayings from different philosophical personals.

Zafar highlights the necessity of disclosing the facts about the history of Bangladesh. The most annoying thing is that Zafar who bears the burdens of delivering such agonies and suffering of Bangladesh to the West. He wonders why he has such a mission. “What the world needs now is answers to all its questions about Bangladeshi history” (Rahman, 2014, p. 281). He becomes the emblem of that agony due to his troubled history and origin. At the same time, he is agitated because the world turns a blind eye to what had happened in his native land. In the West, the truth is that the Holocaust occupied the main front pages of every single study. Beatriz P. Zapata argues that the Holocaust, works like ‘a screen memory’ in which it is concealing other traumatic histories (Zapata, 2015, p. 530).

Therefore, the narrator presses on Zafar to write his story, but Zafar was unwilling to do that. Zafar believes that there are more important stories to be told to the world than his. Consequently, the narrator takes this role on Zafar’s behalf (Stavris, 2015, p. 25). Zafar justifies his decision in saying that “it’s very important that people learn about that ... Never mind the financial crisis, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, never mind global warming and the imminent peak oil crisis. Did I miss anything?” (Rahman, 2014, p. 281). Alongside of the bloody history of Bangladesh, there are different moments of injustice all over the world. Hence, Rothberg’s concept of the multidirectional memory which is the main bone for decolonizing the trauma studies is workable. The multidirectional memory entails the combination of “two or more disturbing memories that work dialogically to bring together different histories of suffering” (Zapata, 2015, p. 529). Zafar concentrates on telling not writing and he believes whole heartily that there are other bloody histories that need to be delivered too. He explains that writing the agonies of any misery is not an easy mission.

Know whether writing a memoir is cathartic. What about all those memoirs you don’t get to read because they don’t get finished? Started with all the hope in the world but abandoned halfway through because the author realized that writing it was dragging him down or because writing it killed him or just drove him insane. Spare a thought for those half-finished memoirs lying in drawers, like bloody daggers, memoirs that, far from delivering catharsis and closure, opened up old wounds (Rahman, 2014, p. 280)

Talking about traumatic experience is comforting and therapeutic. Speaking is relieving. The narrator describes Zafar when he talked about his troublesome experience in saying that “he did not seem the least bit embarrassed to talk about it, and at the time I was rather flattered that he felt comfortable enough with me to discuss the matter”

(Rahman, 2014, p. 400). Here, the narrator asks a question then he tries to postulate an answer for it. He asks “why does a man feel he must speak?” (Rahman, 2014, p. 489). Then, he reaches the conclusion that giving voice to hidden traumatizing memories is therapeutic. Definitely true, speaking out the traumatic experience is therapeutic. Then, the narrator proclaims that “I was too young to understand the redemption that comes from giving voice to what the brain seeks to hide from oneself” (2014, p. 305). This is “why we refer to horrors as unspeakable... But in the end he himself did speak” (2014, p. 490).

Speaking out the painful moment of memory is the main trait of the decolonizing trauma theory. Speaking-ability is one of the bases that decolonizing trauma theory based on. In the case of Zafar, he was able to speak. Speaking was the main reason that brought him to meet his old friend. Without the willing and the intention of speaking, Zafar would never come and may kept himself silent like Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness* when the colonial guilt eat him from within and died with hidden secrets and unknown reasons whispering only one word ‘horror’. It is obvious from the starting point of the Zafar’s story that he is coming after a long absence to tell something happened to him, something traumatic and he fights hard to articulate it (Green, 2014). When Zafar appeared on the door of the narrator at the beginning of the novel, he came to tell something of importance. He wants to articulate what he thinks it should be articulated and not to be kept hidden. Zafar says: “I wanted to tell you something, I thought I would be explicit, make it clear what I did, leave no room to hide. But now I know I can’t. I came this far ... I don’t know how to speak the unspeakable” (Rahman, 2014, p. 491). Huddersfield believes that Zafar’s anxieties about his place in this world as being a ‘no-entity’ has led him to the moment of the ‘unspeakable’ especially that what has been happened between him and Emily in Kabul (Stavris, 2015, p. 26). “But in the end he himself did speak” (Rahman, 2014, p. 490). The narrator also wonders “why it was that Zafar was talking, even about the circumstances of that last day in Kabul and the events of the final hours, in particular the confrontation with Emily ... the root of any explanation must be that very human urge to speak and tell, the impulse that brings the religious to the confessional box and others to the therapist’s couch” (2014, p. 490). Here, it is a clear touch of the decolonizing trauma theory which stresses on the capability of speaking out the traumatic event.



Emily represents the dark side of the British Empire that Zafar has to deal with and live. When he failed to grasp the main touches of her he was enforced to go to psychiatric hospital. Zafar confesses this fact to the narrator directly; “I was once the patient of a psychiatric hospital” (Rahman, 2014, p. 23). The doctor at the hospital told Zafar that “You’re here because of Emily” (Rahman, 2014, p. 395). Zafar, from the first conversation with the narrator after the long absence, declares that he is in this condition because of Emily. It was she who drives Zafar to the psychiatric hospital where she has never visited him once (Green, 2014). Villier, the doctor who treated Zafar at the psychiatric hospital, explains the fact that a human being can be traumatized by different factors. Villier says that “the brain can be traumatized by stressful events ... It can be wounded by circumstances. Soldiers are the obvious example. But war is not the only venue for that kind of stress. There are other battlefields” (Rahman, 2014, p. 394). Zafar’s suffering is niggling due to his sense of lost in the world that is full with injustices and wrong deeds. What adds more pressure on his mind was Emily. She instead of providing shelter, she cemented Zafar’s state of exile and homelessness.

Moreover, there is no evidence in the text that proves that Emily has any feeling at any depth towards Zafar. She is presented “as almost a non-entity. Her main two emotional states seem to be envy and annoyance.... When they arrange to meet, she often shows up hours late” (Green, 2014). The question that presses the thinking repeatedly here is that why Zafar was spellbound with her? The answer may be found in his eagerness and fond with her name; “before he met Emily, he had fallen in love with her name” (Rahman, 2014, p. 156). He could not defend against her pull, although she is not affectionate as he wishes (Green, 2014). The scheme that Zafar uses to escape his misshaped past and to gain recognition is through having a steady relationship with Emily Hampton-Wyvern. Through his relation with Emily, he was planning to overcome his painful search for identity and free himself from the sense of homelessness.

The Hampton-Wyverns is an old aristocracy British family who has a socio-political influence in Britain. Although Zafar loves Emily from the old days at Oxford, but he wishes that he can be part of her family to feel the sense of belonging to the British society. Therefore, when he knew that Emily was pregnant, he was eager to have a child that may change his life. Zafar thinks that it is better if the child can be christened and hold the Hampton-Wyvern’s name instead of his to ensure that the child will not bear

the painful past of him. Zafar refers to the painful past as the ‘bondage’ that may be reflected by his family’s name. He clarifies this point to the narrator in saying that “the truth was that names meant something to me and her name meant everything.... Giving my child her family name was an act of *cleansing* to me” (Rahman, 2014, p. 414; *italics in the Original*). Zafar uses a much sounded religious term ‘cleansing’ to denote that his strong wish to erase his painful past. This is “indeed reveals the desperation with which he looks to make himself at home in England – psychologically, emotionally, and experientially” (Thakur, 2021, pp. 110 - 111).

