WAR TRAUMA, HISTORY AND NARRATIVE: ANALYSIS OF SELECTED AFGHAN FICTION IN ENGLISH

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
in
Linguistics and Literature

DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES, FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
AIR UNIVERSITY, ISLAMABAD
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TO

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Date
DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my father, who wanted to see me complete my doctorate degree, but unfortunately, could not live to see his dream come true!
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The completion of this research study has been no less than a dream come true; and along the way, I have incurred many debts.

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ABSTRACT

This study uses trauma literary theory to analyze selected Afghan fiction in English. Following trauma theories by Cathy Caruth and Dominic LaCapra, according to whom literature serves as a site for a belated enactment and witnessing of what can be referred to as an unclaimed moment of trauma, the study analyzes novels by Afghan writers, Atiq Rahimi and Khaled Hosseini, to see how the trauma-hit characters narrate the ravages of war in Afghanistan, and if these flashbacks and hauntings of the past are in accordance with the tenets of trauma theory. As Caruth uses the image of the wound that cries out and addresses us in an attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available, to indicate that trauma can only be understood through literary or symbolic language, this study investigates Rahimi’s *Earth and Ashes* (2002) and Hosseini’s *The Kite Runner* (2003) to show that the Afghan fiction in English works against a collective amnesia by representing traumatic experiences and their impact on individuals and communities in the war-ravaged Afghanistan, thus dealing with, and bringing forth, the traumatic history that many people believe to be a matter of a long forgotten past. The study analyzes the protagonists’ experience of trauma, as portrayed by the novelists, its effects and the process of *working through*. This endeavor is in place as unlike the Holocaust, the 9/11, the Vietnam War and other traumatic episodes of certain bigger and technologically as well as publishing-wise advanced nations, hardly any work has been done by researchers on trauma fiction by Afghan writers in English. To start with, this qualitative study outlines the major trauma-related works of Caruth, LaCapra, Felman, Tal, and Whitehead, and then, keeping in view the tenets of trauma theory, it goes on to trace the accounts of the characters in the selected novels to study their reaction to the trauma of war in the light of coping with trauma mechanisms by Erikson (1994) as well as LaCapra’s (2001) theory of *Working Through* to see how their flashbacks present the records of history. As the psychological impact of war may seem too minuscule or ordinary to be recorded under the spectrum of the official account, called history, the study also analyzes the development of the trauma-hit characters in the light of Hermin’s (1992) coping with trauma mechanism, which details all the stages of a trauma survivor’s journey from the moment when s/he is hit by trauma to the establishment of safety around him/her, mourning the loss(es), remembrance of the incident of trauma, and return to normal life. The study concludes that trauma fiction, unlike historical accounts, deals with a particular traumatic experience from a more personalized, integrated, and complete scope, bringing forth what is recorded, and what is kept safe in an undiluted form, in the mind of the survivor in order to add first hand witnessed details to history.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Unlike an official account of history, fiction concerning war trauma caters, on a large scale, for the psychological damages of war. Since the writers of such fiction peep into the minds of traumatized characters, an analysis of these literary productions no more remains a straightforward project. In order to do justice to analyzing the selected Afghan fiction in English, it is well in place to carry out this whole investigation in the framework of trauma theory and its related models. Therefore, it is apt to study trauma, which is defined as not just a wound to the mind but also a firsthand record of the details of the traumatic incident.

A through perusal of research databases show that most of the research on trauma fiction has been carried out in cases where the fictional narratives are related to the technologically advanced countries. A good example of this issue is in trauma related scholarship published during 1990s when writers discussed trauma cases related to the Holocaust, the Vietnam War and the World War II. This indifference towards the trauma of less developed countries is against the spirit of trauma studies which, according to Caruth (1995), is neither an advocacy movement nor is it specific to a certain group of people, as she says that we are implicated in each other’s trauma. Thus, the driving force
behind carrying out this research study has been to remain true to the very spirit of trauma studies and cater for the trauma, as depicted in the fictional narratives, of a less developed but equally war ravaged country, Afghanistan.

1.1 Thesis Statement

Fictional portrayals of traumatized war-hit Afghan people, through their acting out or working through reaction towards trauma, augment history. These fictional depictions of the traumatized people work as a testimonial art that tell the untold histories which can be verifies through factual records.

1.2 Background to the Study

Termed by many as the ‘graveyard of empires’, the history and narrative of Afghanistan have been shrouded in the 35 years long continuous war (Imran & Xiaochuan, 2015, p. 65). The country, which comprises of Aimaqs (10%), Hazaras (10%), Uzbeks (10%), Tajiks (25%) and Pashtuns (40-45%), is known to historians and critics due to its invincible nature in front of all foreign forces which invaded Afghanistan (Maass, 1999; Tanner, 2009; Goodson, 2001; Katzman, 2010; Imran & Xiaochuan, 2015). Since mid-1700s, the country has existed in the present form in south central Asia when Ahmad Shah Durrani united the tribal factions of the country (Dupree, 1977). Since then, the country’s history has been marked by prolonged wars, causing infrastructural collapse, political instability and civil wars. This has caused millions of Afghan civilians to leave their country for safe abodes in the neighboring countries and beyond.
According to Ewans (2015), “Afghanistan has over its long history been a highway of conquests between west, central and southern Asia” (p. 10). This has led to the dismal condition of the Afghans, who even today, in 2015, are going through the trauma of a similar war. Farhoumand (2005) asserts that the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan undermined the living standards of the people residing in the country, adding that the human rights violations have been at the worst in the civil war that followed the occupation. Even after the withdrawal of the Soviet forces from Afghanistan in 1989, the country fell a prey to internal conflicts, which resulted in another foreign military intervention, leading to prolonging the problems of the people in Afghanistan. Such a prolonged exposure to the ravages of war has collectively been recorded in history, but it is in the fiction arising from this land that provides the true account of the psychological trauma of the Afghan people.

Detailed inquiries into the devastation caused by these wars in the form of a comprehensive historical research, highlighting the ravages of war during the 10 years long Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and the subsequent civil war, have been carried out by the Afghan Civil Society Forum (ACSF), the Afghan Peace and Democracy Act (APDA), the Association for the Defense of Women’s Rights (ADWR), the Cooperation Centre for Afghanistan (CCA), the Education Training Center for Poor Women and the Girls of Afghanistan (ECW), the Oxfam GB, the Organization for Human Welfare (OHW), the Sanayee Development organization (SDO), the Liaison Office (TLO) and the Oxfam International. The report following the aforementioned detailed study covers problems which the people in Afghanistan faced due to the war from 1979 to 2009. The
report also outlines the destruction caused by the 10 years long war (1979-1989) in the following words:

After decades of relative stability, the overthrow of Daoud Khan in 1978 and the subsequent invasion by Soviet forces in 1979 marked the beginning of a prolonged period of conflict. As mujahadeen resistance groups grew in strength, waging guerrilla warfare and drawing Soviet forces further into the conflict, the abuses committed by both sides intensified. In the years of conflict that followed, more than 870,000 Afghans were killed, three million were maimed or wounded, a million were internally displaced and over five million were forced to flee the country. (2009, p. 9)

Besides outlining the killing, maiming and displacing of the Afghan people during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, the report also highlights the psychological problems faced by Afghan people during the civil war that followed the withdrawal of the Soviet forces from Afghanistan in 1989. It brings to fore how the war affected the lives of the Afghan people, who were either forced to leave their country or live their lives amid fears of blasts and battles. The report details losses to infrastructure that badly collapsed and was, then, hardly restructured due to the ongoing clashes, adding that the standard of life in Afghanistan could never improve as peace could not prevail during this period. It also carries out interviews to gauge the holistic psychological damages, caused by the war.

According to the report, a whole generation has grown up in the war and in a condition where they could never see peace around them. The report further asserts,

“A whole generation has grown up never having experienced peace and many Afghans are struggling to cope with the psychological, economic, social and physical ramifications of the conflicts, past and present.” (p. 4)

According to the mid-year report (2015), jointly prepared by United Nations Assistance
Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the UN Human Rights Office, the number of civilian casualties have exceeded the record high number that was recorded in 2014. The report recorded 4921 civilian casualties during the first half of 2015; thus documenting one percent increase in the casualties compared to the same period in 2014. Commenting on the report, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein says: “This report lays bare the heart-rending, prolonged suffering of civilians in Afghanistan, who continue to bear the brunt of the armed conflict and live in insecurity and uncertainty over whether a trip to a bank, a tailoring class, to a court room or a wedding party, may be their last.”

In such a situation, several writers respond to such extraordinarily tragic situations. Afghan writers and poets are no exception in this regard. The following verses from poems in Pashto language by famous Afghan poets, give a clue of what the survivors of war in this country have been feeling about the state of affairs in their motherland. Ajmal, Annd, a famous Afghan poet says in Pashto:

*Da bomb wahalee tankee wror work marwandona goree*  
*Latawee sthoro tha yo sok laiy yoaiy sanday ghondvee*  
*Da veeno pa watan keh laiy salgo sywa sah dee*  
*Devay kho may da aokhko rawra salay to soghat keh*  
*Khudaya da day toro tupako gharay zr wochey kre*  
*Che mo da chum pa mazigar wkro da gulono baran*

(Translation: A person is searching the hills for the lost limbs of his young brother withered in a bomb blast. What else one can find in this bloody region except sighs. So, please, my beloved, bring a light of glittering tear of your eye to my tomb. O God! Please unload these blackened guns forever, so that we can shower flowers on our village) (Quoted by Khalil, 2012, p.62)
Another Afghan poet Roaid Himmat depicts certain scenes of destruction, caused by a rocket attack, in the following verses in Pashto:

\[
\begin{align*}
Da chum pa jomatono mo bala tughundee raghlah \\
Imam pakay shaheed sho ao member pa veeno rang sho \\
Hadeeray dakay pa zwanano sholay \\
Dltha da murg bus tajrobay dee raba \\
Ta may joor watan kandar kandar kro \\
Ta kho za pa rogh zra bemar krma
\end{align*}
\]

(Translation: A number of rockets have been fired on the mosques of our village. The Imam (prayer leader of Muslims) of the mosque has been martyred and his preaching seat is stained with blood. The graveyard has been filled with the dead bodies of our youth as if this place is a laboratory for experiments on deaths. You made a wasteland of my beautiful motherland, and my healthy heart is aching due to this brutality of yours) (Quoted by Khalil, 2012, p.62)

Just like the aforementioned verses from Pashto poetry, Afghan fiction in English has also been responding to, and portraying, the devastation caused by the war in Afghanistan. The study further elaborates the trauma caused by the war, adding that the memories of the war are such intense that it makes many survivors think of committing suicide. According to the report: “… 81% of women who were surveyed in Kabul reported a decline in their mental condition, 42% met the conditions for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and 21% said that they quite often or very often had suicidal thoughts.” (p. 11)

According to Azeemi (2004) “… most people have witnessed or experienced horrible violence at some point and at least 66% of Afghans suffer mental health problems. Many disorders are connected to trauma experiences.” Such holistic pictures of the ravages of
war in Afghanistan provide a sufficient idea of what happened to the people in Afghanistan.

The aforementioned results are helpful in measuring the extent of destruction that hit the Afghan people. However, the study of fictional narratives which deal with such a trauma leads researchers and readers into the minds of the survivors, letting them know what the survivors of these incidents felt and how they responded to the very incident of trauma. In such a situation, where the people in Afghanistan have been hit by the prolonged war and they have experienced the related trauma, the study of the fictional depiction of these people and their trauma becomes equally pertinent. In the absence of a sufficiently large sphere of English fiction that can portray the aforementioned condition of the people living in Afghanistan, the Afghan writers of English fiction act as cultural proxies between their homeland and the rest of the world. The study is well in place because fictional literature as a means of gaining and broadening cultural intelligence is best comprehended and appreciated when studied within the strategic context of the condition of the people and the related societal realities.

As the literary works of a fiction writer influence how a society’s culture is preserved or changed, particularly when addressing war crimes and psychological trauma, this research examines the Afghan fiction writers in order, in part, to capture the reflection and critique of societal realities and human conditions of the Afghans, living in Afghanistan. These societal realities, in this case, can be best comprehended through individual accounts of the survivors of the war. The novelists, whose works are
investigated in this study, while seeing their homeland and its modern history as a tapestry rent and torn by invasions and internal conflicts, act as cultural proxies between their homeland and their host societies. They serve as cultural informants for understanding and learning about a people’s experience. They, through portraying the trauma-filled lives of the protagonists, play an important role for the troubled Afghan civil society.

This study attempts to investigate the idea of a traumatized homeland, a place from where these writers have been displaced and, especially, the narratives of harsh journeys undertaken on account of the harsh conditions in Afghanistan. This collective trauma can be best portrayed through bringing forth the trauma-filled lives of the individual characters. This endeavor sees how the Afghan writers are haunted by the episodes of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, the rise of the Taliban and the migration of millions of Afghans to Pakistan and other countries, and the ensuing troubles of the Afghan people due to these problems as portrayed by Atiq Rahimi in *Earth and Ashes* (2002) and Khaled Hosseini in *The Kite Runner* (2003). These two novels have been selected for this study because the incidents and characters in these novels suffer mainly due to the war in Afghanistan. Most of the incidents are primarily caused by the war, which is an important variable under investigation in this study. Moreover, the main characters in these novels show symptoms of traumatized individuals, who represent many Afghan civilians going through the trauma of war in their country. Thus, the selection of these two novels for this study has been carried out after proper perusal of the texts through the yardstick the fact if the texts cater for war trauma and history.
The analysis of the novels is carried out, keeping in view the model for engaging with trauma that seeks to work through the overwhelming events – a process which involves acknowledging and transforming the legacy of trauma while trying to leave its debilitating effects behind. The study, thus, focuses on how the protagonists come to terms with the shattering experiences by which they are deeply marked. The events described in these novels are not historical accounts of the novelists by any means; yet, these novels are important public forums in as much as they encourage the empathy of readers by illustrating the effects of the war on survivors, thereby carrying out the ethical task of preserving the vanished and often disavowed moments of Afghan history. In order to carry out the analysis of the novels, an introduction to trauma theory is presented here:

### 1.3 The Basics of Trauma Theory

Trauma: an event in the subject life defined by its intensity, by the subject’s incapacity to respond adequately to it, and by the upheaval and long-lasting effects that it brings about in the psychical organization. (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1974, p. 465)

The essence of psychological trauma is the loss of faith that there is order and continuity in life. Trauma occurs when one loses the sense of having a safe place to retreat within or outside oneself to deal with frightening emotions or experiences. (Van der Kolk, 1987, p. 12)

To accomplish this study, the research mostly relies on trauma theory, the main tenets of which are discussed and summarized before the analysis of the Afghan fiction in English, mainly Atiq Rahimi’s *Earth and Ashes* (2002) and Khaled Hosseini’s *The Kite Runner*
(2003). Majority of the works in the field of trauma studies are produced during the 1990s. A good deal of these theoretical frameworks, catering for the investigation and description of trauma, are written keeping in view the survivors of the Holocaust; however, these works are equally beneficial while investigating other traumatic incidents such as the 9/11 and the war in Afghanistan.

The first ever examination of trauma started with the investigation into the concept of hysteria at the Paris hospital La Salpêtrière with French neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot, with whom Sigmund Freud and Pierre Janet studied in the 1880s (Herman, 1994). Freud’s letters, which he wrote to his colleague Wilhelm Fliess between 1887 and 1897, indicate that his concept of Nachträglichkeit comes to the fore at the same time when the seduction theory of neurosis was developed. According to these trauma theories by Freud that he developed while treating his female patients for hysteria, and for which he used the term Nachträglichkeit in Part II of his book “Project for a Scientific Psychology” that was published posthumously in 1950, he says, “We invariably find that a memory is repressed which has only become a trauma by deferred action” (italics in original).

