

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

 $\infty\infty\infty$

تم رفع هذه الرسالة بواسطة / حسام الدين محمد مغربي

بقسم التوثيق الإلكتروني بمركز الشبكات وتكنولوجيا المعلومات دون أدنى مسئولية عن محتوى هذه الرسالة.

AIN SHAMS UNIVERSITY

Since 1992

Propries 1992

ملاحظات: لا يوجد



Cultural Trauma in Narratives of Displacement

With Special Reference to MirzaWaheed's *The Collaborator*, Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin*, and Khaled Hosseini's *Sea Prayer*

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fullfillment for the Requirements of the Ph.D Degree in Teacher Preparation in English Literature

Submitted by

Eman Tharwat Abdo Oulwan

Supervised by

Prof. Shokry Abdelmenem Megahed

Professor of English Literature
English Department
Faculty of Education
Ain Shams University

Dr. Shireen Youssef Mohammed

Lecturer of English Literature
English Department
Faculty of Education
Ain Shams University

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my utmost gratitude to my dissertation advisor professor Shokry A.M. Megahed for his advice and encouragement. I thank him for his guided support in every step of the way.

Due thanks extend to Dr. Shireen Youssef Mohammed whose feedback has always encouraged me to do better. I am lucky to have a supportive co-supervisor like her.

I am forever grateful to every member in my family, without whom this dissertation would have never been as tangible as so:

- I dedicate this dissertation to my husband for his encouragement, support, guidance, and tolerance and mostly for his belief in me. He always provides a loving and calm atmosphere that helped me at all times.
- I also dedicate this dissertation to my father's soul. My father was the first one who enriched me with the love of continuing my post graduate study. "Dear Dad, Thank you for inspiring me to never give up, always press on, and be true to myself. I am forever honored that I have a supportive father like you."
- All heartfelt thanks to my dearest kids for their tolerance and warm encouragement. I am fortunate to have supportive mother, sisters, and brothers whose warm personal encouragement helped me to accomplish this dissertation.

Thank you

Abstract

This study develops trauma from a cultural perspective in relation to the 'social experience' of displacement that leaves permanent scars on the heart and soul of the displaced collectivities scattered as refugees in different countries around the world. The aim of this dissertation is to explore how the selected displaced writers under study, namely, the Kashmiri-British writer Mirza Waheed (1955), the Palestinian-American novelist Susan Abulhawa (1970), and the Afghan-American author Khaled Hosseini (1965), narratively structure their displacement experience as traumatic in their works respectively; The Collaborator (2011), Mornings in Jenin (2010), and Sea Prayer (2018)? This study further offers an answer to the question: could narratives built around the displacement experience serve an alleviating role in the healing process of trauma? In this dissertation, the trauma of war is examined considering its resulting catastrophic aftermath of displacement with a special attention to Kashmiris, Palestinians, and Syrians. To fully grasp the profound effects of war and its aftermath of displacement upon the collective psyche of these selected traumatized populations under study, this dissertation adopts an interdisciplinary approach combining the psychoanalytic and the socio-cultural theoretical framework. Each displaced writer makes his/her narrator eyewitness to the consequences of war on the psychological and the socio-cultural levels. Moreover, each of the focal characters in the selected works under the study is presented as an epitome for the dynamics of displacement and nostalgia. Considering nostalgia as intermingled with the dialectics of memory and displacement, this dissertation presents a socio-cultural analysis of the selected nostalgic narratives of displacement under study.

Key Words: Cultural trauma- displacement- nostalgia- 'inbetween temporality'- status of 'transit'- narratives of displacement-Mirza Waheed- Susan Abulhawa- Khaled Hosseini.