However, class distinction is the main barrier to Zafar’s repetitive failure to become British. Zafar says that “race ... was never so much a source of anxiety as class” (Rahman, 2014, p. 343). In capitalist venue, finance is the area where class barrier is unrelated (Alcalá, 2018, p. 256-7). The British social hierarchy is relying heavily on class. It is burdensome and barrier too. Thus, oppositions promoted by finance can be employed. Zafar projects his concern about class in the British society. He defines the class as “the eyes with which you see the world” (Rahman, 2014, p. 195). One of Zafar’s painful memories due to class discrimination and causes him a social embarrassment is when Zafar’s peasant-like parents visited him once at Oxford (Rabbani, 2015). Zafar seeks abstraction that drives him beyond the bitterness of class and mathematics was the venue that can provide that choice. He always confesses this fact that mathematics provides him that comfortable cushion where there is no weight for class or color of eyes or who are relatives and friends (Alcalá, 2018, p. 257).

What drives Emily is still an ambiguous matter. She can be assimilated to Iago, the unmotivated villain in Shakespearean tragedy *Othello*. Shortly after being releasing from the hospital, he was overjoyed to know about her pregnancy and he dreams of having good familial time. Zafar says “I loved the baby before it was born” (Rahman, 2014, p. 416). The reason can be driven from his confession that “I have always wanted children ... Maybe I wanted a child in order to repair my own childhood; maybe the desire was to fix something in me” (Rahman, 2014, p. 411). But this plan does not work successfully because of Emily who decided to abort the child. Zafar describes the gloomy day of abortion “as if the sun that day fell in patches” (Rahman, 2014, p. 418). In fact, the abortion is another painful memory that affected Zafar’s mind terribly. He speculates the possibility of speaking out the agonies that are thunder inside him. The

effects on Zafar's mind were heavily painful. He states that "I spent six months grieving for a loss ... How can an explanation of your actions touch anything ... touch the grief, touch the consequences of ... the consequences?" (2014, p. 423). On the part of the narrator, he was very sympathetic with Zafar's loss. "I thought of all the pain Zafar had felt, the pain at the loss of a child ... He had invested so much in the idea of the infant ... the child had mattered to him for reasons that gathered from every corner of his identity" (2014, p. 423).

Nonetheless, Emily with short and few words told Zafar that she decided to abort the pregnancy after fueling the fragile Zafar with hope and beautiful dreams. She broke him into pieces where mending is a matter of impossibility. What makes the matter worse is that when Emily decided by her own will to abort the child she did not take his opinion at least. Emily cut Zafar's dream short when she decided to abort it. Strangely, he found out that the baby was not his in the first place (Green, 2014). Zafar has a sharp memory by which he discovered that Emily's pregnancy started after he went into the psychiatric hospital. Thus, he was not the father of that child. He states that "I understood – not learned, because she never told me – that the child could not have been mine" (2014, p. 479). This was the second shocking moment for him in which he realizes that the baby cannot be his.

One more shock from Emily comes after her proposal to Zafar and they agreed to meet in Dubai, then they leave together to London. But the most disappointing moment for Zafar comes true when she let him waiting for a very long time at the agreed time and location to get married (Thakur, 2021, p. 111). The sudden proposal of marriage by Emily and her absent at the day of wedding in Dubai adds more emotional upheaval to his condition. Time passes without her arrival. Thus, he went strolling in the streets of Dubai aimlessly. There, he strongly felt the sense of exile and homelessness in which he is belonging to nowhere (Thakur, 2021, p. 116). Del Valle Alcalá considers Zafar's marriage to Emily as a "tortured marriage" in which the details are unveiled later in the novel. Moreover, even the sexual relationship was a means to reach mental comprehension and taking control over her being (Alcalá, 2018, p. 254). The difference in class and roots makes difference in perceiving the things around. The question of homelessness, for example, is perceived differently by the narrator and Zafar. The first looks at it is out of goodness while Zafar looks at it is out of fear. Zafar says that "I could

never shake off the certain belief that I was only one small misstep away from the same destitution” (Rahman, 2014, p. 341). The narrator is blinded because of his privileged class while Zafar’s root gives him a fearful image. He fears that his success can be taken away in any minute (Green, 2014).

Emily represents everything that is characterized with English traits. She is supposed to a shelter for Zafar in his quest for identity. One of the points that have been disclosed by the narrator about Zafar and which were hidden in his notebook is the disturbing moment in Kabul where he met Emily for the last time apparently. This meeting was after some dramatic but serious events like bombing the café where was supposed to meet the son of the American senator Crane Forrester. When Zafar planned to meet Crane on a café, Emily sent a message and asked him to wait her for few minutes. She did not come, of course. So, due to his waiting for Emily, Zafar was saved from that bomb and Crane Forrester was killed (Alcalá, 2018, p. 261). Zafar suspected that Emily was informed about this bomb and she tried to delay him to save him. Hence, Zafar was fueled with anger towards her. He questions Emily’s intention whether she knew about the explosion and wanted to prevent him from going there or was it just a coincidence? Or is out of her reoccurring selfishness and neglectful treatment since she makes him always in a state of waiting her? Therefore, he decided to confront her. The nature of confronting is not stated clearly in the novel, but it hints for something violent. The act of rape is likely happened.

Emily delayed Zafar from his meeting with Crane who was working with a private company for a hideous purpose. This delay is purposeful this time because she saved him from the explosion that took place in the café. This deed comes with the colors of conspiracy and hidden intelligence. Zafar feels furious and resentment toward Emily who did not show up this time again. In fact, he spent much time waiting her throughout their relationship. The matter of waiting makes him uncomfortable and this leads to anger. Zafar contemplates that “I thought of all the waiting I had done and felt something rising in me” (Rahman, 2014, p. 471). Waiting Emily again causing uncomfortable situation to Zafar. Zafar says that “I had waited for Emily so many times, waited for her to show up, waited for an explanation of why she was late, waited and waited.... but I think now that what I had been waiting for was for Emily to change” (Rahman, 2014, p. 456). It can be argued that Zafar’s waiting for Emily to be changed is similar to that case

of the colonized who always in waiting for the colonizer to be changed. After spending an hour waiting for Emily who did not come, Zafar went to the café where he witnessed that a huge explosion took place in the café and Crane was killed. Astonishing by the tragic scene, the thoughts flow in his mind without restrains. Zafar narrates to his friend the situation at the site of explosion which was similar to hell that burn who ever come across.

First came the sound. People crying, not women but men, a wailing, the sound of cries for God, Hai-Allah, groans .... If Crane was in that café, there was no way he could have survived. ... We orient ourselves by metaphor, like that ghostly building left standing after Hiroshima, all of eternity in a grain of sand. This is how we avoid talking about blood and bones, and the shredded ends of limbs, and the head with open eyes, and crying men, grown men, my father's age, men with beards, lifting wreckage to find the dead. ... carnage and reflected on man's inhumanity to man and all the rest of it (Rahman, 2014, pp. 472-473).