The aforementioned ‘delayed reaction’ phenomenon in trauma came under investigation and has been discussed by many researchers (Young, 1995; Fassin & Rechtman, 2009; Luckhurst, 2008; Bistoen, Vanheule & Craps, 2014); similarly, a number of empirical studies, which were carried in this field, also endorsed the value and importance of this

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1 Freud’s reference to the “retranscription” of memories and the structural principal of Nachträglichkeit. Nachträglichkeit (and its adverbial form nachträglich) is a word repeatedly used by Freud but never developed by him into a consistent theory. It has been translated by Jean Laplanche as “afterwardsness.”
deferred action (Andrews, Brewin, Philpott, & Stewart, 2007; Carty et al., 2006; Berninger et al., 2010; Yehuda et al., 2009; Bistoen, Vanheule & Craps, 2014). Moreover, a comprehensive analysis came to the conclusion that, on average, 38.2% and 15% of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) cases in military and civilian samples, respectively, have proved to come up with delayed reactions after they were hit by trauma (Andrews et al., 2007). It is also pertinent to mention here that an individual’s experience that s/he undergoes right after an incident does not qualify him/her for being traumatized until the given conditions are fulfilled (APA, 1987, 1994, 2000, 2013).

However, in the first ever explanation that came before all the aforementioned studies, Freud (1895) asserted that an effect that is created by the memory of an unpleasant incident is simply unavailable when the incident takes place, adding that the memory of incident arouses an effect with a completely new understanding of the incident that has taken place in the past. What he means by this is that the victim of a traumatic incident comprehends the traumatic effects of the incident only after some time has passed and the victim is haunted by the trauma when he remembers that incident and encounters the trauma for the second time.

Freud’s theory of Nachträglichkeit that was published in his coauthored book with Joseph Breuer with the title Studies on Hysteria (1895), he termed the concept as ‘retention hysteria.’ They explained it as a kind of disorder in the memory, adding that this psychical trauma works like a foreign agent in the mind. They assert that it is not as if it is some kind of a symptom or a question of the repetition of an action; rather, the whole
unpleasant experience is saved in the mind and the whole incident reoccurs as soon as an incident similar to the ones experienced by the victim is witnessed. This gap between the actual incident and its reoccurrence is, as Freud terms it, incubation. Freud and Breuer (1895) hold that as soon as the affected person starts talking about the incident and verbalize the feelings, the symptoms and the overall grip of the incident disappear.

The issue of latency and the whole concept of trauma and the seduction theory came to Freud’s findings after he dealt with the case history of Katharina. This case was confronted by Freud when he was on a vacation trip. Freud came to know that Katharina had seen her father in bed with her cousin, after which she was suffering from feelings of hatred, disgust, and anxiety attacks. She was unaware of why she was having anxiety attacks with such intensity. However, after getting counseling and treatment from Freud, she revealed that she, at the age of 14, went through the unpleasant experience of being sexually assaulted by her father. Freud writes about Katharina’s feelings after she revealed this incident, saying that she felt lively, exalted and relaxed after telling him about the incident. After that, Freud says that Katharina was having the anxiety attacks because that incident had reminded her of the traumatic experience that she herself had gone through in the past. So, Freud and his colleague gave several insights related to trauma studies after investigating the case of Katharina.

It was not until 1980 that trauma, related mainly to combat veterans, was investigated, discussed and taken into consideration. However, in 1980, the year that is known for marking the birth of the modern trauma studies, American Psychiatric Association (APA)
acknowledged and included Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in its official *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* (DSM-III). The contemporary trauma studies got this recognition mainly due to the problems faced by the veterans of war in Vietnam. Later on, noted psychiatrists such as Judith Lewis Herman (1994) made attempts to include, into this exclusively combat related disorder, other forms of traumas caused by terrorism, war, and domestic and sexual violence as she published her book *Trauma and Recovery: From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (1992). From then on, the contemporary trauma studies has been having a more inclusive approach towards trauma and PTSD as it brought together hitherto separated experiences of trauma, caused by domestic and sexual violence, war, and terrorism. Herman (1994) declares that the investigation into war trauma and sexual trauma follow the same trajectory if considered their journey in the past. She says that war trauma in the context of World War I was studied as war neuroses or shell-shock, adding that it was replaced by the PTSD during the studies concerning the Vietnam war veterans.

Outlining the main symptoms of PTSD, Davison, Neale and Kring (2004) provide a comprehensive account of the disorder. They say that the survivor, first of all, re-experiences the trauma through nightmares related to the traumatic experience, adding that this flashback can also be in the form of various forms of stimuli that remind the survivor of trauma about the incident that s/he has witnessed. They assert that the survivor can be reminded of the traumatic experience through stimuli such as places, smells and sounds, which are associated to the actual traumatic experience. Further, they say that as the stimuli have a very negative effect on the survivor, s/he tries to avoid it,
which ultimately leads to manifest avoidance, which is the second stage of the PTSD. The third stage that they highlight is the loss of memory. Here, the survivor’s behavior of avoidance towards the stimuli can cause the feeling of detachment from one’s self and others, thus causing the survivor to lose the detailed memory of the incident of trauma.

The fourth and last stage, according to the writers is that the survivor experiences an increased alertness, problems with sleep, manifest startle response, and an increased emotional and physical arousal. They assert that the survivor may also suffer from the problems of depression, anger, anxiety and the survivor’s guilt. Mentioning a subtype of the disorder, the American Psychiatric Association (2013) outlines, in its *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, DSM-5*, the dissociative symptoms of the disorder, saying that some survivors may experience the problem of depersonalization, which means that a human being may feel as if s/he is out of his/her own body and is experiencing and witnessing the whole event. The aforementioned manual further says that the survivor may also go through the de-realization feeling, which hallmarks the state of mind that the world, which holds the survivor as its part, is not real and that everything that s/he sees or witnesses are all unreal.

Despite the aforementioned detailed discussion on PTSD, it can be said that all the people

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2*DSM-5, published in 2013, Criterion A has again received important revisions. It now reads as follows: the person was exposed to: death, threatened death, actual or threatened serious injury, or actual or threatened sexual violence, as follows: (1 required) (a) Direct exposure, (b) witnessing, in person, (c) indirectly, by learning that a close relative or close friend was exposed to trauma. If the event involved actual or threatened death, it must have been violent or accidental, (d) repeated or extreme indirect exposure to aversive details of the event(s), usually in the course of professional duties (e.g., first responders, collecting body parts; professionals repeatedly exposed to details of child abuse). This does not include indirect non-professional exposure through electronic media, television, movies, or pictures (National Center for PTSD, 2013)*
who go through, or witness, a traumatic incident do not suffer from the post-traumatic stress disorder. This is in line with the fact that it is the survivor’s emotional response to the incident rather than the nature of the event that mainly deals with the symptoms of PTSD (Maercker, Beauducel, & Schützwohl, 2000; Boals & Schuettler, 2009). The objective data, concerning this phenomenon, proves this point that subjective interpretation does play a vital part in causing PTSD (Ehlers & Clark, 2000; Boals & Schuettler, 2009; Van der Kolk, McFarlane, & Weisaeth, 2007). Davison, Neale and Kring (2004) outline the following factors which play an important role in turning a trauma survivor into a PTSD affected person. They assert that a person’s proclivity to have this disorder depends on his/her record of other such disorders, which are caused by previous traumatic incidents, the intensity of the trauma itself, familial predisposition to disorders, and the perceived threat to his/her life and the lives of his/her loved ones.

Moreover, Davison, Neale and Kring (2004) highlight the fact that the survivor’s reaction at the start of the traumatic incident, and also the mechanism that s/he follows later on after the traumatic incident is over, can play an important role in showing if the person is suffering from the disorder or not. They add that if a person tries to avoid stimuli that remind him/her of the trauma, there is every possibility that he is developing the disorder, compared to the person who can think of the experience and has the courage to see things, as they are, without making attempts to avoid them.

To sum it up, they state that just like disorders of other sorts, the development of PTSD also depends to a great deal on the overall attribution style of the survivor, and to an
equal extent on the presence, absence or lack of social support system where the survivor is living. (Davison, Neale & Kring, 2004)

Following on the aforementioned individual demeanor of the survivor, certain other risk factors to develop PTSD are poor emotional intelligence of the survivor, his/her introvert personality, second hand trauma, mental stress witnessed in others, and a prolonged exposure to the incidents of trauma (Dunne, 2008). Moreover, the frame of mind of the survivor at the time when the traumatic incident takes place can also have a lasting effect on his/her response and reaction to the incident of trauma (Creamer, Burger and Pattison, 1992). So, the individual ethos of the survivor such as his/her attitude, mental proclivity and beliefs play an important role in not only developing the PTSD but also in the recovery stage of the victim.

Explaining the treatment for a PTSD victim, Davison et al (2004) assert that most of the treatments highlight the importance of decreasing the anxiety that is caused by the response to the traumatic stimuli through explicitly confronting the trauma and working through it. The stimuli that cause fear can be controlled if the victim is sensitized with it through a carefully planned process, where, for example, the victim is exposed to the stimuli such as a certain sound, smell or making him or her visit the place that makes the victim remember the trauma (Lönnqvist et al., 2007).

In this manner, when the survivor is made to see and face what he fears the most in the form of the stimuli, his/her associative links between the memories of trauma and anxiety
become weak and s/he is helped to work through the trauma. Davison et al (2004) reiterate that the recovery process largely depends on support towards the survivor from his/her group, family, and friends, adding that the recovery from PTSD is dependent on how helpful and supportive the survivor’s social circle is.

When it comes to stressful life events, the distinction between normative and non-normative life events comes in handy (Schwarzer & Luszczynska 2012). According to Schwarzer and Luszczynska, normative events are the normal everyday events, which do not have anything unusual about them, such as people get married or graduate from universities. Such events do not generate any significant stress on the mind. However, on the other hand, the non-normative events are usually unusual, unexpected and have the potential to cause mental stress.

The aforementioned writers assert that incidents or events such as illness, accidents, and disasters etc are some of these events which cause mental trauma among victims, adding that the main trait of these events is their scope for being unexpected and uncontrollable. This trait is of such nature that it has the potential to cause stress of every kind. Once hit by such incidents, the victim goes through certain stages of PTSD, which are discussed below:

The different stages of PTSD, as outlined by Lönnqvist et al (2007), following a natural disaster or an act of violence, are as under. The first stage is called the threat phase, which takes place only if the traumatic incident progresses gradually. In this phase, the
victim’s anxiety about the imminent danger increases continuously. The second stage is that of the shock phase, which takes place when the victim has already witnessed the immediate threat. At this stage, victims usually are unable to respond to what they have undergone or witnessed; they also avoid remembering the experience. Some victims of trauma may seem surprisingly calm while others may be in a state of heightened agitation. This is followed by the reaction phase, when the victims try to accommodate the incident of trauma in their lives. Here, they make attempts to put the incident in perspective by trying to make sense of what has already happened to them. Many victims may start talking about the incident a great deal, and thus re-experience what has already happened to them.

Lönnqvist et al (2007) assert that the next stage is the processing phase, where the survivor of a traumatic incident starts realizing the reality and process the feelings connected to the incident. This gives way to explicit process of grieving about the incident of trauma. After this comes the reorientation phase where the victim starts considering the tragedy as a part of his/her life, thus dealing with the trauma as no more like an experience that is beyond usual human experience. This act of incorporating the trauma as a part of personal identity can be used as an inspiration for personal development.

Other models for recovery from trauma are also used in studies like this; perhaps, most notably, Herman’s (1997) model with her three stages that consist of (1) the establishment of safety in the life of the survivor of trauma, (2) the reconstruction of the
trauma by the survivor and (3) the survivor’s reconnection with normal life is commonly used in such studies. Essentially, however, both models stress the importance of social support and working through the traumatic experience in order to accept it as part of one’s life story.

The biggest impact of the psychological trauma is that it shatters one’s identity through its pervasiveness and uncontrollability. The exposure of the incident is so much beyond the usual human experience that the victims of trauma suffer damage to the basic structures of the self (Herman, 1997). In the same vein, according to LaCapra (2001), the main characteristic of trauma is that it breaks the self apart during the whole process. This happens because what characterizes a traumatic event is the fact that the fundamental assumptions of the sense of control of one’s self and the sense of safety are taken away, leaving the victim with a shaken trust in him/herself and his/her surroundings. In this manner, not only does trauma shakes the victim’s trust in him/herself but it also affects his/her relations with the people, living around him/her.

So, as Herman (1992) explains, the impact of trauma is so huge that it compromises the victim’s trust in self and others. She adds that, on the one hand, trauma compels the victim to stay aloof from people living around him/her, while, on the other hand, it also makes him/her dependent on them, thus placing the victim in a state of utter confusion. As a result, the trauma victim’s behavior towards people around him/her turns unusual and unstable that is marked by contradictory things like intimacy at one time and complete detachment at another. (Herman, 1992)
Thus, trauma came into existence as a theory. In other words, with its warped temporality and inquisitive structural expression, psychic trauma caters for the reenactments of experiences, which went missing from getting recorded at the time when the incident took place. The very history of trauma theory is termed, as Herman (1992) puts it, as that of episodic amnesia because this has time and again guided researchers and critics into realms, which were considered as unthinkable in the past. She adds that denial, dissociation and repression have, since long, been considered as essential parts of the individual as well as social conscious and that trauma theory is related to addressing the complication arising from this phenomenon.

On the same note, Tal (1996) observes that the penalty on a social as well as individual level for this act of repression is repetition, which in trauma theory is termed as flashback and acting out etc. It becomes clear that putting trauma incident in the framework of history cannot separate theory and events from each other. Caruth (1995) highlights the same phenomenon in the following words:

> Once the notion of traumatic temporality has been introduced, it is no longer simply possible to place this notion within a larger and more traditional temporal framework (i.e., to place the conceptual event of the theory of trauma within the framework of the empirical, institutional, and cultural histories that are its context), since that would disavow the central insight of the theory, which suggests that our more traditional conceptual histories may have to be rethought. (p. 19)

Caruth (1995), while explaining this interconnection between theory and trauma, asserts that history re-enters theory in the temporal conception of trauma. Drawing from Freud, as she discusses the inseparability of the theorization of trauma and its history, Caruth emphasizes that Freud (1895), while trying to escape the neuroses, accidentally meets
Katharina (as mentioned before), takes on her all-important case study, suggesting, in the words of Freud himself, “as if the theory itself emerged as the interruption of a forgetting.”

Thus, as the victim of trauma is hit by the memories of the incident long after the threat has vanished; similarly, the investigation into trauma is usually not carried out at the moment of the traumatic incident but after some time, when the conventional method of recording events, namely, history, fails to grasp the intensity of the shocks felt by the victims. According to Pozorski (2006), trauma emerged as an event that was not recognized the way it should have been until it repeatedly returned with greater impetus through literary productions, historical events and political studies. This theory related background to trauma leads us to the representation of trauma in literary productions.

An upsurge of publication has been visible in the field of psychological trauma and its representation in literature, during the last 20 years or so, mainly concerning and depicting events which cannot be grasped and depicted through historical accounts. The mostly traumatized world that provides a great deal of subject matter to cater for in the fields of the Holocaust Studies, art, science, law, psychiatry, literature and historiography, the unison of literature and trauma attempts to investigate how these untellable stories are represented and what aspects, which went missing from the historical accounts, are highlighted. Such is the extreme and unusual nature of the concept of representation in these events that it geared up researchers for their great interest in trauma studies during the last couple of decades.
This need for the new concept of representation led to tremendous publication of trauma narratives in both fictional as well as non-fictional streams after the works on contemporary trauma theory by literary scholars as Cathy Caruth, Shoshana Felman, and Geoffrey Hartman in 1990s. As a result of this emergence of literary trauma, the importance of the relationship of literature and trauma grew manifold.