Table of Contents

Contents	Page
Preface	VI-VIII
Chapter One	
Cultural Trauma and Displacement	2-36
Chapter Two	
The Kashmir partition trauma and its aftermaths in Mirza	38-75
Waheed's The Collaborater (2011)	30-73
Chapter Three	
Cultural trauma and the problematic of the displaced	
Palestinian identity in Susan Abulhawa's Mornings in	77-118
Jenin (2010)	
Chapter Four	
Trauma of War and its aftermaths in Khaled Hosseini's	120-156
illustrated narrative Sea Prayer (2018)	120-130
Conclusion	158-167
Works Cited	169-175

Preface

Preface

Trauma is a multi-dimensional field of study that comprises different disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and cognitive sciences. The post-traumatic effect of war causes the selected forcibly displaced populations to be trapped in a loop of socio-cultural traumatic experience. To fully grasp the profound effects of such an experience, this dissertation falls into four chapters as follows:

Chapter One:

This chapter functions as the theoretical framework of the whole study. It draws specifically on the works of prominent figures in the field of Trauma Theory and Studies: Cathy Caruth, Deborah Horvitz, Judith Herman, and Dominick LaCapra. All these modern psychoanalytic theorists develop what Freud accentuates the hysterical effects of trauma in his Beyond the Pleasure Principle. This study is based on psychoanalytic notions of trauma; i.e., 'repetitive seeing' of a traumatic event, 'working through' form of healing trauma, the displaced 'double consciousness' and its 'multiple metamorphoses' ... etc. Drawing upon certain notions of cultural sociologists, i.e., Homi Bhabha's 'in-between temporality', Stuart Hall's notion of 'cultural turn', and Thomas Couser's collective notion of testimonies, this chapter presents the post-traumatic effect of war within what Jeffery Alexander postulates the result of a horrendous event that is engraved in the displaced collectivity's memories forever and changes its own sense of identity (Trauma: A Social Theory 15). The last part of this chapter places Mahmoud Darwish's pattern of nostalgia in dialogue with Edward Said's to substantiate the argument of considering nostalgia as intermingled with the dialectics of memory and displacement.

Chapter Two:

This chapter explores how Kashmir's partition hasn't only created geographical borders, but it has further resulted in devastating consequences on the social fabric and the sense of social identity. This analytic part of study presents a literary examination of how the Kashmiri-British writer of the second Mirza Waheed narratively his generation; structures collectivity's plight in The Collaborator. Waheed's unnamed Kashmiri protagonist is examined within the Cathy Caruth's psychoanalytic notion of the 'repetitive seeing' of 'the story of the accident', and the various symptoms Deborah Horvitz postulates haunting the consciousness of traumatized person. Moreover, this chapter explores how Waheed depicts his unnamed traumatized protagonist as a representative for the nostalgic pattern that is engaged with "the Kashmiri connectedness of past and present dialectics", in Bhabha's terms, in which the past is indeed summoned and mingled with the present (19). Developing cultural trauma into an analytical sequence, this chapter further employs Alexander's dimensions of representation of 'shared narrative of trauma' to expose the long-lasting effect of Kashmiris' plight.

Chapter Three:

Palestinian refugees share the same miseries of Kashmiris who were made homeless after the British colonization of India as mentioned earlier. However, the Palestinian trauma has its specificity of context and response to war. This third chapter of the study examines how the Palestinian-American novelist, Susan Abulhawa, depicts her Palestinian focal characters; Dalia Abulheja and her daughter Amal as eyewitnesses to the psychological and social consequences of the historical catastrophes of *al-Nakba* (1948) and *al-Naksa* (1967). Such historical upheavals are represented as two major cultural traumas that resulted in 'acute discomfort entering into the core'

of the Palestinians' collective identities; the reconstruction of 'the exiled Palestinian identity' that is haunted by the "ghurba" or estrangement life (Said, The Question of Palestine 177). Taking the argument, a step further, this part of study contextualizes the Palestinian experience of a social suffering of 'forced departure' through the perpetual 'melancholic condition' of 'exilic displacement' linked through "an 'in-between' temporality", in Bhabha's terms (19, 20). The Palestinian displacement experience is presented in this chapter as engaged with the dialectics of nostalgia and the hope of the 'right to return'.