The scene of explosion is assimilated to catastrophe of Hiroshima where man was capable of demolishing an entire city in a minute. For highlighting the effect and depicting the scene vividly, Zafar uses the catastrophe of Hiroshima as an equivalent. The question that is rendering in Zafar's mind and the postcolonial critics is – why the carnages in the East are not as imperative as those in the West? The answer may lay in the nature of Emily character. In fact, Emily stands for what the West is, England in particular, where he never feels quite welcomed. Her job in Afghanistan was labeled with rehabilitation and social stability, but in fact, as Zafar doubt, she is another chapter of the imperial West.

However, with all of this hints and suggestions that run deep within the narrative, the reader still has limited view of Emily's way of thinking because her character is shaped totally by Zafar's narrative (Green, 2014). Zafar felt a severe state of anxiety and his mind was full with strange ideas for the first time. This state is caused by the explosion that he has witnessed at that café where many native people, not only Crane, have lost their lives. But the attention was directed to Crane as if he was the only person that deserves life because he was Westerner, while the other native people were in the corner of neglecting. This is the clear touch where the calamity of the native people is not discussed and neglected while the Westerner's tragedy is exaggerated. The decolonizing trauma approach is highlighting the tragic life of other people who are out the circle of the West. Zafar and the poor native people in south Asia is a fertile land for decolonizing trauma studies. Zafar decided to confront Emily and the West hegemony after the explosion. Thus, he went to her camp and waited her in her room.

Inside Emily's room,... I became the instrument of my fury. I had never felt such rage as I did then, such consuming vicious anger, and of course I was keyed up: I'd just witnessed a bomb site. ... my body seemed entirely given over to imminent action, every nerve in the service of instincts, every sinew twitching with readiness. Do you know what a scientist would have called my state? Arousal (Rahman, 2014, p. 479).

Zafar was in a state of shock after the bombing of the café Europe in Kabul. This state of shocking and the witnessing of the carnage led Zafar to this state of 'arousal'. Zafar links his arousal to the carnage he has witnessed at the Crane's murder scene. This scene arouses the instinct of violence in him. Thus, the defending shield of his sanity is no longer defensible. The climax of the novel comes with the shocking news that Zafar, like his biological father, is rapist. He was the product of a similar violence back in history where his biological father was a Pakistani soldier who raped his mother in the liberation war of Bangladesh in 1971. The stream of narration comes one more time to shed light on the history of Bangladesh and the consequences of those bloody deeds. Bring Zafar back to that moment in history shows how a man can be trapped in his tormented past, even if he tries to justify his action or shield himself from confronting its reality (Keeble & Annesley, 2021, p. 88). On the general scale of the effectiveness, Zafar is sensitive to the miserable state in which Afghanistan was in. And the most annoying thing is that he could do nothing (Mustaf, 2020, p. 1052).

All of the indicators in Zafar's narration refer to his rape of Emily. This brutal act comes at the final stages of his narrative, but it was the stimuli of the narration from the first place. Confronted by the event and the truth, Zafar comes under the pressure and the effect of violence that he had committed (Alcalá, 2018, p. 261). For this reason his will to tell is suddenly cut short and deflected. He moves away from the reality of this experience: "I have said enough. ... I don't know how to speak the unspeakable" (Rahman, 2014, p. 491). Hannah Harris Green argues that Zafar raped Emily in the earlier period when they were in Afghanistan in 2002, but the novel starts from 2008. She suggests that Zafar's disappearance all that long time from 2002 till 2008 was because of his crime. Besides, in despite the fact that he has been affected by his crime, there is still no sign of repentance in his narration. Zafar committed this very act of raping in a moment where he was emotionally and physically unbalanced (Green, 2014). Emily at the very act was terrified and Zafar controls her totally. He confesses this fact in saying that "she could not move, as if her mind no longer possessed her. And in that fact alone, I felt an engulfing sense of control. She was terrified" (Rahman, 2014, p.

491). Here, Zafar, for some unexplained reasons, did not state clearly that he committed that act of raping and the narrator did not press him and assured him that he is not obliged to say what he does not want to say. This is what surrounded the act of raping from Zafar's point of view. However, Green wonders that "if Zafar, not Emily, will recover from Zafar's crime" (Green, 2014).

Nevertheless, Zafar justifies the rape of Emily according to his condition. What helps this sort of justification is the depiction of Emily's character as cold person who treated Zafar carelessly as if he was her pet (Iftakhar, 2016, p. 102). Among other attractive points like her surname and privilege, Zafar is charmed with her sexually. He confesses that "the sex was extraordinary. ... Sex was the realm in which I could take control of her being" (Rahman, 2014, p. 346). Zafar's act of rape to Emily is a reincarnation of the mass Pakistani soldiers' rape to the Bengalis women in 1971. What turned him as a masochist is his sense of homelessness and exile. These two factors arouse the barbarity that is rooted deeply in his character due to his origin. The genetics is playing the main role of shaping his character. Kendler supports this opinion and he believes that the genes strongly affect the social behavior of the character especially at the moment of exposure to stressful event that may risk to collapsing in a severe illness (Iftakhar, 2016, p. 102).

In the character of Zafar, the author presents all of traits of the traumatized person and he moves freely from London to Kabul and from New York to Islamabad. These movements create different encounters with the financial-minds people and expose some shadowy military officials in addition to Emily, of course. What is more is that the unnamed narrator is similar to Zafar in being jobless and separated from his wife. Although there is a difference in Zafar's case, the narrator attempts transliterate "Zafar's tragic, tortuous tale" (Preston, 2014). Golam Rabbani suggests that the novel provides the readers with unfinished story and urges them to fill the gaps by their own speculation according to the facts and plain history the novel contains. "It seems to lead the readers to comprehend the relationship between knowing and knowledge to motivate the readers to interpret the truth" (Rabbani, 2015).

It has been suggested that the novels with the open-ended structure are suitable for the function of articulating the growth and here Rahman's novel is a good example

(Huddersfield, 2015, p. 22). Near the end of the novel, the confusing state in which Zafar was placed comes as a result to the uncertain knowledge and his search for truth that may be hidden within the layers of the narrative. This is clear when he suspecting Emily and the nature of her job. Because the lack of knowledge and the lack of clear-cut answers, and fuelled him with anger and anxiety he raped Emily, although it was not stated clearly in the text which was full with ambiguous laps. But it is noticeable from the heavy words that Zafar has done the act of raping (Huddersfield, 2015, p. 26). This is what adds more pressure and calamity to Zafar's mind which is characterized with uncertainty and lack of knowledge. He searches for truth and facts. He was unbalanced man because he does not know what Emily's real job or she has to do in East.

James Wood argues that Rahman 'novelizes' the thesis of homelessness through using these two culturally and socially different characters namely the privileged unnamed narrator and Zafar. Late in the forties of their ages, they met again when the novel starts in 2008. In this meeting, they covered the incidents and events in the previous decades namely the eighties and the nineties (Wood, 2014). Throughout his narration, Zafar is denoting clearly to his displacement and homelessness especially after knowing that his biological father is a rapist. Woods believes that there are some clear hints of inserting some autobiographical moments in the Zafar's narration by the author. Moreover, the long conversations between the unnamed narrator who participated a little on his part and Zafar who takes the major part resemble "a single character's internal dialogue" (Wood, 2014).