Thus, Rivkin and Ryan (2004) and Wolfreys (2002) declare that trauma theory turned into and emerged as an important critical category in the field of literary studies. According to Hartman (1995) and Wolfreys (2002), the well-established status of trauma theory in literary studies is mainly due to the fact that it is constructed on the foundations of psychoanalytic discourse and deals with subject matter on the yardsticks of psychoanalytic literary criticism. The coordination of literary studies and the modern trauma theory has grown so much due to the increasing traumatic events around the world that a number of contemporary authors such as Ann Whitehead (2004) and Vickroy (2002) discuss this relationship in unison terming it as Trauma Fiction.

The reference of trauma through literature comes under scrutiny for a start due to the curious spatiotemporal structure of trauma that cannot be represented through the traditional ways of representation. The question that inevitably comes to mind regarding this representation of trauma through literature is how literature can represent trauma when trauma resists narrativization due to its incomprehensibility upon occurrence. If, as Caruth (1995) asserts, trauma eschews being recorded through the language, it means that it cannot be represented in any form that is linguistically recognized. However, Caruth
further explains this representability issue, saying that although trauma cannot be expressed upon occurrence but it does not mean that its references should be ruled out altogether. She adds that the victim’s experience of the incident of trauma is termed as an unclaimed experience because it is inherently unrepresentable due to its disruptive referentiality. Caruth’s explanation of the phenomenon is in line with what Felman and Laub (1992) say, according to which the survivor’s failure or inability to make sense of the event lies at the base of trauma. They argue:

Trauma survivors live not with memories of the past, but with an event that could not and did not proceed through to its completion, has no ending, attained no closure, and therefore, as far as its survivors are concerned, continues into the present and is current in every respect. The survivor, indeed, is not truly in touch with either the core of his traumatic reality or with the fatedness of its reenactments, and thereby remains entrapped in both (1992, p. 69).

Thus, the survivor remains trapped in the moment of the incident and simply cannot move on. The severity of the incident and its ensuing impact is so intense that the survivor is unable to bring the incident to an end in his mind, even when the actual incident has already gone past. So, the flashbacks and haunting of this incident continue to hover around the survivor and keep the incident as fresh and untainted in his/her mind as a recording on a videotape (Tal, 1996).
1.4 Research Objectives

The main objective of the study is to investigate the relationship between trauma, fiction and history, with special reference to the fictional portrayal of the war in Afghanistan. Following the pattern of trauma fiction that covers mainly the accounts of the Holocaust survivors and/or the incident of 9/11, the purpose of this study is to analyze the selected Afghan fiction in English in the light of trauma literary theory to investigate the individual accounts of survivors of war in Afghanistan.

One of the objectives of the study is to carry out a detailed study of trauma and PTSD. In this vein, the research aims at studying the works of the torchbearers in the field of trauma theory such as Cathy Caruth and Dominic LaCapra to see how they defined and explained trauma. More importantly, the study makes an endeavor to see how Caruth linked this purely psychological concept with history. The study aims to use the same link between trauma and history to analyze the characters in the novels under discussion. This research project also studies and records the contributions by other noted writers like Shoshana Felman, Dori Laub, Kali Tal, Ann Whitehead, and others. The research aims to discuss and bring forth the pertinent points of these writers in a bid to analyze the selected works by the Afghan writers.

The study endeavors to see if the individual accounts of the survivors of war and their trauma, as portrayed in the selected Afghan fiction in English are in accordance with the various aspects of trauma literary theory and its tenets as outlined by the aforementioned writers and critics. This study further aims at endeavoring to see if the individual
accounts of trauma are limited to the individuals only, or they, just like the accounts of the Holocaust survivors, can also be applied to the Afghan society as a whole, leading to show the individual trauma as a collective trauma. Moreover, this study endeavors to see if, following Caruth’s footsteps, the survivors’ accounts, as portrayed in the selected fiction, can be taken as of some historical significance in terms of the truth value that these accounts carry.

One of the objectives of the study is to see how the characters in the selected novels cope with the trauma of war. Various coping mechanisms such as the ones by Kai Erikson, Dominic LaCapra and Judith Lewis Herman have been used to see if the coping with trauma strategies used by the characters as well as their reactions to the overwhelming nature of trauma are in accordance with the models which are recommended by the aforementioned writers. This analysis of the coping strategies used by the characters is helpful in establishing how realistically the characters and their traumas have been portrayed by the novelists; thus, enabling the study to see if the witness accounts of trauma as verbalized by the characters can qualify for maintaining any truth value to augment the related history.

Before carrying out an analysis of the selected fiction, the study also aims to carry out a detailed investigation into the work done in the field of trauma fiction in a bid to be able to bring this study at par with the research carried out in other parts of the world. The research aims at taking a step ahead of the endeavors that investigated the trauma of
fictional characters belonging to the holocaust, the Vietnam War, and the 9/11 by expanding the range of trauma literary theory and the related investigation to the incidents of trauma in countries like Afghanistan. The details of studies, which have been carried out by other researchers to cater for fictional representation of trauma in other parts of the world, have been provided in the chapter on Literature Review.

1.5 Research Questions

In critical exploration of the texts, selected for the research with reference to war trauma, history and fiction, the study tries to address the subsequent three significant questions:

1. Keeping in view the concepts of *Acting Out* and/or *Working Through* in trauma theory, how do the traumatized characters in the selected Afghan fictional narratives in English articulate their witnessing of trauma, and what measures do the traumatized characters take to cope with the overwhelming incident of war in order to recover from the trauma and reconnect to everyday life?

2. In what ways can the trauma of the individual characters in the selected novels be ascribed to the collective trauma of Afghan society as a whole, and how does this narrativization of their accounts highlight the collective war-impacted ravages in the Afghan society?
3. Following Cathy Caruth’s footsteps, can the portrayal of trauma of the individual characters in the selected novels add something to the history which is recorded under the traditional documented evidence?

1.6 Delimitation of the Study

According to Miller (1990), it is important to identify delimitations in the course of designing any research study to assure validity. This study focuses on the characters’ reaction to the overwhelming nature of the incident of war, their coping mechanisms, and the nature of their trauma as either individual, collective or both. The research also pays special attention to see how these accounts, by the surviving characters who witnessed the war, can, in the light of trauma literary theory, qualify for augmenting history due to their truth value.

1.7 Significance of the Study

Fictional narratives are a vivid source of information for readers and, in particular, for those who do not have firsthand experience with the indigenous people. As Appel and Richter (2007) assert, narrative has an implicit influence on the way people view the world as well as shifting people’s worldview. Yet one is left to wonder how the popular fictional narratives in English represent the Afghan people to the Western readers, who
rely on these outlets as the firsthand source of information, and the question remains whether this sort of mass media device reproduces what the Western news media represents or if it depicts the Afghan people and their trauma differently. To the knowledge of the researcher, there is no sufficient study in this area. Searching the dissertation abstracts and research databases through online libraries, the researcher concluded that the research in this domain is insufficient and that this gap needs to be filled through this doctorate level study.

To fill this gap in literature, the researcher chose the selected popular novels, which are written by Afghan authors to examine and uncover the images of trauma, experienced by Afghan people. The purpose of this project is to discover the traumatic incidents embedded in these novels. This study tries to fill the erstwhile gap by providing additional information to the reservoirs of knowledge with reference to the study of trauma narratives, which are arising from the Afghan soil. In addition, it attempts to broaden the sphere of interpretation and practical understanding of the novels by the Afghan writers.

Tracing the war trauma of a country like Afghanistan, which is not as developed or technologically advanced as most of the European and American countries are, brings to attention the fact that just like the Holocaust, the Vietnam War and the 9/11, the trauma of the Afghan people also hurts. The people in Afghanistan and other such war-hit countries as well as their related traumas require as much attention as do the people in the
technologically advanced countries, because what is common among people throughout the world is the fact that they feel the same feelings when confronted with trauma of one sort or another. The study is vital in its message that one person’s trauma should be felt by his/her fellow beings, no matter where s/he is from and no matter what his/her location is, because, as Caruth (1996) states that people all over the world are implicated in each other’s trauma.

Apart from bringing forth the basics of trauma theory as well as its link with history and fiction, the study is equally useful in discussing the models of coping with trauma by Judith Lewis Herman, Kai Erickson and Miller. LaCapra’s concepts of working through and acting out are useful in understanding the reactions of a trauma victim. The extensive explanation of the aforementioned models in the study is very helpful in analyzing fictional characters in terms of their reaction to trauma. This exhaustive explanation of the models and their application on characters in the selected novels are of great help for prospective researchers, who can study these models in order to understand them, see how the characters have been analyzed in the light of these models, and use any one of the models to carry out their analysis of trauma-hit characters in their research.

The study is equally significant in arousing interest among, and encouraging, other researchers to entrust themselves with working on literary productions of other writers from Afghanistan as well as Pakistan, which have been faced with the curse of terrorism. This endeavor encourages other researchers to look for the aftermaths of natural disasters
as portrayed in literature and to carry out a trauma analysis of these works. The detailed discussions on trauma literary theory, trauma symptoms as well as coping with trauma mechanisms, covered in this dissertation, attempt to greatly help researchers in Pakistan and other countries where, unlike the developed West, work on literary trauma theory is not that well known. This work tries to provide researchers with a reference book to most of the major works in literary trauma theory and helps to direct and guide on how to deal with a literary work with reference to this theoretical framework.

The study also provides an alternative to other researchers to investigate other fictional accounts of the ravages of war in Afghanistan in a bid to unearth and bring forth how the survivors of the war coped with the situation. Moreover, the study encourages other researchers to use the tenets of trauma theory to analyze literary productions written in Pashto and Dari composed by Afghan writers, so that the world can, not only, know the long lasting impact of the war on the Afghans, but also capture the real history, recorded by the first hand witnesses as well as victims of trauma in this country.

1.8 Chapter Division of the Study

The first chapter of the dissertation provides an introduction to the study by presenting a background and rationale for the endeavour. The study, first of all, contextualizes the research by briefly providing the impact of the recent wars in Afghanistan and
highlighting the problems of the inhabitants of this war-ravaged country. Here, the study draws an analogy between the trauma of the technologically advanced countries which went through the troubles of events like the Holocaust, the Vietnam War, and the 9/11, and the trauma of the people in Afghanistan, necessitating the argument that an investigation into the fictional representation of the trauma-hit lives of the Afghan people is as in place as that of the technologically advanced countries. The chapter outlines the characteristics of trauma fiction and its relationship with history as mentioned in the works of writers like Cathy Caruth, Dominic LaCapra, Kali Tal, Ann Whitehead and others. The chapter also provides the thesis statement, objectives, significance, research questions, and delimitation of the research.

The second chapter of the dissertation titled, Literature Review, discusses the works of major theorists in trauma theory. This chapter caters for some of the basic concepts and debates involved in the study of trauma. Here, the study incorporates the place of history in this whole discussion and relates the records of trauma narratives in this discipline. The works of most of the noted writers like Cathy Caruth, Dominic LaCapra, Shoshana Felman, Kali Tal, Ann Whitehead and others come under discussion in this part. Apart from a detailed discussion on these works, the study refers to the use of these theories in research works which investigate fictional characters of narratives related to the Holocaust, the Vietnam War, and the 9/11 etc. Moreover, the last part of the chapter discusses several trauma-based cultural productions in the forms of movies, plays, and novels, which are based real as well as imaginary incidents. This part of the study also accumulates a good deal of research that has been carried out on fictional narratives,
which are based on the incidents of trauma. This portion of the chapter highlights various aspects of trauma theory which has been used by several researchers.

The Third chapter titled, Research Methodology, explains the theory and outlines the models which are used in this study. The works of Freud, Caruth, LaCapra, Felman, Whitehead, Tal, Laub, and Craps come under consideration here when these works are studied with reference to history. This part of the study also explains the models for coping with trauma mechanism, used for this project. Mainly, the works of LaCapra, Herman and Miller come under consideration here to gauge the traumatic effects of trauma on individual characters and also the way these characters cope with the trauma that they are faced with. This part of the dissertation discusses in detail the various aspects of these models and also outlines the ways, which are used to incorporate the models in the study to carry out the investigation.

The fourth and fifth chapters of the dissertation, bring forth the traumatic events as described in Hosseini’s *The Kite Runner* and Rahimi’s *Earth and Ashes*. Here, the research pays special attention to all the tenets of trauma theory as outlined by the aforementioned noted writers to see if the reactions and coping with trauma strategies of the individual characters, who went through the trauma, are in accordance with what the theorists in the field of trauma have put forth. Here, the study also pays special attention to the models outlined in the chapter on Research Methodology. This part of the study discusses in detail both novels to look for the ways how the novelists articulate traumatic
incidents through the characters, and what historical value these accounts carry. This is the part where all the steps outlined in the Research Methodology part are followed in a bid to achieve the objectives and look for answers to the questions which are mentioned in the introduction part of the dissertation.

The sixth chapter, titled Conclusions and Recommendations, provides answers to the Research Questions, outlined in the Introduction part of the dissertation. Here, the study highlights the results and findings of the whole endeavor to see if the research questions, mentioned in the first chapter, have been answered. In the light of these findings, the study suggests recommendations for prospective researchers in this field. These recommendations are supported by the findings, which are based on the whole research project.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Origin of Trauma

Trauma [...] does not fit into a single story, cannot simply be recounted and left behind; instead, it must be retold endlessly. (Robson, 2004, p. 186)

Trauma is not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual’s past, but rather in the way that its very unassimilated nature – the way it was precisely not known in the first instance – returns to haunt the survivor later on. (Caruth, 1996, p.4)

As briefly mentioned in the last chapter that the origin of the concept of trauma dates back to the theories of Sigmund Freud, this phenomenon found place in his discussions on psychology and psychoanalysis during the last decade of the 19th century. Freud (1895) argues that the cases of hysteria among women are due to psychological trauma that they go through, further explaining that this happens with women, who are sexually abused at a young age. He goes on to explain that such women experience the real trauma when they are in their puberty, adding that their trauma “consists of two scenes - the earlier (in childhood) having sexual content but no meaning, the later (in puberty) having no sexual content but sexual meaning” (quoted in Caruth, 1995, p. 9). He asserts that such women go through the real intensity of the event due to this latency of feeling.
Freud terms this delay as ‘belatedness’. Relating this concept of temporal delay, Codde (2009) stresses that Freud’s model concerning delay in relating the trauma of child abuse can be applied to trauma of other sorts also.

However, it was later on that Freud adjusted his theories mainly when soldiers, during the World War I, returned home with war phobia. This happened to certain soldiers, who had never actually been on the battlefield. This gave Freud the hint that in order for the flashbacks of trauma to take place, it is not mandatory for the survivor to have gone through the actual traumatic experience. The same situation occurred during the World War II; however, it was only during the war in Vietnam that this disorder was formally recognized. Thus, this important phenomenon, which was ignored for a very long time, got recognition from the American Psychiatric Association in 1980, when it was termed as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). PTSD replaced the previously used terms such as traumatic neurosis, combat stress, shell-shock, and delayed stress syndrome. In the past, it, according to Caruth (1995), was also mentioned as ‘response to both human and natural catastrophes’ (p.3).

2.2 The Nature of Trauma

For questions like how a traumatic incident impacts human mind, and how traumatic incidents resurface in the mind to replay in words whatever the mind had experienced in the near past, Caruth’s detailed works Trauma: Explorations in Memory (1995) and
Caruth, while defining trauma, says that it can be described as ‘an overwhelming experience’ that is related to an event of sudden or catastrophic nature, adding that the response on part of the individual, who is going through it, is usually in the form of a “delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena” (Caruth, 1996, p. 11).