Chapter Four:

The final chapter reflects how the Afghan-American writer; Khaled Hosseini, utilizes the visual illustrated narration in his Sea Prayer (2018) as a symbolic representation to keep the trauma of war and its catastrophic aftermath of displacement alive and present. This chapter explores how Hosseini mingles the poetic language of his letter style of writing and Dan William's illustrations as a means of artistic expression to convey a broader meaning to the various audiences around the world. Hosseini employs a traumatic story of an unnamed Syrian displaced father and his son as a shared universal and allencompassing testimonial of present-day crossing-border refugees around the world, i.e., Pakistanis, Iranians, Yemenis, etc. Similar to Waheed's Kashmiri protagonist and Abulhawa's Palestinian central narrator, Hosseini's unnamed displaced narrator is caught in nostalgic ties to lost childhood and memories in homeland. In this textual-illustrated narrative, the detailed elements of Dan William's each coloured picture capture a moment, past, present or uncertain future, that resonate with other refugee experiences from Iran, Afghanistan, Yemen, ... etc.

Conclusion:

The conclusion is a synthesis of the findings of the study.

Chapter one Cultural Trauma and Displacement

Chapter one

Cultural Trauma and Displacement

The following theoretical framework draws specifically on the work of prominent figures in the field of Trauma Theory and Studies: Cathy Caruth, Deborah Horvitz, Judith Herman, and Dominick LaCapra. The scholars in the field of trauma studies focused on the trauma of Western groups living in different host countries as a result of immigration and/or displacement but the sufferings of non-Western traumatized displaced groups living in Western countries or still living in their conflict zones did not receive equal attention. Thus, this theoretical framework broadens the limited scope of trauma studies with a common focus on the West to further focus on other non-Western traumatized forcibly displaced populations.

Trauma of war will be examined considering its resulting catastrophic aftermath of displacement with a special attention to that of the Kashmiris, Palestinians, and Syrians. To fully grasp the profound effects of this daily lived reality, this chapter employs certain notions of cultural sociologists, i.e., Jeffery Alexander's social theory of trauma, Kai Erikson's social and collective notions of trauma, Ron Eyerman's notion of 'the cycle of generational memory', Homi Bhabha's 'in-between temporality' and Thomas Couser's collective notion of testimonies, as a theoretical framework of the whole study.

A displaced person could not be limitedly seen as a surviving victim of a destructive reality but should be considered its eyewitness to its catastrophic aftermaths. This traumatized individual is perpetually trapped by memory and tormenting feelings of fear and pain that he/she has to endure. Such a plight could be examined on both the personal and the collective levels.

The following theoretical framework combines the psychoanalytic and the socio-cultural examination of war trauma and its aftermath of displacement to offer answers to these pivotal questions: What are the different psychoanalytic and socio-cultural notions of trauma? How could the displaced writer narratively structure his/her displacement experience as traumatic? And could narratives built around the displacement experience serve an alleviating role in the healing process of trauma? The following theoretical framework is categorized to three main areas: Trauma from a psycho-sociological and cultural perspective, displacement, and cultural trauma and narratives of displacement as vehicles for bearing witness.

Trauma from psycho-sociological and cultural perspective:

Traumatic Experience and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Trauma studies as a field of research comprises different disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and cognitive sciences. On its official online website, the American Psychological Association (APA) defines trauma as the "emotional response" someone has to an extremely negative and "terrible event". Such a response could not be merely seen as a reference to a wounded psyche; the response implies a story of a wound that tells a real, true, and agonizing traumatic event. Psychoanalyst, Judith Herman identifies any traumatic event as one that causes "threat to life or bodily integrity" (24). It can also be "a close personal encounter with violence and death" (Herman 24). In the same vein, Cathy Caruth argues that sometimes a traumatic event could be further seen as an embodiment of a human voice crying out from the wound: "a voice that witnesses a truth" (3). This traumatic event "is experienced... repeatedly, in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor" as Caruth puts it (4). Such an event remains at the heart of the cognitive process of "repetitive seeing" of "the story of the accident" (Caruth 92). The core of such psychoanalytic trauma studies goes back to the foundations laid down by Freud in his *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*.