Zafar went back home one more time. His arriving to the south of Asia for two purposes; the first is to work as a financial advisor for the Bangladeshi government and to investigate in some corruption cases there. The second purpose, which was aligned at the same period, was to be part of the UN reporting team (Atta-ul-Mstafa et al, 2020, p. 1053). Worked as anti-corruption lawyer in Bangladesh and then as a civil rights lawyer for AfDARI in Kabul, Zafar discovers many hidden issues that changed his way of thinking. He does no more trust the governmental works in these areas. What is the most important thing is that he comes to an unambiguous understanding of the American dark side of its efforts of rehabilitation and liberation in different countries like Afghanistan. He is not only criticizing the NGOs like AfDARI, but he also suspects the mission of some individuals like Emily and Crane (Thakur, 2021, p. 114). Too much similar to the



heroes in the postmodern novels like those of Thomas Pynchon, Zafar is swaying between religious corner and the secular one in this world where he trusts none (Thakur, 2021, p. 117). Here, Rahman is seems to initiate “a negotiation, an engagement that seeks to propagate a certain openness towards questions of faith, belief, and trust in the contemporary period” (Thakur, 2021, p. 118).

At that time, Zafar feels attracted for America. However, he realizes late that he is just an outsider for America; “I felt no tie to America at that moment, as I might have done, nothing in the way of being at home” (Rahman, 2014, p. 97). Moreover, he feels a difference when he comes to talk to a Westerner (Iftakhar, 2016, p. 102). The fact is that after the 9/11, the race discrimination comes to be obvious. The narrator mentions that before 9/11 “I was invisible unsexed. How is it that after 9/11 suddenly I was noticed—not just noticed, but attractive” (Rahman, 2014, p. 20). As a matter of fact, and in contrary to their claim, the current American policies smash up the world peace. The American view of Muslim shakes the global stability. In general, there are many sides and groups are trying to demonize the Muslim community. The critique is that the American policies do not depict the 9/11 attack as tragic only, but they exaggerate the effects to get the global solidarity. And it doing so, many changes come upon the geopolitical map in the world (Atta-ul-Mstafa et al, 2020, p. 1048).

The point of importance here is that the catastrophe of 11 September is tragic, but it should not conceal other tragic events in the lives of the minority people. In fact, the catastrophe of 9/11 is like the Holocaust in that both of them are de-centering other histories. Zapata argues that the Holocaust, works like ‘a screen memory’ with the intention of concealing other traumatic histories. The point of importance here is that the Holocaust or other atrocities like the catastrophe of 9/11 in the West should not conceal the public view from the other atrocities acted by the West in different areas especially the East. The catastrophe of 9/11 gives the legitimated excuse to attack other countries (Zapata, 2015, p. 530).

In a matter of fact, America had a long hand in Afghanistan before decades. The American administration had helped the local fighters to face the communist invasion in Afghanistan. They showed sympathy and concern about the future of Afghans. Thus, they supported the local fighters with weapons and bombs which were enough to defeat

the Russian forces. After that, they turn a blind eye about the miserable state of Afghanistan which was destructed totally. The miseries will occur again. Therefore, Zafar does not trust the Western positions about Afghanistan and this is what makes him facing Emily. The horrifying wreckages and the dreadful left burdens have put Afghanistan in a critical situation when the world ignored these miseries and pay no attention at all.

Consequently, Zafar refuses to see the most effectual global events like those of the 9/11 tragedy and the Financial Crisis calamity in 2008 as accidents that anyone can understand their nature and impact. This is a clear suggestion for the changing on the part of his perceiving the current events in the world. In other words, things are not supposed to be seen as they appeared. This changing comes from his belief in Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem. He rejects the idea that history is transparent cipher and it is capable of providing meanings. Zafar is no longer engrossed to find a firm fact and meaning to the global events (Thakur, 2021, p. 113) because "the truth is a mutable commodity" (Green, 2014).

Another vital point in this novel that is discussed and highlighted by James Wood is the possessing of knowledge. It comes to be the burden that makes the main character, Zafar, suffers and traumatized. The novel wears the garb of knowledge mainly as a burden that affects the main characters heavily. Therefore, the novel is bulky and runs for more than five hundred pages with many quotations and epigraphs to great philosophers and some poetic leading figures like Dante, John Donne, Freud, Edward Said and alike. This is due to Rahman's interest of possessing knowledge. Wood believes that "know much less than we think we do, that intellectual modesty in the face of mystery and complexity may be the surest wisdom" (Wood, 2014). Wood argues that even knowledge is worked as a metaphor, in some cases, to Zafar. It is a means to find home. Zafar acquired a lot of knowledge not to 'better himself' but to "lay ground for his feet to stand upon; in order, that is, to go home, somewhere, and take root" (Wood, 2014). Here, as James Wood believes, Zafar failed to achieve this mission. Thus, Zafar's elaborated narrative runs in different directions. He makes the issue of anger clear by attributing the stimuli at Oxford. College students speak ignorantly about various social aspects and try to inflate what they know. Mathematics, on the other side, refuses any

compliment and it gives no heed for class or social statures. Thus, Zafar loves mathematics (Wood, 2014).

The novel celebrates the possessing of knowledge, any type of knowledge. It has a central role in the post-industrial society where the uncertainty is the norm. “This articulation of crisis in the possession of knowledge amounts to a privatizing operation from which the relational aspects that characterize production today are forcibly (and sometimes traumatically) excluded” (Alcalá, 2018, p. 254). The knowledge eventually avoids a real confrontation with the narrative event which can be a crisis or a conflict or even some issues of politics. Zafar declares implicitly, through the narrator’s mediation, that he has a will to speak. He has the will to confess what is eventually going to be truncated or interrupted. Yet, he finds in this shortening and interruption the exculpatory evasiveness (Alcalá, 2018, p. 261).

One of the moments that affected the life of the modern man in general is the economic distress. What had been happened in Wall Street in 2008 causes a new type of trauma for the people in a similar way to those days of Willy Loman in *Death of a Salesman*. At a different moment of confession, Zafar narrates his miserable background in a job interview at Wall Street when the interviewer asked him if he had any fight in his previous life. Zafar answers that “I’ve come a long way, from a mud hut in the rainy season in a part of the world you only know as a basket case of misery. ... I’ve been kicked and spat at because of my race ... I’ve been beaten black and blue my whole short life” (Rahman, 2014, pp. 253-254).

Therefore, the most important point for Zafar’s stability is the subjective crisis that drives his sanity to the edge and causes him a mental breakdown. But these crises are sprung from universal agonies and suffering in which Zafar was a part of. Hence, he tests his personal coherence (Alcalá, 2018, p. 259). He contemplates that “my thoughts and sense-experience used to hop from one thing to another, as if the world was just coming at me with meaningless stimuli, one after another” (Rahman, 2014, p. 400). The mental crisis that Zafar suffers from is dismantling the ‘narrative self’ which is, according to his description, the most vital means that bridge the void between the thought and experience. In other words, it is the connective piece that relates the intellect

with the material world. “It is very telling that this disarticulation is finally exposed as dysfunctional and ungovernable” (Alcalá, 2018, p. 259).