What Caruth suggests by saying that the victim found the incident overwhelming is that the mind of the victim was not ready for this unusual experience. In this case, the victim was not prepared to go through this feeling of pain, a phenomenon which according to LaCapra (2001), is named by Freud as Angstbereitschaft. Caruth goes on to explain that since the traumatic incident is beyond usual human experience, it cannot be grasped in its actuality by the victim, adding that the victim needs time to comprehend and then relate what actually happened that s/he witnessed. This reaction which comes in the form of flashbacks of the incident haunting the victim is, as mentioned earlier, as PTSD. Caruth broadly defines PTSD in her introduction to Trauma: Explorations in Memory (1995), saying that there is no one-line definition of PTSD; however, there is a general consensus on the fact that the victim exhibits a response to a traumatic event which s/he has gone through and that response is usually delayed, adding that it is in the form of dreams, hallucinations, thoughts about the event, inclination towards or avoidance of the factors, which cause the remembrance of that event, and/or a general numbness during or after the flashback of the event (Caruth, 1995, p. 4).
The aforementioned details show that the prime feature of PTSD is that the victim, at the time of the occurrence of the traumatic event, is unaware of its impact. It is mainly due to the unexpectedness of the event that the mind is unable to cope with it. This inability to process the trauma creates the gap between the actual trauma and its processing by the mind. Before Caruth, Freud (1939) defined this latency by saying that it may happen to someone who experienced and witnessed a train collision but he went unharmed. Freud explains that the survivor, after a few weeks, will develop certain serious symptoms which can be related to the experience that s/he witnessed. At this stage, Freud says, the victim has already developed a ‘traumatic neurosis’. Freud further explains that the time between the accident and the first visible symptom is the ‘incubation period’ which, quite interestingly, is signaling at what usually happens in infectious diseases.

In order to explain why this delay, in showing this symptom, occurs after the victim experiences the train crash accident, Caruth (1995) says that the delay is not due to the fact that the victim suppresses or forgets the trauma; rather, it is because the victim, at the time of the accident, is not fully aware of what had actually happened around him. She adds that this is the reason why the mind of the survivor does not have any imprint on the accident. She goes on to show that the latency is not due to forgetting the reality that has occurred but this is due to the delay in understanding the traumatic experience (Caruth, 1995, & Caruth, 1996). In response to Freud’s thesis that the delay is due to the victim’s forgetting of the incident for some time, Caruth (1996) asserts that the victim cannot forget the incident because s/he, due to dissociation, has not experienced it in its full capacity.
What Caruth says, as outlined in the previous paragraph, is sometimes considered as a serious disorder in personality. In this case, the survivor, who happens to have a close shave in such incidents, surviving some particular accident, does not happen to consider it as an accident that could have involved him in terms of the losses incurred on other people; rather s/he sees it like a spectacle as if he is witnessing an incident that does not involve him and that is happening to some other people, not him. It takes the victim quite some time, or it happens after proper therapy, that he is convinced that he is not someone who is not involved in the accident and that he, just like other survivors, is traumatized by the accident. At this juncture, it is worth noting that it is not the event or the ensuing trauma that haunts the survivor every now and then, but it is the very fact that haunts and disturbs the survivor that the incident was so traumatic and unexpected that it took the survivor aback.

Another trait of trauma is that the survivor of a traumatic incident goes through a double trauma. As a common understanding, the survivor of trauma, after going through all the required medication, therapies and counseling, should be more than happy for the fact that s/he, despite all odds, is still alive. But that is not the case. As discussed earlier in the light of what Freud (1895), and later on Caruth (1995) explained, that it is not possible for the human mind to register trauma as soon as it occurs; rather its impacts is more severe when it haunts the mind much after it occurred. Moreover, as Caruth (1996) asserts that it is not the traumatic neurosis in a traumatic event but the typically disturbing survival that the survivor goes through and that disturbs him/her more than anything else.
During his research on the trauma, as some soldiers were suffering from war phobia upon their return from the battlefield, Freud discovered that there was a highly disturbing relationship between trauma and survival, saying that this was the main reason why many soldiers were never content with the title of ‘survivors’.

This is mainly because it is not only the traumatic moment that they experienced was traumatic but the very fact of its passing out is something that disturbs them and “the survival itself can be a crisis” (Cauth, 1996, p. 9). This is quite true because nothing can be more traumatic for a survivor than the fact that s/he survived an accident that engulfed his/her dear ones or that eliminated many other people like him/her.

The same feeling or experience of double trauma usually forms the essence of many narratives, like the ones under discussion in this study. It is this contradictory nature of the survivor’s guilt of remaining alive or escaping the trauma that gives rise to this question, “Is the trauma the encounter with death, or the ongoing experience of having survived it (Caruth, 1996, p. 7)?” This contradiction is mainly due to the fact that the survivor is faced with a very challenging situation. S/he is unable to comprehend the tragedy of death of so many people, nor is he in a position to see his own survival because the deaths of so many people take place around him/her but he is still alive. When the survivor thinks about the death of these people he asks himself why was he not killed when all others were; thus, the only way out that he sees to cope with this situation, in so many cases, is to commit suicide. Caruth (1995) asserts that the most terrible thing for the survivor is not the flashback of the traumatic incident but the moment when he
becomes fully conscious of what had actually happened around him, adding that when the survivor dreams about the incident or has spatial flashbacks of the trauma, his/her unconscious is involved; however, the real trauma hits the survivor with its full strength when the survivor wakes up and regains complete consciousness.

Here, it is worth mentioning that the major part of trauma takes place not only because the survivor feels that s/he has survived it but when it dawns upon him/her that s/he has survived the traumatic incident without even knowing about it. This, as discussed earlier, appeals to the reason also because the survivor comes to know about the full intensity of the trauma when he regains consciousness.

This is, then, the time when he feels the intensity of how he survived when others around him were struck by the trauma. For the first time, the survivor comes to know through the flashbacks of the traumatic incident that he has survived the trauma. This is the point when, s/he, ironically does not ponder about his/her near death; rather s/he thinks about his mysterious survival (Caruth, 1996). The repetition of the flashback of the trauma is, as Caruth asserts, an attempt to comprehend the very fact that one has survived the incident despite all odds, adding that it is, in no way, an effort to say that one has almost died.

However, LaCapra (2004) warns readers not to see all the traumatized people as victims. He says that traumatized, in some cases, are actually the perpetrators of the traumatic incident, adding that one has to be careful in making this distinction. This is very
important when analyzing the works of fiction related to a certain traumatic incident. A perpetrator of a traumatic incident can definitely be traumatized by the things that s/he has committed but this in no way connotes that s/he should be considered similar to the ones who were subjected to the traumatic incident.

The readers of a work of fiction related to an incident of trauma should consider someone as a victim only when s/he belongs to a particular category on the basis of his/her social, political and ethical belonging; rather than by considering him as a victim merely because s/he is going through that particular psychological state of mind. This is applicable to the survivors of historical trauma, which is always limited and specific to a certain group of people and nobody else, who does not belong to that group or community, is entitled to be catered for in that category (LaCapra, 2001).

The reason why a number of works of fiction follow incidents of historical traumas is, as Caruth (1996) asserts, that trauma is not limited to an individual and that the survivor is not the sole proprietor of trauma; rather “history is precisely the way we are implicated in each other’s traumas” (Caruth, 1996, p. 24). This is the reason why writers create fictional characters but with historical incidents of trauma in a bid to enter the holistic structure where people are related to each other by being implicated in each other’s trauma. Moreover, this writing of and about trauma plays an important role in overcoming trauma itself as the discussion on coping with or overcoming trauma goes on in the next section.
2.3 Strategies to Overcome Trauma

Trauma, being a complicated injury to the mind, is not something that will heal overnight. In order for the victim of trauma to heal, the survivor needs proper treatment, comprising a variety of stages. For Freud (1895), mourning and melancholia are the various stages for the victim of trauma to overcome the problem. LaCapra (2001), however, comes up with the notion of ‘acting out’ and ‘working through,’ as the two phrases which, from then onwards are being used whenever it comes to discussion on trauma studies. Simply put, melancholia in victims of an incident of trauma can be taken for a form of acting out, while working through is the reaction of the survivor of a traumatic incident in the form of mourning.

According to LaCapra (2001), acting out is the behavior of the victim of trauma where s/he is unable to get out of the traumatic past. In this case, s/he, being stuck in the trauma of the past, repeats the same enigmatic incident through flashbacks, visible in his behavior or through nightmares. On the other hand, working through, as LaCapra puts it, is the case when the victim seems to have found a way out to overcome the trauma. Here, the victim accepts the fact that trauma is a part of his life, thinking of it as something that has already taken place. The victim, thus, by making the trauma as an incident from his life and his surroundings, mourns the destruction and starts to reconnect to everyday life. In this case, the survivor is capable of differentiating between what happened in the past and how the present is different from that past experience. Here, the survivor can think about the past event, feeling sure that he is living in the present and that he has a future
ahead (LaCapra, 2001). The acting out and working through may seem completely opposite responses to an incident of trauma, but, the fact of the matter is that these are the two stages in a survivor’s recuperation from the impact of trauma.

The aforementioned concepts of melancholy and mourning may also seem similar but mourning, as Freud (1895) describes, is more of an active working-through approach on part of the survivor; while melancholy, as Versluys (2009) asserts, is based on inertia that leads to self-hatred. Once again, these two stages are well connected to each other. In order for the survivor of an incident of trauma to recuperate from the impact of trauma, s/he will be able to work through the grief only when the acting out stage is over (Codde, 2009).

Another coping with trauma mechanism that has been used in the study to analyze the trauma-hit characters in the selected novels has been suggested by Miller (2000), who indicates various techniques for problem-focused and emotion-focused coping. Basically, the problem focused coping, according to Miller, is action centered and “is utilized when something solid can be achieved, for example, stealing blankets or additional rations of food” (p. xxii). On the other hand, emotion focused is to a greater extent a “thinking strategy.” When something tangible is not feasible, methods, for example, “fantasy,” “numbing,” “humour,” and “relationship with others” are all alternatives for shielding oneself from the effect of the trauma notwithstanding when not keeping the trauma from happening.
Miller (2000) brings up the idea that for some detained in Auschwitz, emotion centered coping was the main technique accessible since there was almost nothing one could do to effect one’s physical environment. In spite of the fact that her work was produced through meetings with women survivors and the center of her study is on their stories, her work can positively be connected to numerous trauma writings. She offers, for instance, a fine setting through which to peruse the regularly examined Night by Elie Wiesel (1960).

Commenting on Miller’s coping with trauma model, Dailey (2009) argues that the model is particularly useful when collective trauma such as any genocide or the holocaust related fictional narratives are being investigated, adding that such literature usually caters for such characters.

He further stresses that the usage of Miller’s “problem-focused coping” and “emotion-focused coping” strategy by the traumatized characters go on to show the real distress of the characters, further explaining that the exploitation of this model by researchers to track the trauma of characters can fully bring forth the seemingly inaccessible trauma to readers and that the real injury that people sustained in the form of group trauma can be best unearthed through this model. Following Dailey’s recommendations, the present study also uses this model as one of the tools to analyze the trauma of characters in the selected novels.

The study explains this model in the chapter on Research Methodology and extensively
applies it on the characters to see if their reaction to trauma is in accordance with the model in the fourth and fifth chapter of the study.

Among other coping with trauma models, Herman (1992), first discusses the various stages of how a victim of trauma reacts to the incident, and then goes on to elucidate the coping mechanism usually used by the victim. She argues that the first stage in this coping with trauma mechanism is that safety should be established in the life of the survivor of trauma. This means that the survivor should not only be physically safe but he should also have the sense of safety. This, Herman explains, goes on to show that the survivor should come out of the constant state of fear and s/he should be sure that s/he is out of danger. The second stage of Herman’s coping mechanism is that the survivor of trauma should be able to remember and mourn the incident, adding that the victim, at the third stage should be able to reconnect to everyday life.

Herman (1992) asserts that at the third stage of the model the survivor should be able to relate what trauma s/he has gone through. Herman says that in this manner the survivor “transforms the traumatic memory, so that it can be integrated into the survivor’s life story” (Herman, 1992, p.175). She says that as the third stage of this model is that the survivor should be able to return to everyday life, the survivor, with the support of the people, who are living around him, should be able to reconnect to everyday life and start a new beginning, after he has remembered the incident and mourned the losses.
Discussing Herman’s coping with trauma mechanism, Dailey (2009) applies certain aspects of the model on characters in Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye* (1970). He asserts that this novel is especially suitable for trauma analysis with reference to the aforementioned model by Herman because there are many layers of trauma when it comes to analyzing the characters. He says that these layers are evident when readers see Pecola in a state of complete helplessness due to the traumatic situation that she finds herself in. As Herman provides the coping with trauma strategy for characters like Pecola and Claudia who are in distress and who need some mechanism in order to survive the incident and move on, Dailey (2009) argues that Morrison provides an interesting situation in the novel as he presents Claudia with the availability of the survival tool, but these tools are nonexistent for Pecola. However, despite the unavailability of the survival tools, Pecola does not succumb to traumas such as her rape at the hands of her father, the indifference of people who are living close to her, and her neglectful and shaming mother. Pecola continues to survive the trauma, notwithstanding the fact that she definitely would have met a death that was psychic and spiritual rather than physical.

On the contrary, Dailey (2009) argues that the story of Claudia runs parallel to Pecola’s in the sense that they live and grow in the same place; however, the situation Claudia is in is different from that of Pecola because the former enjoys a sense of safety, which, according to Herman (1992) is the first stage in recovery from trauma. On the other hand, Pecola’s sufferings are caused by none other but her own parents, at a time when Claudia and her sisters are protected by their parents whenever the need arises, thus providing the sense of safety to them. The different treatment that both characters get is not limited to
their homes; rather, it continues in the same manner when they interact with their classmates, people in the family and other people in the vicinity. Claudia is blessed with a sense of safety as she considers her home as the safest place to return to; on the other hand, Pecola is under attack from most of the people she has been dealing with, and to add to her pain, she does not have the sense of safety even at home.

With this sense of safety with her, Claudia is in a position to tell the story of how she lived with Pecola for one year. Unlike Pecola, Claudia has a community to take care of her, and so is in a position to tell the account of the sufferings, because she, as Herman (1992) recommends has a sense of safety that is required as the first phase in recovering from trauma. Thus, following the very first phase in Herman’s model for the recovery of a trauma victim, readers know the reason why Pecola cannot survive. Dailey (2009) argues that readers understand the different treatment for Pecola and Claudia after they are struck by the trauma, adding that the non-supportive role of community in Pecola’s case makes it extremely hard for her to recover from trauma.

Dailey (2009) suggests that The Bluest Eye supports Herman’s model by suggesting the reason that is responsible for a trauma-hit character’s failure to survive in front of an overwhelming situation. He also asserts that a comparative analysis of the aforementioned Celie and Pecola make the point clear why Celie was able to recover from the trauma, but Pecola could not do so, adding that role of the community towards a trauma victim plays a decisive impact on the future of the victim.

Through the aforementioned model, Herman (1992) also advises for the recovery of the
victims of trauma that it is vital for the society to openly acknowledge the survivor’s trauma, adding that the people living around the survivor should take certain actions in this regard so that the survivor does not consider him or herself aloof from the rest of the community. Giving the example of traumatized soldiers, who return from war, the writer asserts that the soldiers look forward to the people living around them to tell them how they look at their actions in the war. She further notes that the soldiers always have this fear if their actions are being seen as honorable or the other way round, adding that they are also doubtful of the fact whether their sacrifices are being given due credit. She advises that it is the responsibility of the society to bridge the gap between the survivor and the society and to take actions in this regard in a bid to remove the concerns of the survivor. As the study also uses this model for analyzing the reaction of the trauma-hit characters in the selected novels, a detailed study of this mechanism is available in the chapter on Research Methodology.