Cathy Caruth builds her psychoanalytic notion of trauma on her reading of Freud's Beyond the Pleasure Principle. Such a notion of trauma concerns with "not just any event but, significantly, the shocking and unexpected occurrence of an accident" (Caruth 6). In that manner, the traumatic event represents a "breach in the mind" instigating "conscious awareness of the threat to life" that consequently generates post traumatic symptoms (Caruth 62). The traumatized person passes through a post-traumatic stage that often induces a Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Such disorder is manifestation of "an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often uncontrolled, repetitive appearance of hallucinations." (Caruth 11) Seen through this psychoanalytic lens, the traumatic experience embodies strong impressions of a previous past that the person is unable to abandon or forget. This traumatic experience could not be limitedly seen as referring to a past traumatic event but should be seen in light of its results and catastrophic aftermath. In other words, it is not an event that started and ended in the past; it is a daily lived reality.

Building on Caruth's psychoanalytic insight, Deborah Horvitz highlights in *Literary Trauma* (2000) the victim-survivor's "capacity and willingness to incorporate... a traumatic event [which he\she experienced] *inside* oneself as an indispensable piece of personal history" (6). The greater one's ability to "make story" out of trauma, which is defined differently for each person, the more likely s/he is to regain control of her or his life after that trauma (Horvitz 6). Providing

the direct link between PTSD and an external violence, Horvitz sheds light on different symptoms that haunt the traumatized person. In Horvitz's view, PTSD generally includes different diagnoses such as "shell-shock," and "traumatic neurosis" as direct effects of external violence such as wars and displacement (12). Horvitz uses the term "echoing" events in the victim's mind to make clear how the traumatic experience intermingled with the characters' everyday thoughts: memories turn up in the form of symptoms, including anxiety, [and] depression" (17). Placing these symptoms in dialogue with 'repetitive appearance of hallucinations' provides insight into what Caruth refers to as "the absolute inability of the mind to avoid an unpleasurable event" (59). In other words, trauma seen through a psychoanalytic lens is an event and outcome that is based on a personal traumatic experience. Such experience is depicted as a cognitive one characterized by 'repetitive seeing of 'hallucinations', flashbacks, and remembrances suggesting and leading to trauma. However, these traumatic significations, on a collective level, could be mediated through various dialectics that engage with larger social factors as well as cultural values.

On one level, war exposes one or more particular group (s) of people to traumatic violent situations. On the collective level, wars negatively affect the whole social structure. For example, in a mental health survey on Kashmiris, Tambri Housen and colleagues highlight the negative psychological impact of living in war and conflict zone upon the collective psyche. The authors view Kashmiris as survivors of violence who traumatically live with long-lasting "threats to life, ... disappearance of friends or family, loss of property or belongings, [and] forced separation from family members [after] military attacks" (Housen et al. 4). Nonetheless, these traumatic events evoke Kashmiris' prevalent feelings of disappointment, anger, hopelessness as well as future

uncertainty (Housen et al. 2). The oppressed Kashmiris are specifically affected by what they have witnessed because of the doleful situation and the recurrent break out of conflicts between India and Pakistan over Kashimir which justifies the pattern of suffering and the catastrophic after-effects of wars following colonization upon traumatized populations. One of these psychological consequences of war is living with long-lasting classic symptoms of PTSD such as panic attacks, flashbacks, and nightmares of a traumatic past. By the same token, Palestinians and Syrians experience societal post-war conditions that result(ed) in catastrophic aftermaths both psychological and the social levels. To fully grasp the aftermaths of violence and victimization committed against similar minority groups or occupied nations, there is a growing need to consider trauma on the collective level of social crises which consequently become cultural crises.

Collective and Cultural Traumas:

Every traumatized individual could be viewed as a "linked cell" in a larger communal body (Erikson187). Working on trauma theory from a social dimension during the 1970s, the American sociologist, Kai Erikson specifies the sense of danger to the society in the form of traumatic experiences. He postulates that "the tissues of community" could be damaged similar to "the tissues of mind and body" (Erikson 185). Erikson's sociological model based on the Buffalo Greek disaster that occurred in February 1972 in West Virginia resulting in thousands of dead and homeless people which offers a broader scope to that of psychoanalytic theorists. Erikson broadens trauma's vocabulary from one that focuses on "a stress or blow that may produce disordered feelings or behavior" to one that significantly refers to "the state or condition produced by such a stress or blow" (184), in other words, a shift from the