Zafar’s most obvious technique in crisis is avoidance or sublimation; expect the last situation with Emily when the confrontation comes to be a crucial need. The narrative self is the main stimulus that is put on hold when the anxiety and pressure of the personal marital crisis comes to surface. Zafar’s narrative commitment is similar to a special temporal mode. Therefore, his narrative voice is more echoed than the narrator's amore attached to the past. Resolutely, the narrator urges him to write a novel. Zafar refuses this idea totally because he believes that the novel mode will add restrictiveness that he abhors most. Zafar justifies this issue further in saying that “putting things on paper makes things real, hardens them, makes them unchangeable, even before things have made sense” (Rahman, 2014, p. 292). In fact, the narrator and Zafar “are constantly pulled by the violent turmoil of a living present that cannot exorcise its political contents” (Alcalá, 2018, p. 260).

There are different attractive sides that are trying to pull Zafar to them. Zafar becomes complicated, willingly or not, in the spying game acted by these different parties mainly his old lover Emily, Crane, Mushtaq and Suleiman. This game has of course a deadly outcome namely the Crane’s murder by an IED in one of the café in Kabul. Zafar, therefore, was agitated and tried his best to comprehend what happened, but his endeavors went in vain. All the lines of the game cut short before reaching a full conclusion. Incompleteness and short of knowledge make him perplexed. As a reaction to this anonymity and out of personal violence, he rapes Emily twice to feel some sort of control (Keeble & Annesley, 2021, pp. 87-88).

Zafar says that “our choices are made, our will flexed, in the teeth of events that overwhelm and devour us” (Rahman, 2014, p. 119). Even if the events were retrospectively presented, the future is attached though it is unknowable (Alcalá, 2018, p. 255). In fact, forced immigration and the sense of homelessness are very effectual on the part of Zafar’s personality. It runs deep to the bases of the Zafar’s character. Accordingly, anxiety was the main trait that is clouded his life. The narrator characterizes Zafar’s personality when he describes him as being a person who belongs to nowhere. This is due to his historical roots and class background in the age of

globalization (Stavris, 2015, p. 24). Zafar is an international outcast and “a social nonentity” (Rahman, 2014, p. 134). His life story is narrated by different methods like the memos, notebooks, some personal remarks by the narrator himself, and mainly through the recorded conversation between him and the narrator. This novel stands for the man desire to tell his story to the world within the limited space of human understanding and knowledge (Stavris, 2015, p. 24).

In a conversation with Rahman interviewed by Mayukh Mahtab, Rahman answered the question about the relation between the history of Bangladesh and writing this novel by saying that “Bangladesh has been struggling to talk in a civil manner about 1971” (Mahtab, 2014). This is the most important aspect of discussion in the sense that the decolonizing trauma studies are attempting to give articulation to the history of minority that was neglected. This comes along with the responsibility of the intellectuals that Edward Said stresses and highlighted as the most vital part of the intellectual. Said believes that the intellectual’s responsibility is refining then articulating the dilemmas which facing the community like the imprisonment, mass deportation and forced immigration (Preston, 2014).

To conclude, the novel is packed with unforgettable moments where sadness, shame, and violence colored most of Zafar’s mind. These remembered moments are fiercer and more effectual than the original ones. Here, the narrative method relies heavily on recalling these various moments, not on the personal level only, but on the national level as well. Retrospect is the main route of the narrative in the sense that most of the chapters are based on the recalled moments that are retold by Zafar to the unnamed narrator. Besides, Zafar is not only retelling, but he also analyzes and mediates these moments. Therefore, the narration is governed by what comes first to Zafar’s memory, definitely the most powerful and appalling ones. By remembering and analyzing, Zafar tries to find meaning in these moments. Telling and thinking over these moments were mixed here. The work of memory, the discussion over social issues, and the ability of speaking out the horror are the main features of this novel. Therefore, the decolonizing trauma theory suits the description of this novel.

## CONCLUSION

In this study, the use of the decolonizing trauma theory and its application is the main point of discussion through three postcolonial novels: Soueif's *The Map of Love*, Monica Ali's *The Brick Lane*, and Zia Haider Rahman's novel *In the Light of What We Know*. The first one is dealing with the problems in the Middle East, especially in Africa after the end of the British colonialism in Sudan and Egypt. The move, in the last two novels, is the same in which the attention is directed to Asia and further East. The second novel exposes the hidden facts about the problems of gender, social discrimination, class and race which colors most of its chapters, especially those which were discussing the prejudice and torture of women in Bangladesh. But there are also many moments where the atrocities acted by the Imperial West exposed and delivered like the famine in 1943. The third novel discloses the bloody history of Bangladesh with special concentration on the Liberation war in 1971 when Bangladesh gained independence. The touches of politics and conspiracy were never absent from the scenes.

These three novelists share the same sense of responsibility to expose the traumatizing memory. It is not only on the individual level, but on the national one too. Each one of these novelists tries sincerely to turn the pages of history of his/her country where the traumatizing moments are hidden in the forgotten corner. Although the traumatizing moments are different from one country to another (like the first two novels) or from one writer to another about the same country (like the last two novels), but the goal still the same. These novels expose the inner social factors of the traumatized persons in Africa or Asia. Although the second and the third novels about Bangladesh, but each one deals with it from a different view. the second novel deals with class, race and social discrimination, especially on the part of the immigrants in London, whereas the third novel exposes the facts about the historical struggle between Pakistan and Bangladesh and relates it to the contemporary fight in Afghanistan.

As a matter of fact, these three novels deal openly and directly with the question of colonialisation and the atrocities acted by the colonial forces in Africa or in Asia. Strangely, these atrocities were out of flavor in the old model of trauma theory. They were not included in the discussion which was focusing mainly on the Western tragic events. For this reason, the application of decolonizing trauma theory which calls for

expansion and encompassing all the moments of pain and agony of the native people with their systems of belief and rituals outside the circle of Europe. Thus, Rothberg's theory of the decolonizing trauma theory suits accurately the investigation and examining the traumatizing moments in these novels. In general, the novelists' endeavors are aiming at delivering the voices of agony and pain of those poor native people to the world.

In Ahdaf Soueif's *The Map of Love*, the struggle between the East and the West colors the flowing of the narration. Soueif never missed any occasion to link the shared traumatizing past to the ongoing critical situation in the Middle East. This novel contains many painful moments in history that are rooted firmly in the memory of the native people who were colonized. These painful memories are mixed brilliantly with different strands of the narrative. In fact, trauma here is spoken and expressed through mourning and grief over the miseries of Sudanese and Egyptian native people that shaped their identities. In this case, the trauma studies are decolonized to encompass all the painful moments in the history that were neglected due to the concentration of the old model on the Westerners' trauma only, namely the Holocaust. The traumatizing memories are many in this novel, but the most important incidents are the atrocities of Omdurman war in Sudan and the Denshwai incident in Egypt. Ahdaf Soueif has a deep sense of responsibility to deliver the agonies and the traumatizing memories to the world. Her narration covers a wide range of the painful past of Africa. For example, the Palestinian struggle for independence is running behind the scene and emerges whenever a possible moment of comparison is available. Soueif cleverly combines these incidents in her novel in which the heroine, Anna, is related to the first two, while the narrator – Amal – is related to them all. In truth, many people were killed and injured in Egypt, and not only in Sudan, but no one sheds light on these incidents. These incidents are the shared memory and they are important to the history of Egypt in terms of affecting the lives of people in the present time.