Christ (1986) provides a coping with trauma model that is aimed at the analysis of literary productions in the field of trauma literature. She brings forth four stages, in her book *Diving Deep and Surfacing: Women Writers on Spiritual Quest*, to discuss the journey of female characters towards wholeness and self-identity as portrayed in writings by female authors. In her study, she recommends four stages for readers to track in a traumatized character, saying that a traumatized character goes through these stages when she is facing various traumas in her life, adding that the stages that lead the character to the ultimate concept of wholeness in her life are: nothingness, awakening, insight, and new naming.
Dailey (2009) asserts that the reader will be able to know the emptiness of the nothingness stage as well the reality of other stages because he will be in a position to see how the character moved from one stage to another, leading her to make these decisions on the basis of well-informed choices, and thus enabling the reader to assess the real value of a certain stage that leads her to heal from the trauma. She recommends that her model should not only be used to know how a character survived in the face of a trauma; rather, it is of equally great benefit for female readers to gauge and judge their own lives as well. Supporting her model and the related study in its value for women, Christ (1986) argues, “Women need a literature that names their pain and allows them to use the emptiness in their lives as an occasion for insight rather than as one more indicator of their wholeness” (p. 17). She further says that a writer achieves the status of wholeness if and when he writes about his personal trauma, because this is the time when he is lifted from the position of a victim.

Dailey (2009) uses the aforementioned model to analyze Alice Walker’s *The Color Purple* (1982) in order to trace the four stages of Christ’s (1986) concept of the trauma-character’s growth of character. He carries out this endeavor of using the model for the trauma analysis and sees how Celie, the protagonist in the novel develops her character after being faced with the trauma. In the novel, Dailey asserts that Celie, as a child has been repeatedly raped by her stepfather, resulting in getting pregnant twice and giving birth to children whom she was deprived of after their birth. Dailey further argues that Celie’s trauma did not come to an end as she was, later on, married to a man, who used to torture her physically and whose ill-mannered children made her life terrible.
According to Dailey, Celie’s character is in the stage of “nothingness” when the novel starts, saying that the situation for her is so overwhelmingly disturbing that this stage in her contact with trauma can be described as that of “nothingness.” Dailey says that this is the stage in the life of trauma-hit women when, according to Christ (1986), they experience “emptiness in their own lives - in self-hatred, in self-negation, and in being a victim” (p. 13). He further explains that, in this stage of nothingness, women question the meaning of life, reject conventional solutions to their worries, and open for themselves “the revelation of deeper sources of power and value” (Christ, 1986, p. 13).

As many people go through such stages in life when they feel an experience of such overwhelming nature, Christ, in fact, is referring to the feelings of powerlessness, desperation, and self-hatred which are usually experienced by the victims of trauma.

As a second stage in Christ’s model, the experiences of awakening and insight are quite evident in Celie’s character, who does not stop at the stage of nothingness but moves on to survive the traps of trauma. In the words of Christ (1986), the stage of awakening and insight is pretty much “similar to a conversion experience, in which the powers of being are revealed, [which] grounds [the woman] in a new sense of self and a new orientation in the world” (p. 13). She explains that “women overcome self-negation and self-hatred and refuse to be victims” (p.13) through this awakening, adding that characters like Celie and many other trauma-hit women like her do not see the representation of great powers in the traditional powerhouses of gods and deities which are considered as omnipresent; rather, she gets her power from her own experiences and tales of survival
amid all the traumatic incidents, in facing the troubles, in seeing the offender, and in finding her voice and proclaiming it in order no more to be dependent on him.

For Celie, this journey from the sense of nothingness to independence starts in the novel as soon as she is adored, appreciated and befriended by her teacher Shug, who makes her stand against things in life that she does not need to tolerate by loving her, and thus, making her feel that is she is worth loving and thus a full-fledged human being who does not need to live with the sense of nothingness. She start loving herself the moment she is able to love Shug. Her strength in herself multiplies as soon as her love for herself increases, thus enabling her to stand in front of her husband who is responsible for taking her sister Nettie away from her. Thus, as Christ (1986) asserts that Celie starts living with her great powers which are coming from anywhere but her inner self, necessitating the point that she is no more living inside the overwhelming nature of trauma that she has gone through and experienced.

Dailey (2009) argues that the victim, after distancing herself from the moment of trauma through this process of awakening, comes in a position where she can have an insight into her experience of trauma.

As Christ (1986) asserts that this then leads to the last stage, called naming of self, in coping with trauma, adding that this stage enables the victim of trauma to come to terms with her new reality that is based on the individual’s orientation to self and environment. She argues that the new naming is not just limited to the internal habitat of the survivor;
rather it demands from the person to let the world know about this new free of being oppressed individual who is powerful and not subjected to anyone’s brutality. Christ (1986) says that this new naming of the self is possible only when the victim is able to create a new home for herself and that the home is independent of anyone else’s influence, adding that she knows that she has a voice in everyday affairs, she uses it, and she does not stay connected with anyone who is a source of harming her.

Dailey (2009) argues that for researchers of trauma fiction, it is important to breakdown the story into pieces and see what stage of Christ’s model applies on a certain phase of Celie’s life, adding that this would be helpful in tracing her journey from the sense of nothingness to complete healing.

Commenting on the model, Dailey says that this approach requires readers to closely read the text of any given piece of fiction and trace the stages, while paying special attention to the phenomena which are responsible for a certain traumatized character’s shift from one phase to another.

### 2.4 Acting Out and Working Through

As discussed earlier, LaCapra (2001) presented his theory of acting out and working through in a bid to discuss the reaction of the victims of trauma towards the trauma that they survived and witnessed. He defines acting out as a condition of the victim of trauma where “one is haunted or possessed by the past and performatively caught up in the
compulsive repetition of traumatic scenes,” adding that in this condition, “tenses implode, and it is as if one were back there in the past reliving the traumatic scene” (LaCapra, 2001, p. 21). He explains that as the victim of traumatic incident is continuously haunted by the traumatic experience, s/he is living in a continuous state of fear and tragedy. At this stage, the victim has no respite, whatsoever, because s/he does not only have nightmares but also the flashbacks of the nightmares related to the traumas. S/he considers himself to be living in the past and in that exact moment when the traumatic incident took place. Hence, the victim has no sense or understanding of the past, the present or the future.

Acting out, according to Codde (2009), is not supposed to be taking place only through nightmares; rather it can happen in the form of committing unintentional acts, tendency of forgetfulness, and memory loss. According to Freud (1924), the victim, who is reacting to his feeling of memory loss, ends up repeating to do what he did at the moment of the incident of trauma, in order to remember whatever he witnessed. In this case, the victim no more remembers what actually happened around him; rather he acts that action out. “He reproduces it not as a memory, but as an action; he repeats it, without, of course, knowing that he is repeating it” (Freud, 1924, p. 150, original italics). The victim’s haunting by and obsession with the moment of trauma is symbolic of his/her inability to differentiate between the moment of trauma, which is the past, and the normal condition, which is the present. The victim is not capable of differentiating the memories of trauma from his/her present state of being.
This inability to differentiate between the incident of trauma and the rest of the world is mainly due to the victim’s tendency to repeat what happened in the moment of trauma; thus, foregrounding it and pushing the thoughts about his present peaceful status to the background. So, the unintentional and continuous remembering of the moment of trauma and its repetition are the two hallmarks of the acting out stage. In fact, in order for the victim to go through and get rid of the two symptoms, it is mandatory for him to move from the acting out to working through stage.

However, paradoxically, the more the victim of trauma tries to resist the remembering of hostile and hurtful memories, the more the acting out of the incident will take place. This is the case, because if the intensity of the traumatic incident is greater, the urge to resist its remembering will increase. This ultimately leads to acting out the incident (Freud, 1924). The shift from acting out to working through becomes all the more difficult when this resistance level is high. In this case, the victim has to face the calamity in his mind head on. S/he has to dig deep into his/her mind to create new mental schemes or adapt the existing ones to accommodate, one way or the other, the incident of trauma (Caruth, 1996).

Despite all this, Caruth (1996) asserts that the victim’s remembering of traumatic incident is not based on a simple memory, adding that the images concerning the moment of trauma are as clear and precise as a photograph but that the victim’s conscious control and recall cannot have an access to them. What Caruth means to say by the aforementioned statement is that it is not at the discretion of the victim to bring those
disturbing moments into his/her mind; rather these flashbacks appear in his mind at the time when they find the required stimulus. These images of trauma can visit the victim through nightmares, or s/he can be haunted by these flashbacks when s/he is making conscious effort to do away with the memories. So, it is very difficult for the victim to come out of the acting out stage and enter the working through scenario, where s/he can use his conscious mind to cope with the memories of the past.

In order to understand how intense the stage of acting out can be, or in other words, who are the ones more prone to be hit with more severity by trauma, the distinction between the concept of absence and loss is necessary to be made here. The two terms may seem somewhat similar as they connote the loss of something. However, the notion of absence implies that there is no existence of something concerned, while the loss connotes the missing of something that was originally or previously in one’s possession.

Sharing one’s trauma through any manner, including the work of fiction, entails the fact that one is mourning his/her loss, and that the others who either read that account or listen to it feel the absence of what the victim has been deprived of. However, while reading other people’s trauma, if one is reminded of his/her own trauma, as Caruth (1994) asserts that we are implicated in each other’s trauma, then this feeling of absence can be converted into that of the loss. In that case, LaCapra (2001) emphasizes that one can think of “some original unity, wholeness, security, or identity that others have ruined, polluted, or contaminated and thus made ‘us’ lose” (p. 58). He adds that the stage of mourning comes only when the feeling of absence is somewhat turned into that of a loss,
which can further go on to convert into melancholy (LaCapra, 2001, p. 68). This is because one cannot really mourn the loss of a person or an object that was not really there in the first place. This is perfectly in place when fictional characters are discussed and analyzed. The loss of a character who has actually witnessed an incident of trauma is completely different from the feeling of loss that some other character may have for the loss of the victim of trauma.

On the other hand, working through is the stage when the victim comes out of the phase of acting out what s/he has gone through. Here, the victim is able to break the continuous spell of repeating whatever s/he has witnessed and starts differentiating between the moment of trauma (the past) and the moment filled with the memories of trauma (the present) by starting to share with others what s/he went through. At this stage, as LaCapra (2001) asserts, the victim has the ability to put his grief concerning his moment of trauma and the life beyond that. The most important thing in this transition from the acting out stage to that of working through is that the survivor should be able to break the repeating continuity of the moment of trauma and he should be able to talk to someone and share his grief, related to the moment of trauma.

According to Versluys (2009), the writers of fiction, who witness a certain moment of trauma, and undergo this transition from the acting out to working through stage, may convert their traumatic memory into a narrative memory. What the writers of trauma narrative do is that they put their traumatic experiences into a chronological order. In this case, according to Laub (1992), the one who listens to the account of the trauma survivor
plays an important role because s/he is the one who works like a blank screen where the experience of the victim is recorded.

Both LaCapra (2001) and Laub (1992) are of the view that the victim becomes a witness and similarly the listener is turned into a secondary witness only when the victims is able to testify in front of the listener whatever he witnessed at the moment of trauma. For the listener, this act of testimony on part of the victim always runs the risk of extending the trauma to the listener. There is every possibility in this case that the trauma will be incorporated in the mind of the listener. Thus, LaCapra and Laub assert that the listener can listen to the account of the victim in two different ways i.e virtual experience and vicarious experience. LaCapra (2001, 2004) states that the listener, while paying attention to the account of the victim, thinks that he can understand the problems and the related trauma of the victim. The writer adds that this is a naturally human and perfectly justified response, which is a healthy activity, adding that this reaction on part of the listener is called ‘virtual experience’ (p. 125).

However, LaCapra further notes that the actual problem in listening to the account of a trauma victim starts when the listener starts taking the victim’s trauma as his/her own and starts identifying his or own self with the victim of trauma. This is the stage when the trauma is no more limited to the victim only; rather it becomes the trauma of the listener. LaCapra terms this phenomenon as ‘vicarious experience’ (2001, p.47).

As the victim of trauma goes through the pain of loss, the listener, who listens to the
traumatic account and goes through the vicarious experience, should still be able to
differentiate between the feeling of loss that the survivor has and his own feeling of
absence that s/he can witness in the victim. Once into the vicarious experience, the
listener usually forgets this difference between absence and loss. This happens when the
listener identifies himself with the person who has lost some loved one, thus feeling the
loss as the victim himself feels. In this case, the listener should be feeling the absence of
someone from the life of the victim rather than feeling the loss as felt by the victim.

The listener, working as a secondary witness – the victim of course being the primary
witness – should remain somewhat objective in order for him not to over-sympathize
with the victim and run the risk of feeling the loss that should be exclusive to the victim.
This feeling of loss will turn into a huge generalization of historical trauma if the listeners
of a traumatic account forget about this difference between absence and loss. Once
captured in the feeling of loss, where it should have been the feeling of absence, while
listening to an account of trauma, the listener enters the victim-specific melancholy; thus,
the trauma of the victim is turned into the trauma of everyone who is unable to
differentiate between absence and loss (LaCapra, 2001).

The fact that the victim is always occupied with the flashbacks of traumatic scenes
compels him/her to relate whatever s/he has witnessed. The victim is stuck in the moment
of trauma, so, s/he tells the stories of what was witnessed. In order to explain this
phenomenon while doing research on the survivors of the Holocaust, Laub (1992) asserts,
“the survivors did not only need to survive so that they could tell their stories, they also
needed to tell their stories in order to survive” (p. 78). So, in order for the survivor to be able to live and not totally consumed by the grief of whatever they witnessed, they have no other way out but to tell the accounts of trauma. This is the burden that the survivors carry with them, compelling them to live with the grief that they came across and witnessed.

In the same vein, Caruth (1996) recommends that it is no less than an enigma for the survivor to have witnessed the destruction and survived it, adding that the incomprehensibility of a catastrophic experience can be understood well if we are able to know trauma as a paradoxical relation between the victim’s survival and his/her witnessing of the destruction. Here also, the role of the listener, who acts as a secondary witness, is very important because he is the one who makes the survivor talk and relate the incidents of destruction. The listener does so, because the survivor cannot talk on his own. It is the listener and other listeners of this traumatic account who make sense of this inherent incomprehensibility of the survivor’s guilt of survival and his/her determination to talk about it every now and then.

The moment, as LaCapra (2001) says, that is very difficult for the survivor and the listener is the one when the survivor is back in the past incident of trauma and when s/he is possessed by the flashbacks of grief that he witnessed. At this stage, it is very important for the listener to be careful with his / her reaction to the account of trauma. There is every possibility that the listener will be engulfed by the loss of the victim because it is very difficult to feel detached from such accounts. However, in order not to
enter the vicarious feelings, typical of the listeners, who are no more able to differentiate between absence and loss, the listener must tread carefully.

Despite the crucial role of the survivor and the listener, crossing the border of the acting out stage to the working through stage is a difficult one. This is explained by LaCapra (2001) who says that the survivors of trauma who witnessed a tragic incident and also the ones who sympathized with the traumatized individuals may develop this inclination to resist the working through stage, adding that this tendency can be termed as faithfulness to the feeling of trauma. This is quite logical when we analyze the traumatized individuals of the war in Afghanistan and other traumatic incidents around the world. What happens in this case is that the very essence of trauma becomes the core of the character’s identity, so s/he will be reluctant to let it off. This feeling towards owning the trauma becomes stronger when anyone of his loved one has been killed in the incident. In that case, the survivor will always love to live in the past and act the event out instead of work through it, because the past and that event in the past is a memorial of his relatives.

Thus, the survivor is mostly reluctant to work through the trauma by considering that event, carrying death for his loved ones, as something from the past. The survivor does not want to accept it as a past event because that will, then, mean as if he has accepted his loved ones, who were killed in that event, as individuals who lived in the past and are no more living. The very fact that such traumatic incidents like the war in Afghanistan and other tragic events can contribute towards, and play a major role, in constructing someone’s identity, is not only shocking but also quite helpful in understanding why
survivors continue to resist accepting the working through stage, which is a step towards recuperating from the effects of the traumatic incident.

LaCapra (2001) further explains that “human beings come out stronger only after going through incidents of trauma” (p. 161). This assertion by LaCapra is quite visible in the excessive display of cultural productions related to the wars in the past, the incident of 9/11, the holocaust, and the recent war in Afghanistan. The depiction of these traumatic events in the forms of movies and fiction is quite typical of the earlier discussed fidelity to trauma. Instead of emphasizing suppression of the incidents of trauma, the inclination on part of not only the survivors but also the listeners, to resist the working through stage is quite evident in these cultural productions, making the transition from acting out to working through a very difficult one.