Similarly, Monica Ali exceeded the geographical limits to encompass in her narration of the other's hidden agonies in the third world. In her best novel, *The Brick Lane*, the light of discussion is directed to further East where the different moments of pain and agony are endured by the native people there. It is not the pain of the white people's prejudice, rather it is the pain of the Bengali women who suppressed and

tortured according to the values and tradition of the Bangladeshi social norms. Not only the violence against women, the writer presents different colors of trauma in this novel like the sense of lost, class, and the social discrimination. Since the decolonizing trauma approach involves expansion to include all the moments of suffering all over the world, the novel gives a survey about the horrible and dreadful circumstances that the people endure in different places of the modern world.

The same sense of responsibility is coloring Monica Ali's narration. Here, different indications are given to depict the lives of those deprived people in different location of this world. It is through the character of Karim, the writer has delivered these agonies to the world. Karim explains the suffering of other people outside Britain and how the world is going on there. He said "Do you know about our brothers in Egypt? ... the oppression, the jailings, the cowardly American-loving government" (Ali, 2003). Whenever he comes to visit Nazneen, he always talks and exposes the ugly face of the modern world. He is the character that delivers the author's voice through the narration. Karim explains to her one more crime against humanity; it was "about the orphan children in refugee camps in Gaza. He was moved and Nazneen watched ... his eyes became watery" (Ali, 2003). In the same way, he concludes the list of agonies in the world with mentioning that "there is one crime against humanity in this last decade of the millennium that exceeds all others in magnitude, cruelty, and portent. It is the US forced sanctions against the twenty million people of Iraq" (Ali, 2003).

The novelists are exposing the hidden traumatizing moment throughout their narrations. Hence, Soueif rejects the highlighting of Holocaust as the only prime catastrophe while the other miseries are neglected and out of the sun shine. The Holocaust is de-centering other histories. Zapata argues that the Holocaust, works as 'a screen memory' by which it conceals other traumatic histories. The point of importance here is that the Holocaust or other atrocities in the West should not conceal the public view from the atrocities acted by the Britain in the Middle East. As far as the Great Britain is concerned, Dan Stone and many other critics believe that the focus in the recent years on the Holocaust in the British community is purposeful. It works as a screen memory to hide the ugly face of the British imperial atrocities in the past (Zapata, 2015). The British imperial past in the Middle East should be exposed. For example the Omdurman War which is one of the most painful memories in Africa. It took place in



Sudan and it was caused by the Britain Empire. It is the wound that cannot be healed. Humanity was lost and no traces to be found then. Indeed, it was an absurd war and Sir Charles, Anna's father-in-law, affirms this fact by confessing directly about the brutality of the colonial deeds in Africa: "the British Empire had done so much harm to so many people ... and then it would be too late to say or do anything" (Soueif, 1999). This confession comes from the colonizer's side, although it was too late. It suggests that the amount of brutality exceeded the limits, if there is any. And, of course, this is accompanied with pain and agony on the colonized side, the native people in Sudan.

Similarly, the British atrocities are mentioned intensely in Monica Ali's novel. There is a whole chapter in *Brick Lane* talks about one of the British atrocities acted in the East. This episode is narrated by Chanu to his daughters. He tells them how native people of Bangladesh were starving to death during the famine in 1942-3 which was due to the British control on the grains. This point of pain in the history of Bangladesh was documented through paintings. The paintings expose the dark side of the British Empire to the world. Chanu says that there is a famous painter from Bangladesh named Zainul Abedin. The main subject of his painting was the ordinary people of Bangladesh. In his paintings, the life and death are shown side by side like that of the real life. Here, Chanu reports the most horrible fact that was documented by this painter. He says "in the famine, there was life and there was death. The people of Bangladesh died and the crows and the vultures lived. ... the child who is too weak to walk or even to crawl, and the fat, black crows – how patiently they wait by the child for their next feast" (Ali, 2003).

There is another terrible picture that can be drawn in the minds of the native people only. In the famine, there were "three million people died because of starvation.... While the crows and vultures stripped our bones, the British, our rulers, exported grain from the country" (Ali, 2003). The assimilation between the crows and vultures on one hand, and the British forces on the other hand is delivered brilliantly. Such painful moments in the history of Bangladesh definitely cannot and will not be forgotten. It should be exposed and delivered to the public opinion, because this moment had affected their lives considerably and it was the source of pain and death to millions of the native people. Such incident caused by the colonizer should be brought to the sunlight as seriously as the Holocaust. It is an urgent need to engage the studies with the other traumatic histories of the minority people. Accordingly, the Holocaust should not

be promoted as the only misery of the human being that the world needs to weep at. In effect, Rothberg's model of trauma theory can help hugely to understand and interpret trauma in different situations and colors and enable the studies to encompass more different traumatic experiences.

The second shared point among these three novels is the characters' capability of speaking out the agony and hidden pain. In fact, speaking about the painful memories is one of the key features that differentiate the decolonizing trauma theory from the event-based trauma theory. Revealing the hidden pain is one of the main touches of the new model of trauma theory which believes that pain is speakable. Different from the Caruthian model of trauma which denies any chance of speaking of the pain and agony of the traumatized persons, Rothberg's model believes in the capacity of the traumatized persons of speaking and releasing the hidden pain. Susan Brison also believes that narrating traumatic memories to other whom are capable of listening and understanding is therapeutic and facilitates the way to recovery. In this view, it is "therapeutic to bear witness in the presence of others who heard and believed" (Brison, 1999).

In Ahdaf Soueif's *The Map of Love*, there are many characters who took the lead in this matter. Sharif Pasha, Anna, and Husni Bey al-Ghamrawi decided to deliver the voices of Egyptian poor people to the world. The elite had to articulate these brutalities and convey the reality of the British savageness to the public opinion. Thus they agreed on delivering their articles and writings to the newspapers all over the world for the sake of exposing the atrocities that were acted in Egypt. Sharif pasha thinks of publishing these atrocities abroad. He says that "*L'Egypte* is read abroad. *The Manchester Guardian* has already taken the matter up.... We shall get it published in England. If the case is publicised enough, people will press for questions to be asked in Parliament and the Irish will take it up.... We may not end the Occupation, but we will get rid of Cromer" (Soueif, 2000). On the part of Anna, she uses her connection in the West to deliver the views of the problems in the Middle East. The Western public opinion is the target. It is a necessary step to deliver the voice of agony to the world and this is what Anna and Sharif decided to do. Anna sent letters to Mr. James Barrington, a close friend of Anna and Sir Charles. Mr. James will use his connections to get the letter published in England and France.