So, once the survivor enters the working through stage, he develops the ability to live both in the past and the present. This is the moment from which onwards he or she is able to differentiate between the past and the present. He starts thinking of the traumatic incident as an event from the past, but at the same time, develops the ability to think of the present as something more important than the past. The survivor, thus, values the past because that is the time or event which contains the memories of his/her loved ones but he/she does not live in the past, thinking that he has to live his or her life as normal human being with stakes in the present. In the words of LaCapra (2001), instead of dichotomizing acting out and working through, the survivor develops an ability to differentiate between the two, thus valuing the past but living in the present.
2.5 Private and Public Trauma

Trauma can either be personal i.e private, limited to an individual only, or it can be societal i.e public, affecting the society as a whole. The trauma of child abuse or sexual harassment is the example of private trauma, while the holocaust, the 9/11 and the war in Afghanistan are incidents which can affect a certain group of people as a whole. Kai Erikson (1994), who tracks down the effects of sociological disasters such as the genocide in Yugoslavia asserts that the impact of a trauma can be collective, adding that both individual and collective trauma can appear simultaneously.

Erikson (1994) uses Caruth’s theories concerning trauma and says that trauma is a blow to the mind, adding that trauma possesses the mind of the victim. He argues that the memory of the victim will repeat to him/her the incidents that s/he witnessed until he comes to terms with them. He further explains that the memory of trauma will haunt the affected people until their mind is able to cope with the experience. This is perfectly in accordance with what has already been discussed here, namely that the victim of trauma will usually experience flashbacks of the incident when he goes through the acting out stage. Erikson (1994), while explaining the symptoms of trauma, asserts that the victims of trauma experience a variety of feelings which range from restlessness and agitation to numbness and blankness. Erikson goes on to say that the victims of trauma usually distrust the world and they do not hope any good from the world, adding that they feel how destructive the people in the world can be.
The ways in which Erikson’s definition of trauma is different from those of the others is that he does not talk about trauma as a force inflicting wound on the individual mind; rather he emphasizes that trauma injures the community as a whole. He asserts that even if the wound of the trauma is inflicted on individual minds, it goes on, by combining the traumas of the individuals, to create a common mood or an ethos, which he describes as a group culture. He asserts that the intensity of this group culture, based on the traumas of the individual, is a lot more than the intensity of the individual traumas put together. Quoting from Caruth (1995), he says that unlike the individual trauma, which is limited to the individual victim, this collective trauma has certain social dimensions.

Explaining the impact and intensity of collective trauma, Erikson (1994) says that this collective trauma can be so powerful that it can create bonds and feelings of unity among the victims, adding that such bonds are no less effective and no less vital than the bonds of common language and common background. This can happen because people, who go through the same trauma, identify themselves with each other and differentiate the whole group from the ones that did not go through that trauma. Thus, they look at the people who have gone through the trauma just like them as individuals who belong to their own group and they own them too, creating a bond of oneness.

Putting forth the main difference between individual and collective trauma, Erikson (1994) says that the individual trauma consists of a blow to the mind of the individual, and that the blow takes place so suddenly that individual mind does not have a chance to react in a proper manner or to come up with a defense mechanism. However, Erikson
(1994) asserts that collective trauma is like a blow to the very basic tissue of social life, adding that it damages the bond that attaches people together and that it harms their sense of communality. 

Thus, on the one hand, it creates a group which shares the same loss and is bonded together, but on the other hand, it creates an animosity towards others who played some role in inflicting the trauma on the victims. Thus, collective trauma damages the very social fabric and divides the society into groups, where individuals are not seen as full-fledged living beings different from each other yet remaining similar to each other, but as mere units comprising the different groups. Erikson’s concept of collective trauma is especially very important while discussing the societal traumas such as the holocaust, natural disasters and genocides.

What Erikson talks about as a collective trauma is in terms of natural disasters; however, it can be applied to the technological disasters as well. It is in such collective disasters that the sense of commonality among humans is challenged and thus a response that is equal in intensity comes forth. One of the examples of such responses is the French author Luc Lang’s ‘11 Septembre mon amour’ (2003) where he says that “for the first time perhaps in the history of humanity, we were all contemporaries” (quoted in Versluys, 2009, p. 7).

Moreover, the survivors of a traumatic incident usually develop a collective identity that is associated with the trauma. In that case, not only the victims see themselves connected
to the other victims but the community at large also remembers and considers the victims as components of a big whole of trauma. Thus, the trauma becomes the identity of the individuals and they are known by that collective trauma. Miller (2003) says that a collective identity of the missing persons was constructed after 9/11 when the New York Times published the biographies of the 1910 missing persons in a book titled ‘Portraits’ (p. 19). The publication of the book commemorates the collective nature of the trauma.

Miller (2003) further explains that the construction of memorials is also typical of remembering the collective trauma; however, adding that the publication of this book is typical of how a collective trauma is made of individual traumas. He says that this book is about the collective trauma of the missing persons, but at the same time, it is composed of individual accounts, thus putting forth the fact that collective trauma is based on individual trauma, and also highlighting the fact that the very nature of its collectiveness asserts that the individuals suffering from that trauma were all equal irrespective of their gender, class and/or social status. The intensity and scope of loss in a collective trauma is so big that it has to be cut into pieces in order for it to be understood (Miller, 2003).

Despite the fact that remembering collective trauma is no less than recording the trauma of individuals, LaCapra (2001) asserts that it is important to note how the accounts of historical trauma impact the memory of the public. He explains that when a historical incident is put forth for investigation, there is every possibility that it can be misused in a number of ways. Supporting his thesis, LaCapra says that the way a single historical event is seen differently by different people is evident from the fact how people in
Germany, Israel and the United States carry completely different perceptions of the holocaust. Therefore, the dealing of historical events by the writers of fiction has to be dealt with very carefully. The fiction writers’ act to mix fact with fiction while recording trauma needs to be seen carefully, as the next part of the chapter brings it for further discussion.

### 2.6 Trauma in Literature

Literature, being the imitation of life, depicts trauma also. LaCapra’s (2001) evaluation of the Holocaust testimonies goes on to declare post-traumatic writing as a testimonial art, where, as he says, this art of portraying the trauma of traumatized people exists since the last decade of the 1900s. Dealing with the portrayal of trauma, LaCapra details the risks which one should be aware of while portraying the accounts of the traumatized people, adding that these risks become even more pertinent in such narratives of trauma because this is where the writer feels with the victim/s of trauma and is thus connected with him/her. However, he makes it clear that this state of making connections with the victim/s is comparatively safer than the actual experience of trauma which the victim/s has/have gone through.

Moreover, LaCapra asserts that this act of recording the trauma by someone who is not the actual victim of trauma can mean by the writer no less than the stages an actual victim of trauma usually goes through. He adds that in writing trauma fiction, the writer actually enacts the trauma and also serves as a witness to the incident of trauma. He
further explains that the writer also has to work through the trauma which may either be his own nor that of his/her relatives or even that of the social circle that s/he is a part of (LaCapra, 2001).

As discussed earlier, traumatic incidents of high magnitude resist representation right after the occurrence. Even then, the works of fiction of traumatic events such as the world wars, the Holocaust and the 9/11 are innumerable. It means that the phenomenon of trauma is a paradoxical one which the human mind cannot understand and capture with ease. This is mainly the reason why researchers take help from different disciplines and carry out studies in subjects such as sociology, psychiatry, psychoanalysis and literature to understand trauma in a manner that is true to experiences which the victims felt upon contact with the traumatic event.

This is in line with what Caruth (1995) recommends for the investigation of trauma, saying that an inquiry with the help of disciplines such as Sociology, Psychiatry and Psychoanalysis is helpful in tracking trauma. Help from all these disciplines play an important role in making up for the difference between what is known and what is unknown about a certain incident of trauma.

LaCapra (2001), while further explaining the relationship between traumatic history and fiction, brings forth a detailed explanation of historiography, the discipline which investigates the way how history is written. He asserts that there are two different methods to write history, namely radical constructivism and a documentary or self-
sufficient research model. He says that the documentary way of recording history is used by writers of fiction when they make use of the primary documents. In this method, the writer uses the facts of the primary documents in his/her narrative, thus allowing the erasures to see and recheck if the details mentioned in the fictional piece are in accordance with the facts of the primary documents.

In this case, all that counts is the results and not the form of the written piece. In this case, a simple structured linear text is always preferred over a more complex one. However, LaCapra himself, then goes against this model, saying that fiction, rather than documentary details, has the ability to tell the truth to the readers mainly because it provides a view into the very phenomena that is under scrutiny. He says that the reader is better able to know about phenomena such as slavery or the holocaust when he is provided with a feel for the experiences of the people who go through these experiences. He further explains that the capacity of fiction to provide truth to the readers is enhanced because it lets them know about the emotions of the people who went through such hard times, adding that this feel for the experience cannot be provided by documentary evidence related to a certain event. He further asserts that documentary methods are limited and restricted and thus they lack the ability to bring forth the reaction of the society (LaCapra, 2001).

This is mainly the reason why writers of fiction adapt non-fiction historical accounts related to history to write narratives. However, the art of a fiction writer lies in the fact that s/he adds stylistic, emotional and fictional details to the accounts in a bid to remove
the element of its limitedness to a certain individual and to make it timeless. However, LaCapra (2001) asserts that what is important in a work of art and its analysis is not its truth claims but its rhetorical, poetic and performative dimensions which, according to him, not only mark but make differences historically.

LaCapra’s assertion is quite clear because one cannot see art and history as things which are completely opposite to each other. A piece of art cannot be composed in a space; rather, it has to be the creation of the artist’s mind, which is inevitably impacted by his surroundings that take impressions from the past too.

Thus, art goes on to bring history to the fore. However, the fact remains that one’s dealing with the events of trauma has to be a careful one because anything reminiscent of a certain trauma, be it in the form of a documentary evidence or a fictional narrative, can trigger the unpleasant memories to flashback in the mind of any survivor. An account of the Holocaust, 9/11 or for that matter the war in Afghanistan can mean differently to different people. For a survivor of the war in Afghanistan, a fictional account of the traumatic event in his/her country will ignite all his sorrows which s/he has worked through with the passage of time.

On the other hand, radical constructivism, as LaCapra explains, is mainly related to the aesthetic function of the text while taking into consideration the ideological and political perspectives emanating from the events concerned. He asserts that this study of history differentiates between the methods of portrayal of the incident to see if the event has been
recorded in as a historical context or a narrative in literature. Here also, this difference halts the real and detailed description of event to come to the fore by undermining either literature compared to history or history compared to literature.

Just like the documented history, where the record of the actual events is taken care of, here, the fictional representation of a historical event which covers the multidimensional details of the affected individuals than just the records, is differentiated from the historical records. Instead of keeping history and fiction in conjunction, the differentiation by radical constructivism denies history of the richness that literature can bring to it.

Despite making the distinction, LaCapra supports neither of the extreme positions; rather supports the concept of history as a combination of both as an objective reconstruction of the past and “a dialogic exchange with it and other inquirers into it wherein knowledge involved not only the processing of information but also its effect, empathy, and questions of value” (LaCapra, 2001, p. 35) In short, LaCapra does not condemn a romanticized approach of trauma in literature but he does plea for a clear-cut distinction between the facts and the fictionalized.

One more pertinent issue that needs to be mentioned here is the fact that the very nature of trauma does not allow it to go so easily with literature. Despite the fact that the depiction of trauma in writing is very difficult if the writer tries to depict it right after the tragic incident has taken place, writers still make an effort to write down the traumatic
experience that they have gone through, mainly because they endeavor to work through the trauma. However, critics like Thane Rosenbaum (2009) still question the putting in of the writing of traumatic incidents right after the incident has taken place, as he questions whether it is possible to “make art in a time of atrocity” (p. 11).

Rosenbaum, while referring to the 9/11, insists that silence is the loudest sound of all. However, it is after sometime that a number of fictional accounts come forth highlighting the tragic incident. These accounts by the writers of fiction are not despised by readers, saying that they are reminiscent of the trauma they or their ancestors experienced; rather these literary productions come in handy among the people mainly because they attach a lot of importance to the way writers look at, record, and interpret that traumatic incident. The time space required for a writer to record the incident after s/he has witnessed a traumatic incident is not explicitly defined; however, Versluys (2009) asserts that people use the healing power of language to understand what actually happened to them. Thus despite the fact that trauma cannot be recorded in fiction right at the moment of its occurrence, it is the determination of the writer to make an effort to cope with the situation by using the power of language to record the incident and see what actually happened.

2.7 Characteristics of the Narratives of Trauma

Summing up the main traits of trauma fiction, Anne Whitehead (2004) begins with outlining the impact of post-colonialism, postmodernism and the remnants on the
narratives of trauma. She says that trauma fiction enjoys a commonality with postcolonial narratives which is concerned with the recovery of memory and the acknowledgement of the denied, the repressed and the forgotten. However, it is not only the remembrance of painful memories that trauma fiction is concerned with; it, in fact, is concerned with ‘how’ and ‘why’ an incident of trauma is remembered (Whitehead, 2004).

She goes on to say that this is mainly the reason why, unlike the scientific and medical discourse, the literary studies are considered to be a better place to answer the ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions of the remembrance of an incident of trauma. She further adds that the unconventionality of a traumatic incident necessitates the use of an equally unconventional narrative technique in order to represent the trauma in an apt manner (Whitehead, 2004).

Before delving into the details of the aforementioned discussion on the use of the unconventional narrative techniques as put forth by Whitehead, it is apt to discuss what her predecessors and/or compatriots have to say on this subject. According to LaCapra (2001), the most basic trait of trauma fiction is that it is non-linear and it has a nonconventional beginning-middle-end plot, adding that the reason why this kind of plot is applied so frequently is that the traditional plot usually aims at a proper closure, which the traumatic narratives do not offer. She clarifies the fact that the use of this nonconventional plot is not limited to trauma fiction only and that the modern literature of all sorts has been using this quite often.

One of the ways how the plot in trauma fiction is non-linear is in cases when the trauma
survivors experience flashbacks of the incident. In some cases, there are big spatial and temporal gaps when the characters are transported back to the moment of trauma. This takes place when the survivor, while either attempting a reconnection to the normal life or narrating the incident to someone, defies the temporal setting and feels as if s/he is living in the moment of trauma.

The non-linear plot that results in leaving certain gaps in the course of action and also the nonconventional ending of the story, which defies closure, are the typical traits of trauma fiction. The gaps hint at the lacunae in history. Moreover, flashbacks in trauma fiction bring forth the importance of repetition in such narratives. Being a stylistic feature of trauma fiction, repetition in imagery, plot and language is so common in such narratives. Explaining the repetition, Whitehead (2004) says that repetition, being an inherently ambivalent act, basically portrays mimicry of the traumatized person’s situation that he undergoes.

LaCapra also mentions the middle voice, a voice hovering between active and passive modes, when he discusses the free indirect style, or “Erlebte Rede” (LaCapra, 2001, p. 196) as one of the most appropriate ways of representing trauma in literature and especially literature concerning the Holocaust. This type of voice is “most suitable” according to LaCapra, “for representing or writing trauma, especially in cases in which the narrator is empathically unsettled and able to judge or even predicate only in a hesitant, tentative fashion” (LaCapra, 2010, p. 197).
This mode of telling is mostly not applied in narratives where ethical or political matters are discussed and it does not claim to tell the absolute truth. On the contrary, the middle voice is often related to uncertainty, risk and openness to the story of the radical other (LaCapra 2010). When we look at this middle voice in grammatical terms, the dictionary tells us that this type of voice is in between the passive and the active voice because the subject is not an agent, nor a patient. Whitehead adds to this that the present continuous tense is a means of representation that often helps to transmit this uncertainty and openness to the reader.

Keeping in view the fact that the traditional models of narration fail to present trauma in an apt manner and that the narratives of trauma enjoy certain exclusive traits, it is worth saying that the use of such unfamiliar modes to portray trauma is in line with the unusual nature of the very incident of trauma itself.

Keeping in view the aforementioned works on trauma and its impact on, and portrayal in, history and fiction, the study carries out a research a step forward. As this literature review is fundamental in giving an overview of the work that has already been done in the field of trauma fiction, it also necessitates the need that the approaches, which are used to carry out studies in the realms of trauma fiction, pertaining to the Holocaust and the 9/11, should also be used to assess literature that is portraying the Afghan experiences of trauma. This literature review gives a sound picture of how and how much work has already been done in this domain, necessitating the need to use the same trauma theory on the Afghan fiction in English.
### 2.8 Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Literature

This part of the dissertation gives a background to the concept of psychological trauma along with the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). It further highlights the portrayal of this concept in literature, and provides the basis for the present study. It is worth mentioning here that the study uses, and refers, to the concept of trauma as a psychologically traumatic experience along with its repercussions. Moreover, the study uses the term Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder to explain and outline the characters’ post trauma behavior.

Quoting from *The Encyclopedia of Psychological Trauma*, Reyes, Elhai and Ford (2008) define psychological trauma as exposure to catastrophic life events such as combat, sexual assault, and natural disasters that is different from the definition used for physical trauma, according to which trauma is a permanent damage caused to the body by severe injury or illness.

In the same vein, the American Psychiatrist Association (2013) describes trauma as “an emotional response to a terrible event like an accident, rape or natural disasters.” Closely related with the concept of trauma is the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which according to Newman (2001), is a diagnostic term for a group of symptoms of a traumatic experience and is primarily used to describe the psychological symptoms of war veterans.

As discussed in the chapter on introduction to the study, it was not until 1980 that trauma,
related mainly to combat veterans, was investigated, discussed and taken into consideration. However, in 1980, the year that is known for marking the birth of the modern trauma studies, American Psychiatric Association (APA) acknowledged and included Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in its official *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* (DSM-III). The contemporary trauma studies got this recognition mainly due to the problems faced by the veterans of war in Vietnam. Later on, noted psychiatrists such as Judith Lewis Herman (1994) made attempts to include, into this exclusively combat related disorder, other forms of traumas caused by terrorism, war, and domestic and sexual violence as she published her book *Trauma and Recovery: From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (1992). From then on, the contemporary trauma studies has been having a more inclusive approach towards trauma and PTSD as it brought together hitherto separated experiences of trauma, caused by domestic and sexual violence, war, and terrorism. Herman (1994) declares that the investigation into war trauma and sexual trauma follow the same trajectory if considered their journey in the past. She says that war trauma in the context of World War I was studied as war neuroses or shell-shock, adding that it was replaced by the PTSD during the studies concerning the Vietnam war veterans.

Outlining the main symptoms of PTSD, Davison, Neale and Kring (2004) provide a comprehensive account of the disorder. They say that the survivor, first of all, re-experiences the trauma through nightmares related to the traumatic experience, adding that this flashback can also be in the form of various forms of stimuli that remind the survivor of trauma about the incident that s/he has witnessed. They assert that the
survivor can be reminded of the traumatic experience through stimuli such as places, smells and sounds, which are associated to the actual traumatic experience. Further, they say that as the stimuli have a very negative effect on the survivor, s/he tries to avoid it, which ultimately leads to manifest avoidance, which is the second stage of the PTSD. The third stage that they highlight is the loss of memory. Here, the survivor’s behavior of avoidance towards the stimuli can cause the feeling of detachment from one’s self and others, thus causing the survivor to lose the detailed memory of the incident of trauma. The fourth and last stage, according to the writers is that the survivor experiences an increased alertness, problems with sleep, manifest startle response, and an increased emotional and physical arousal.

They assert that the survivor may also suffer from the problems of depression, anger, anxiety and the survivor’s guilt. Mentioning a subtype of the disorder, the American Psychiatric Association (2013) outlines, in its Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, DSM-5, the dissociative symptoms of the disorder, saying that some survivors may experience the problem of depersonalization, which means that a human being may feel as if s/he is out of his/her own body and is experiencing and witnessing the whole event. The aforementioned manual further says that the survivor may also go through the de-realization feeling, which hallmarks the state of mind that the world,

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3 DSM-5, published in 2013, Criterion A has again received important revisions. It now reads as follows: the person was exposed to: death, threatened death, actual or threatened serious injury, or actual or threatened sexual violence, as follows: (1 required) (a) Direct exposure, (b) witnessing, in person, (c) indirectly, by learning that a close relative or close friend was exposed to trauma. If the event involved actual or threatened death, it must have been violent or accidental, (d) repeated or extreme indirect exposure to aversive details of the event(s), usually in the course of professional duties (e.g., first responders, collecting body parts; professionals repeatedly exposed to details of child abuse). This does not include indirect non-professional exposure through electronic media, television, movies, or pictures (National Center for PTSD, 2013).
which holds the survivor as its part, is not real and that everything that s/he sees or witnesses are all unreal.

Despite the aforementioned detailed discussion on PTSD, it can be said that all the people who go through, or witness, a traumatic incident do not suffer from the post-traumatic stress disorder. This is in line with the fact that it is the survivor’s emotional response to the incident rather than the nature of the event that mainly deals with the symptoms of PTSD (Maercker, Beauducel, & Schützwohl, 2000; Boals & Schuettler, 2009). The objective data, concerning this phenomenon, proves this point that subjective interpretation does play a vital part in causing PTSD (Ehlers & Clark, 2000; Boals & Schuettler, 2009; Van der Kolk, McFarlane, & Weisaeth, 2007). Davison, Neale and Kring (2004) outline the following factors which play an important role in turning a trauma survivor into a PTSD affected person. They assert that a person’s proclivity to have this disorder depends on his/her record of other such disorders, which are caused by previous traumatic incidents, the intensity of the trauma itself, familial predisposition to disorders, and the perceived threat to his/her life and the lives of his/her loved ones.

As mentioned above, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is one type of response to traumatic experiences. Despite the fact that almost the same kind of phenomenon got the attention of physicians while investigating the after effects of railway accidents in the 19th century, according to Herman (1992), the fact remains that the discovery of psychological trauma lies in Freud’s concept of *hysteria* in women that came to the fore in the late 19th century. As mentioned earlier, the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-
III) included the disorder in its third edition in 1980 when a large scale disorders of this kind were observed after the Vietnam War. The disorder that was known after the First World War was termed as “shell-shock”. According to Newman (2001), the role of the Western Psychologists was phenomenal in paying attention, during the early days to this disorder amid the World War I.

Thus, as the American Psychiatric Association (2013) outlines, in its Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, DSM-5, the traits of the post-traumatic stress disorder, saying that it is the “exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence” that the survivor relives involuntarily. It further states that other symptoms of the disorder are that the survivor makes attempts to avoid the stimuli, which are connected with the traumatic experience, adding that the stimuli can also cause an increased physical and emotional arousal along with a general numbness in response and feelings. The manual further says that in order for the survivor to qualify for PTSD, s/he must experience all the aforementioned symptoms for more than a month, adding that the survivor will be suffering from the acute stress disorder if s/he experiences the symptoms for less than a month.

2.9 Trauma Fiction

Although researchers have also worked on the portrayal of trauma in films and dramas, the fact remains that most of the studies on trauma fiction focused on literary works. Most of the studies paid attention to and catered for the works of fiction, which depicted
real-life traumas, namely the 9/11 attacks, slavery, the war in Vietnam, and the Holocaust. In “Trauma Transfer and Narrative Framing in Jonathan Safran Foer’s Extremely Loud and Incredible Close,” Saal (2011) explains how the trauma of 9/11 interweaves with those of the bombings of Hiroshima and Dresden during World War II, respectively, as well as with the Holocaust itself. Similarly, Rebecca West’s novel The Return of the Soldier (1918) has been analyzed by several academics (Pinkerton: 2008; Pulsifer: 2013, Bonikovski: 2005) for its portrayal of a shell-shocked soldier suffering from amnesia after returning home from the First World War. Another example is that of McAlister (2006), who discusses the use of an unreliable narrator in constructing the identity of a traumatized character in the novel Basic Black with Pearls (1980) by Helen Weinzweig.

The point worth noting in the aforementioned trauma analyses is the researchers’ choice of works which exclusively discuss the trauma of Euro-American characters. This excessive, or rather exclusive, concentration on the trauma of technologically advanced nations is against the very foundations of trauma studies, which according to Caruth (1995), implicates us in each other’s trauma. This does not mean that the traumas of nations other than European and American have not been discussed and investigated at all, as the following portion of this chapter shows that certain works also cater for the trauma of other nations, but the crux of the argument is that the amount of work that could/should have been done on trauma-related works dealing with the 36 years long war in Afghanistan, the problem of terrorism in Pakistan, the violence against minorities in Pakistan, India and other countries, the marginalization of women in most of the third
world countries, the curse of child abuse, and others manifestations of trauma caused by several other problems in the underdeveloped countries have, unfortunately, not been carried out. The present research study is thus an effort to make up for this shortcoming.

Moreover, just like literary works, psychological trauma has frequently been portrayed in film as well (Reyes, Elhai & Ford, 2008). They assert that despite the fact the film industry is yet to work on many aspects of the psychological trauma, the areas that have been covered revolve around the contemporary topics. Among the well-known aspect of psychological trauma is the portrayal of the trauma of war. Most of the works have been done on films, which cover the fictional portrayal of the Nazi concentration camps, and the Second World War.

Movies such as Sophie’s Choice, 1982 and Saving Private Ryan, 1998 also address such issues. Moreover, trauma caused by fictional and real terrorism is also portrayed by filmmakers as, for example, in World Trade Center, 2006. Other than the portrayal of traumatic events, there are movies such as Hitchcock’s Vertigo, 1958 and Marnie, 1964, as well as Taxi Driver, 1976, where the characters are suffering from the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

In the same vein, a number of the contemporary television dramas such as West Wing (NBC, 1999–2006) and Grey’s Anatomy, Good Wife (CBS, 2009 - ) use traumatic incidents in the story as well as the development of the characters, thus making the audience sit in front of their television sets every week to see how the victims of trauma,
in a given situation, survive and cope with the trauma. On the pattern of the literary productions and movies, the dramas portray the concerns of the people living around the survivor of trauma as, for example, in the public shootings in *Grey’s Anatomy*, season 6; and *Good Wife*, season 5. Here, as in the case of Terry in *True Blood* (HBO, 2008- ); Ryan in *Parenthood* (NBC, 2010- ); Owen in *Grey’s Anatomy*, the audience watch the characters suffer from PTSD symptoms after going through the trauma of war in Iraq and Afghanistan. Same is the case with Nicholas Brody in *Homeland* (Showtime, 2011- ) who, being a US marine, suffers from the flashbacks of trauma that he witnessed in Iraq.

Other than the aforementioned television series and films, writers have also portrayed trauma in its various manifestations, and most of the researchers have also done a great deal of their work in this set of genres. Hwangbo (2004) studies selected American novels to investigate trauma from a psychosocial viewpoint, where the researcher particularly concentrates on the disappointments of the minority subjects in America, their disempowerment and social abuse. The researcher focuses on the trauma of minority subjects as depicted in the selected contemporary American novels and inspects the characters, who are witnessing and healing therein.

The study contextualizes a proportion of the essential issues depicted in the novels and inspects the relationship between trauma, identity, and narrative. It examines the constitutive part that the narrative plays in the shaping of identity. The analysis inspects the effect of prejudice against African-Americans by examining the distortion of love in Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye*, with an emphasis on the intergenerational transfer of
racial self-hatred as the background of layered trauma, which Morrison portrays in the novel. The study utilizes psychoanalyst Heinz Kohut’s idea of self object and clarifies the mental effect of racism on African-Americans to the extent that it results in the absence of self-admiration and ends up with the characters seeing themselves as self objects.

The researcher further investigates the Holocaust and its survivors, with an emphasis on Isaac Bashevi Singer’s *Enemies, A Love Story*. By analyzing different manifestations of trauma and the uncanny flashbacks from the past calamity, as Singer depicts in his characters, the analyst reads the Holocaust figuratively as an open wound of history that has not yet been worked through.

He additionally talks about the issues of migration and diverse cross-border entry by breaking down the interstitial predicament of Asian-Americans, as depicted in Changrae Lee’s *Native Speaker*. By analyzing the progress of the migrant family as far as a reversed oedipal dramatization of administrative issues of grieving, and finishes up by investigating the performative healing capacity of trauma writing.

Finck (2006) argues that some individual or collective histories can never be totally coordinated into the continuum of one’s emotional life. Such stories delivered in traumatic times or in sad occasions are liable to stay less comprehended or acknowledged. Analyzing the human impacts of traumatic occasions, for example, the subjugation of Africans in the United States or the endeavored eradication of the Jewish
individuals in Europe is the domain of this work. The researcher holds that it is more productive if these occasions are analyzed from the point of view of the trauma they have caused because this is the methodology that suspends the chronological and topographical obstructions of time and space.

The study holds that postmodern French writer and an Auschwitz survivor Charlotte Delbo, who portrayed her story in testimonial structure, offers that understanding into trauma, as does the postcolonial work of Toni Morrison. The first volumes of both trilogies, *Aucun de nous nereviendra* and *Beloved* uncover the harm done to people and societies regarding trauma by uncovering the degree to which living at the edge of life and seeing terrible demonstrations of enormous demise and decimation shape and effect victimized people as well as the social orders to which they return.

Endeavors to work through these strikingly traumatic encounters further highlight the particular state of mind that is regularly found in such accounts of survival. The researcher suggests that *Une connaissance inutile* and *Jazz*, the second volumes of the trilogies, upgrade that sort of comprehension, while both point at the fundamental as well as inconceivable possibility of overlooking the traumatic encounters that remain plainly undigested. Occasions, such as the silly killing of a whole group of individuals and the merciless abuse of a whole race were not kept earthed, as well as deliberately advanced by the groups in question.
The study finds that *Mesure de nos jours* and *Paradise*, the last volumes of the trilogies, plainly record the absence of mindfulness to the requests of survivors and freed slaves by their particular groups after liberation. Despite the fact that support was not provided by these groups during the traumatic events, this ought not separate us from our gravest obligation: to hold up under witness to the sufferings of a barred other whose recovery and working through stay a tricky business.

Shulga (2008) investigates the fiction of Vasilii Grossman and Iurii Dombrovskii in the setting of trauma theory, recognizing the routes in which the theory enlightens the representation of cataclysmic occasions in Russian fiction and in the meantime examining the points of confinement of trauma hypothesis itself.

The writer opines that trauma theory has regularly been considered to be a “Western” idea, and its application to the Soviet experience has been challenged. As of late, the idea has increased some ground in Soviet works also. Concentrating on the relationship between an occasion and its traumatic effect, the study explores the stories that are based on this relationship, with a specific concentration on identity and un-representability, the two ideas which are a key to both trauma and Soviet studies.

In this study, the writer observes that the pertinence of trauma theory can be questioned yet not dismissed altogether. The fiction of Grossman and Dombrovskii permits an
inventive way to deal with the collective experience, which empowers the occasion to be dealt with in an unprecedented manner.

Brown (2008) asserts that Postcolonial critics in literary studies note the tenaciously repeating representations of colonial violence in post-independence Anglophone African novels. The study recommends that complex psychological and political methods of colonial trauma constrain this repetition in narrative. This investigation compares Postcolonial and trauma theory with a specific end goal to dissect abstract representations of colonial violence regarding race, sex, personality, and the post-freedom state of affairs. For this purpose, the researcher draws in with Latin American testimonio studies, black feminism, Subaltern Studies, and African history.