Here, Rothberg's concept of the multidirectional memory which is the main bone for decolonizing trauma that entails the combination of "two or more disturbing memories that work dialogically to bring together different histories of suffering" (Zapata, 2015) is working best. In fact, each culture has its own rules and beliefs and in the name of these rules and beliefs many people (female characters in particular) were tormented. Susan J. Brison comments on the role of culture and society in the process of violence flourishing especially against women in which she believes that "the traumatic event is experienced as culturally embedded (or framed), is remembered as such (in both traumatic and narrative memory), and is shaped and reshaped in memory over time according to how others in the survivor's culture respond" (Brison, 1999). In this light, Monica Ali's *The Brick Lane* can be considered as a store for the traumatizing moments of the Bengali people. Colors of violence are varied. The most dangerous physical violence that is depicted tragically in this novel is the acid attack in which throwing acid on the faces of women causes severe damages as well as painful memories.

In *The Brick Lane*, the light is shed on such painful incidents that the world turns a blind eye to them. Acid attack is the most dangerous and prevailing color of violence against women in Bangladesh. Strangely, this type of deed goes smoothly in the Bangladeshi community without conviction. In fact, these tragic events and atrocities are called to the front to be discussed and at the same time they stand for the troubling memories of the female characters who are mostly either traumatized or narrating the experience of other traumatized female characters. Thus, it is worthy enough to call these experiences as traumatic due to the ugliness of the deed and the everlasting pain on the part of the victims who are mostly women living in poor countries like Bangladesh. These are the traumatic experiences of the minority people who were neglected and not included in the search by old model of trauma. The new model of trauma highlights such cases and encompassing them all in its domain of search.

Rahman's *In the Light of What We Know* is packed with unforgettable moments where sadness, shame, and violence colored most of Zafar's narration. These remembered moments are fiercer and more effectual than the original ones. Here, the narrative method relies heavily on recalling these various moments, not on the personal level only, but on the national level as well. Retrospect is the main route of the narrative

in the sense that most of the chapters are based on the recalled moments that are retold by Zafar to the unnamed narrator. Besides, Zafar is not only retelling, but he also analyzes and mediates these moments. Therefore, the narration is governed by what comes first to Zafar's memory, definitely the most powerful and appalling ones. By remembering and analyzing, Zafar tries to find meaning in these moments. Telling and thinking over these moments come to be mixed here.

Zafar highlights the necessity of disclosing the facts about the history of Bangladesh. The most annoying thing is that Zafar who bears the burdens of delivering such agonies and suffering of Bangladesh to the West. He becomes the emblem of that agony due to his troubled history and origin. At the same time, he is agitated because the world turns a blind eye to what had happened in his native land. In the West, the Holocaust occupied the main front pages of every single study, while the other terrible histories are neglected and out of favor. For Zafar, he was traumatized by many factors like his origin, his childhood, the shadow of the liberation war in 1971, the work for NGOs in Afghanistan, and most importantly his unbalanced relationship with Emily due to race and class discrimination. In the character of Zafar, the author presents all of traits of the traumatized person and he moves freely from London to Kabul and from New York to Islamabad. These movements create different encounters with the financial-minds people and expose some shadowy military officials in addition to Emily, of course. On the part of the unnamed narrator, he attempts transliterate "Zafar's tragic, tortuous tale" (Preston, 2014).

Therefore, the narrator presses on Zafar to write his story, but Zafar was unwilling to do that. Zafar believes that there are more important stories to be told to the world than his. The world is full with injustice and prejudice. Zafar justifies his decision in saying that "it's very important that people learn about that ... Never mind the financial crisis, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, never mind global warming and the imminent peak oil crisis. Did I miss anything?" (Rahman, 2014). Alongside of the bloody history of Bangladesh, there are different moments of injustice all over the world.

In these three novels, three main characters are sensitive to what's is going in the real world; Sharif Pasha in Soueif's *The Map of Love*, Karim in Monica Ali's *The Brick Lane* and Zafar in Rahman's *In the Light of What We Know*. They bring into their discussions the miseries of the other. They feel sympathetic to the tormented people all

over the world. They come across the Palestine case, the Iraq's situation and the turmoil of wars in different regions in the Middle East or the further East. Therefore, they refused to tell their personal agonies before attracting the attention to the universal problems which cause much injustice to the native poor people. Strangely, the world exaggerates one incident while neglect the other on the base of its relation to the West. Therefore, there are many painful moments that are forgotten in the history. Hence, Rothberg's concept of the multidirectional memory and the decolonizing trauma theory is workable.

Talking about a traumatic experience is comforting and therapeutic. Speaking is relieving. The narrator describes Zafar when he talked about his troublesome experience in saying that "he did not seem the least bit embarrassed to talk about it, and at the time I was rather flattered that he felt comfortable enough with me to discuss the matter" (Rahman, 2014). Here, the narrator asks a question then he tries to postulate an answer for it. He asks "why does a man feel he must speak?" (Rahman, 2014). Then, he reaches the conclusion that giving voice to hidden traumatizing memories is therapeutic. Then, the narrator proclaims that "I was too young to understand the redemption that comes from giving voice to what the brain seeks to hide from oneself" (Rahman, 2014). This is "why we refer to horrors as unspeakable" (Rahman, 2014). In fact, the ability of speaking is one of the main beliefs in the decolonizing trauma theory. The critics in this new approach of trauma believe in the capability of the traumatized person of speaking the horror that agitated his soul.

Speaking out the traumatizing moments leads to the third shared feature of the decolonizing trauma theory which is the possibility of recovery. Speaking out the painful moment of memory is the main trait of the decolonizing trauma theory. Speaking-ability is one of the bases that decolonizing trauma theory based on. In the case of Zafar, he was able to speak. When Zafar appeared on the door of the narrator at the beginning of the novel, he came to tell something of importance. He wants to articulate what he thinks it should be articulated and not to be kept hidden. Zafar says: "I wanted to tell you something, I thought I would be explicit, make it clear what I did, leave no room to hide. But now I know I can't. I came this far ... I don't know how to speak the unspeakable" (Rahman, 2014). Zafar's anxieties about his place in this world as being a 'no-entity' has led him to the moment of the 'unspeakable' especially about what has been happened between him and Emily in Kabul. "But in the end he himself did speak" (Rahman, 2014).

The narrator also wonders “why it was that Zafar was talking, even about the circumstances of that last day in Kabul ... the root of any explanation must be that very human urge to speak and tell, the impulse that brings the religious to the confessional box and others to the therapist’s couch” (Rahman, 2014). Definitely true, speaking out the traumatic experience is therapeutic. The work of memory, the discussion over social issues, and the ability of speaking out the horror are the main features of this novel. Here, it is a clear hint for the success of applying the decolonizing trauma theory which stresses on the capability of speaking out the traumatic event. Therefore, the decolonizing trauma theory suits the description of this novel.

In Ahdaf Soueif’s novel, the political critique goes hand by hand with the discussion of history and through different stages, firstly, by the national character of the novel, Sharif pasha. Politics occupied all of his thinking and causes him some traumatic nightmares. Even when Sharif decided to divorce politics for the sake of a peaceful life, politics refuses to leave him alone. Secondly, the author puts into the front the British people who opposed the colonial practices of the British Empire in the middle east, namely via the characters of Sir Charles Winterbourne and Anna. And most importantly, the critique focuses mainly on Lord Cromer’s practices in Egypt (Kennedy, 2021). Bring back history into the front of the discussion is one of the techniques that the characters use to recover and remove the guilt from their shoulders. Remedy can be achieved by releasing the anguished pain and directed the criticism on Lord Cromer’s practices in Egypt especially in the domains of agriculture, industry, and taxation. In this novel, the letter that was written by Sharif Pasha to criticize Cromer’s policies in Egypt at that time before Sharif’s death establishes a new canon of resistance the colonial acts in this novel. It represents the anti-colonialist tendency that has been emerged among the elite of the Egyptian nationalists and it is also the writing back to Empire.

In Monica Ali’s novel, the core of the problem is when the traumatic memories seek a window. In other words, “pain and guilt have to be acknowledged” (Tancke, 2011). Although the novelist put some characters in silence mode, but the target is to be articulated. The silence here is meaningful. She is trying to give them voice, but indirectly. “We will suffer in silence.... In silence, said Amma” (Ali, 2003). These characters use the silence as a means of expression. The novel seeks the power that the narrative provides to facilitate the reconstruction of the traumatized character. In this

novel, Nazneen succeeded in reconstructing her traumatized self and goes through metamorphosis phases to reach the point where she is capable of making the decisions by herself. Recovery from the painful past or the ugly present is depicted beautifully in this novel through the character of Nazneen. In fact, “piecing together a self requires a working through, or remastering of, the traumatic memory that involves going from being the medium or object of someone else’s (the torturer’s) speech to being the subject of one’s own” (Brison, 1999). Despite this fact, the narrative of Monica Ali is always opening new horizons to her characters by presenting different possible solutions without losing the touches of love and tenderness.

Through speaking the agonies and the tormented moments in the history of the poor non-Western people, new standpoints of solidarity are created. Attracting the view of the world and creating new solidarities are the main goals of the decolonizing trauma theory. Soueif in *The Map of Love* tries to create solidarity by exposing the hidden facts to the public opinion. Therefore, a new reading to the history of Egypt creates a new solidarity. Rothberg gives enough room to this proposition when he discusses the role of the multidirectional memory by saying that “when the productive, intercultural dynamic of multidirectional memory is explicitly claimed ... it has the potential to create new forms of solidarity and new visions of justice” (Rothberg, 2009). In fact, exposing these hidden events in the history and bring them back to the front page is one of Soueif’s aims to inform the world. She tries to attract the attention to the forgotten history which is full with traumatic experiences that are still affecting the present. Rothberg’s model of trauma that focuses mainly on the multidirectional memory is useful because it allows the other histories to be viewed and studied in a similar manner to that of the Holocaust. With Rothberg’s theory of the decolonizing trauma, the reader can feel and initiate a new solidarity to the suffering and agonies of people from different regions.

Likewise, the position of solidarity is created by Monica Ali in *The Brick Lane* when she exposes the hidden ugly face of the domestic violence against women as well as the atrocities of the British Empire. On the part of the violence the World Health Organization (WHO) reported that the violence is the essential factor to poor mental health especially with women in the third world countries like Bangladesh. In truth, any type of violence “has a far deeper impact ... and a traumatic effect on those who witness it, particularly children” (WHO, 2005). The violence that women are facing is in fact the

main reason behind developing some mental diseases. Women in Bangladesh are enduring rape, violence, and physical abuse. They are also tortured with nightmares that shut them off from the normal life. The physical violence plays a major role in affecting the women's mentality and leads to traumatic memories. The result of such exposing is reflected clearly in the works of the organizations all over the world. Their works stand for the new solidarity that is created. For example, different studies and surveys have been conducted to measure the amount of violence acted by male partners on the female personages in Bangladesh. Moreover, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) considers Bangladesh as the fourth country in which the violence against women takes a higher percentage (Sarker & Yesmin, 2013).

Recently, Bangladesh is one of the countries that labeled with highest rate of violence against women. It is about 50 to 70 percent of the Bengali women are experiencing violence from their male partners every year (Sarker & Yesmin, 2013). Asma Fathima and Prajapati try to highlight the effects of the violence and warn against neglecting the facts resulting from such deeds. The argument is that any "attempt to discern violence and its effect often lead people towards frustration, despair, anger, hatred, depression and trauma" (Fathima & Prajapati, 2020). Therefore different organizations were established to support the Bengali government to face such injustice which creates traumatic memories. In fact, violence against women is out of flavor to the event-base model. But the decolonizing traumatic theory encompasses such traumatic moments because it calls for expansion to encompass every day experience.

On a different level, the Liberation War of Bangladesh is highlighted most in Monica Ali's novel *The Brick Lane* as well as in Rahman's novel *In the Light of What We Know*. War in Asia was not in the consideration of the event-base model, but it is central for the decolonizing trauma theory because it seeks the tormenting memories of the non-Westerners. What had been happened in this war in Bangladesh had created the ghost inside the collective conscious of the Bengali people in general. Besides, the whips of injustice and agony in this war will never be forgotten. These two novelists expose the ugly face of this war to the public in a manner of delivering a voice, a voice of agony of those people who were victims in a similar way to those of the Holocaust. It was really genocide. Consequently, the effect still runs deep in the Bengali community. These are the traumatic experiences of the minority people who were neglected.



It is Rothberg's theory of the decolonizing trauma that gives space to such non-Westerner catastrophes to be tackled and scrutinized via the work of the shared memory that the colonized native people hold as a scar and the colonizers as a spot of shame as Sir Charles confessed. From this point, it comes to be crystal clear that the work the multidirectional memory is not 'private' or stagnant. It involves unending transactions and intercultural mixing. Therefore, the postcolonial works are good soil to dig for the multidirectional memory which is the main tool of decolonizing the trauma studies. Rothberg believes that many postcolonial works are devoted to 'local conditions' and they are indicative to the variety of forms that the colonialism took and to the different colors of influence that it left in the colonized communities. Therefore, the decolonizing trauma theory is suiting accurately the postcolonial narrative because it provides the context that this theory can work effectively.

Middle East or Further East, any kind of violence against the humanity can affect equally regardless the classification of race, class or gender. Supposedly, the trauma theory should include all of the moments of pain and agony all over the world and try to give these moments the suitable voice to be known and recognized. Unfortunately, the old model of trauma theory that was initiated by Cathy Caruth and others was limited to a single event, namely the Holocaust. It is Michael Rothberg's approach of the Decolonizing Trauma Theory that can be considered as a success in achieving the aims of the trauma theory because it calls for expansion the area of search and encompassing all the varieties of pain in all over the world. In fact, Rothberg calls the scholars to focus on "social actors bring multiple traumatic pasts into a heterogeneous and changing post-WWII present" (Rothberg, 2009). The social actors that are presented and analyzed in this study are varied and many. All of the three novelists that are tackled in this work have succeeded in presenting the most pressing issues in their communities and highlighted the social actor that traumatize the ordinary people. It is Rothberg's theory that makes the search for these social actor possible and valuable.

On the part of remembering, it is a painful experience because it involves the pull of the past that is colored with dehumanizing experiences which disturb the shaping of identity of the traumatized subjects. The most important point is that the recovering from these remembered moments is not impossible. Because the traumatic experience can be

articulated. Thus, it can be delivered to others and in this way the traumatized subjects can be healed.

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