The writer suggests that regardless of varieties in aesthetic mode, depression, flashbacks, and repetitious mourning take place in realist and postmodern Anglophone African and diaspora novels with fascinating varieties other than the typical complex contrasts. This propensity compasses sub-Saharan Africa, and the Atlantic cultural production. The study recommends that we should utilize the vocabulary of psychoanalysis to productively read the writing from newly independent states as a testimony that is speaking to the trauma caused by colonial occupation.

The study says that trauma studies in this context shows that testimony is the course to surviving appropriately after an experience of traumatizing event, adding that this is not
the first investigation of Anglophone African novels to utilize the vocabulary of psychoanalysis; however, it is the first to recommend doing so in the connection of testimony to a traumatic event. The study investigates three methods of telling testimonial bodies, censored testimony and its ghosts, and trans-generational testifying injuries, depicted in Ayi Kwei Armah’s *Fragments* (Ghana, the United States, and France), Tsitsi Dangarembga’s *Nervous Conditions* (Zimbabwe), Nuruddin Farah’s *Maps* (Somalia), Moses Isegawa’s Abyssinian Chronicles (Uganda and the Netherlands), Meja Mwangi’s *Carcase for Hounds* (Kenya), Helen Oyeyemi’s *The Icarus Girl* (Nigeria and Britain), and in Zoë Wicomb’s *David’s Story* and J. M. Coetzee’s *Disgrace* (South Africa).

While read as traumatic testimonies, the writings investigate the crossed, normalizing talks of globalization, trans-Atlantic relocation, women rights, and decolonization. They exhibit that the snippets of national pigmentation and verifiable locales of potential for the group to update the past, make a national citizenry, and graph a socially dynamic future through transformative processes of mourning.

Blundell (2009) advocates that following World War II, the novel confronted an emergency in its method of location, as he asks how could the human and his empathetic capacity of dialect and imaginative representation be loaned to the delineation of verifiable fear or trauma and who has the privilege to talk in the interest of – or to expect the voice of – casualties of such genuine barbarity? Moreover, he asks, to what degree
can an author take care of another person’s trauma without aestheticizing the compelling powerlessness, or losing the reader due to his/her lack of concern or repugnance?

The challenges for writers of fictional works went up when tending to such issues as domestic abuse, war, colonization, subjugation, and even genocide, which are not established in the insufficiency of language structure; rather, they are a result of the disjunction between the hopeful suspicions that connected dialect to a feeling of humankind, insight and the quest for objectives that are useful to society at large, and the limit of belated demonstrations of human barbarity as led, not by the savage other but by the present day social orders with which the reader would somehow identify.

According to the researcher, since the mid-twentieth century, various writers have reacted to these difficulties by renouncing the customary dialogic type of the novel and choosing characters that can’t or won’t talk to pass on, through their confusion and every now and then their harmed physicality, the degree of the roughness and abuse to which they have been subjected, and the trouble of acclimatizing such brutality into the stories by which groups, or without a doubt entire countries, characterize themselves. The suddenly huge cast of such quiet characters recommends that silence has a crucial part in the scholarly depiction of historical trauma.

The study recommends that the predominance of silence in contemporary fiction identified with the Holocaust, for instance, it demonstrates how this gathering of writers
perceives the degree to which this occasion has tried and keeps on testing artistic investigation. Writers the world over keep on declining to disregard these subjects in reality, the broken pictures and divided structures common to large portions of the books contemplated in the accompanying pages can be seen as an adept reaction to the tumult of war and human hostility. In any case, as is obvious from the quantity of contemporary works of fiction fusing a quiet character, silence has turned into an acknowledged and successful apparatus for the depiction of recorded occasions of dread or trauma that keep on challenging the ethical limits of imagination.

Risber (2010) declares trauma as a phenomenon which is so shocking that it would be impossible to be completely enlisted upon happening and which rather just shows belatedly and at some other place in meddling pictures and compulsive reenactments, offers particular difficulties to conventional ideas of referentiality. He adds that an upsurge in diverse fields of production has been seen of late and that it is dedicated to this phenomenon and its representation.

His investigation looks to investigate how traumatic encounters, for example, incest can be spoken to, read, and if possible worked through regarding transient and spatial references. By analyzing Jane Smiley’s *A Thousand Acres* (1991) in connection to the *Lear* gathering of father-daughter incest stories in dialogue with contemporary trauma theory, while likewise contextualizing the novel against other contemporary female-composed *Lears* by The Women’s Theater Group with Elaine Feinstein, Mairi MacInnes, Margaret Atwood, Lucy Ellmann, Valerie Miner, Ann Tyler, and Laura Esquivel, his
work contends that distinctive creators’ continuous allocations of the same Lear story crosswise over time can be seen as intertextual (re-)institutions of a not-yet-graspable snippet of father-daughter incest in a prior source and thusly can be considered piece of a continuum with individual trauma accounts.

These rehashed returns, the study holds, all the while sign endeavors to come to terms with the trauma literarily, and additionally to involve the readers in reviewing the tale of trauma as a type of social memory. His study additionally looks to exhibit that trauma in writing is spoken to, carried on, and perhaps worked through references to time as well as to space - topographical, real, and printed. Drawing on advanced trauma theory in further dialogue with Eco criticism, this theory peruses the enunciation of psychic trauma in connection to depictions of the traumatized cultivating scene in A Thousand Acres, reexamining the ramifications of arranging a traumatic past spatially in a lethal scene that has been gendered female by following an association between the obliteration of the area and the ill-use of the little girls’ bodies.

The writer holds that the real space of infringement, mapped in connection to the defiled group of area and doubly deleted - turned remote by trauma and through being harmed through the area - incomprehensibly develops as an unwavering witness to both the sexual infringement and the area ill-use. At last, his present study contends that trauma fiction itself, for example, Smiley’s novel, can turn into a memory-site for recollecting and taking the stand concerning the past traumatic moment, thus supplant lethal physical
or topographical places as memory spaces giving the content does not see a lot of but rather can convey the spatio-transiently troublesome power of trauma.

Horton (2010) looks at the relationship of trauma with the literary mode of the fantastic. While the fantastic has generally been seen as a mode of escapism or a writing of wish satisfaction, it might likewise assume an imperative part in how casualties of trauma develop their accounts. The fantastic does not just abandon trauma or give wonderful distinct options for genuine encounters; rather, it can constitute the carrying on of trauma, encourage working through, and even empower victimized people to manage witness to the traumatic past.

After a brief review of both trauma theory and the impacts of war trauma, his study offers readings of Kurt Vonnegut’s *Slaughterhouse-Five*, John A. Williams’ *Captain Blackman*, and Tim O’Brien’s *Going After Cacciato* to demonstrate that phenomenal components in trauma stories can be seen as reactions to and signs of trauma. The second part comes back to O’Brien’s novel to inspect the fantastic mode as a method for healing. The study finishes up with an investigation of the fantastic as taking the stand concerning genuine recorded occasions notwithstanding those that make up the experience of trauma.

Awan (2010) asserts that it is one of the biggest aftermaths of the post 9/11 world that the Western societies are haunted by the excessive fear of xenophobia or Islamophobia, adding that this fear of the Muslims as well as their ensuing stereotyping is evident in the
Western cultural productions as well. Analyzing John Updike’s *Terrorist* (2006), Awan highlights the point that this stereotyping of Muslims and Islam as the supporters or perpetrators of terror has led Updike to misrepresent both in a bid to play his part in the ongoing politics of cultural productions. Awan asserts that there are 33 verses of the Holy Quran quoted out of context by Updike in his novel *Terrorist* in order just to brings his point home that Islam as a religion promotes, supports and encourages violence. In the same vein, Awan (2013), discusses the ramifications of such Islamphobic or xenophobic approach by the West, saying that this leads the non-Westerner immigrants to go through the trauma of cultural shocks that is caused partially by their geographical dislocation but mainly due to the aforementioned attitude of stereotyping by the host Western societies. Analyzing the works of Zulfikar Ghose and Mohsin Hamid, Awan rues the present day xenophobia in the West, saying that it is ironical that the so-called global world has been so much divided due to the excessive xenophobia of the West, leading the non-Westerners to be faced with the traumatic experiences whenever they find themselves amid people in the Western societies.

Cannon (2012) inspects the methods of individual and cultural lamenting that portray the British writing of the Great War and its repercussions, 1914-30. Consolidating archival research, social history, and genre theory, the study recognizes the war writing’s articulation of a poetics of anguish and grievance: one that is melancholic, in that it opposes redemptive grieving, and accusatory, in that it oftentimes allocates fault for war and enduring on non-military personnel observers or the writer himself. To follow the advancement of the antielegiac in the writing of the Great War, the study gives: (a) a
distribution history of the war ballads of Wilfred Owen, (b) an examination of the pathetic fallacy and pastoral mode in the works of warrior artists and Virginia Woolf, and (c) an itemized evaluation of the gathering of the controversial war diaries and novels of the late 1920s.

The research discovers and challenges the generally held supposition that the pervasive incongruity and disillusionment of the literature of the Great War is principally a result of the recorded break of the occasion. It suggests that the ironic mode created amid the war-and between war periods is an outflow of individual and social nervousness appended by writers to the subject of individual mortality. Furthermore, it contends that the writing of the Great War concentrates on the breaking points of dialect that addresses outrage, and the insecurity of the thought of comfort in a period of mass, industrialized deaths.

Malsin (2012) says that in spite of numerous reasonable purposes of association, the field of rhetoric has to a great extent stayed unresponsive on the idea of trauma, or an experience of such overpowering nature. His study look to create the routes in which trauma all the while makes the exigency for talk and entangles its assignment, utilizing Holocaust survivor Charlotte Delbo’s notable memoir *Auschwitz and After* as a contextual analysis. The researcher contends, drawing upon the work of Susan J. Brison, that the externalization of her recollections in narrative structure permits Delbo to recover the self that was crushed by trauma; the text, notwithstanding, smashes traditional patterns of what constitutes a narrative of coherent structure, as put forward by Walter Fisher in his narrative paradigm. The analysis presumes that *Auschwitz and After* is
critical in that it institutes the trauma it looks to transmit, a fundamental approach despite the loss of reason and language, caused by the Holocaust.

Nabutanyi (2013) investigates representations of pained childhoods in post-1990 African narratives. Characterizing disturbed childhoods as the encounters of youngsters are presented to distinctive types of infringement including physical, mental, sexual and psychological mistreatment, the study considers portrayals of such encounters in a selected contemporary African fictional narratives in English.

The study’s focal point is that, while specific writers’ written work offers verifiable investigation of troubled childhoods, the information about this reality that such fictional writings deliver and put in the general population reverberates with readers on account of the story that both makes knowledge concerning such childhoods available and make a feeling of the critical predicament of such kids. They render such troubled childhoods grievable. The study portrays three qualities of the chose writings that clarify why such fictions can be viewed as critical from both social and aesthetic points of view: specifically, their foregrounding of interlaced vectors of infringement and/or helplessness; their skillful utilization of multi-layered story voices and their making of particular posttraumatic harm and survival tropes.

The study by Nyota (2013) spotlights on the fictional accounts of Eastern and Central European women writers who are writing in German and investigates the routes in which
political and historical trauma shapes their way to deal with narrative. By researching the outrages of the World War II through the yardstick of trauma theory, the study takes a gander at the courses in which their narrative writing is upset by their traumatic memory, inducing a genre that raises doubt about the authenticity records saved in history.

The research contends that without the development and multiplication of these individual trauma accounts to challenge, official, solidified records, there exists a danger of changeless engraving of official historical accounts into open cognizance, viably barring the stories of groups and individuals who are rendered delicate by war and/or relocation.

The analysis shows how these trauma fictions i) uncover the weight of unresolved, transmitted trauma on the second generation as the urgent era between the severe Stalinist time and the breakdown of communism, ii) upset historical records of incidents through the interruption of individual’s traumatic memory that is by nature unmediated and uncensored, iii) offer a different yet plural record of events by dismissing ordinary regular dialect as a vehicle for account and rather exploring different avenues regarding methods of representation, articulating trauma through idyllic dialect, through spaces, and through the body, and v) battle against theory, while regularly succumbing to the exceptionally same organized dialect of trauma that they look to challenge.

The study further holds that trauma fiction consequently develops as a different genre
that hinders the risk of deletion of different memories by continually questioning and uncovering the erased aspects of the official historical accounts, while additionally indicating the difficulties confronted in endeavoring to give a voice to individuals and groups that have endured trauma during a time where the term has ended up implanted and abused in our regular language.

Hassinen (2014) depicts and examines the courses in which psychological trauma and its result influence two focal characters and their connections in the U.S. primetime drama *Gray’s Anatomy* (ABC, 2005- ). All the more particularly, the study concentrates on the investigation and portrayal of post-traumatic reactions and symptomatic conduct of two of the show’s principal characters, Meredith Gray (the title character, played by Ellen Pompeo) and Cristina Yang (played by Sandra Oh), and the part of their kinship on their recuperation from trauma.

The investigation has been directed by nearly watching and portraying the characters’ correspondence with one another and additionally with their mates in the repercussions of two different traumatic occasions. Furthermore, a couple of illustrations of their cooperation with partners and patients have been incorporated at whatever point significant to the subject.

The study draws on the expansive hypothetical structure of TV studies; analysis on portrayal and character personality has likewise been counseled with the end goal of
clarifying the significance of characters and their improvement in sensational TV dramas. For the reasons of characterizing and dissecting traumatic encounters, writing on mental trauma and post-traumatic anxiety issue, specifically, has also been discussed. The investigation is subjective in nature and utilizes a hermeneutic procedure: hence, rather than strict adherence to a solitary investigative system, the examination has been led by doing a close reading on the scenes of the two selected plays, mentioning objective facts on the routes text-based and televisual components allude to the mental trauma and its impacts on the characters, and portraying and examining the perceptions in detail.

Georgiades (2014) analyzes the interrelation between the elements of human company and the psychoanalytic idea of witnessing in Samuel Beckett’s post-war plays. The examination focuses fundamentally on *Waiting to Godot* (1952), *Endgame* (1957), and *Happy Days* (1962) and arranges these plays inside a post-war system, while looking at their expressive qualities and topical concerns inside the connection of trauma studies.

To follow and uncover the overwhelming presence of trauma in the plays, the analysis concentrate on the treatment of structure and content and develop a critical reading by suggesting that both shape and substance at the same time internalize the rhythms, symptoms and the techniques of traumatic memory and experience. Showing that the dramatization of the plays is sufficiently suited to speak to and give typified structure to trauma, the study then examines the reasonability and criticalness of Beckett’s post-war trilogy as a testimonial fictional account.
Testimonial dramatization, the writer contends, exemplifies the symptoms of trauma both specifically and basically, and successfully figures out how to vouch for its chronicled connection through the demonstration of being performed before a crowd of people, before a human witness. By recognizing the physical presence of the gathering of people, the stage execution figures out how to make the witness to its battle to affirm, as the Beckett stage transforms into a key site of connection between trauma, theater and history.

Concentrating then on the state of memory, language and the body, the study recommends that they constitute three essential destinations for the appearance of natural traumatic experience and inquiry, subjectivity and the accessibility of decision in the consequence of enormously authentic trauma. This dialog is trailed by the evaluation of the nature, reason and estimation of human agency in the traumatic fallout. Human agency, the study contends, is in a broad sense identified with past trauma.

His study observes that it is conclusively formed by the breakdown of social structures, the loss of memory and the nonattendance of seeing, developing as a convincing human need that is urgently yearned for, searched out and kept up while diminishing individual character to pretend. A result of a profoundly traumatic history, human agency additionally surfaces as a method for imperviousness to authentic detestations as the human different serves as an imperative wellspring of comfort, backing and mutuality, while furnishing with his or her physical presence the quite required human witness to one’s presence.
The study says that a key figure of speech of Beckett’s post-war dramatization, human organization forefronts the status of the set of three as a significant masterful and moral reaction to the abhorrence of the Second World War, as the requirement for the human different as a witness – uncovered both specifically and basically – opens up the likelihood for seeing and affirmation to happen in the consequence of a verifiable period which blocked its own witnessing.

2.10 History, Literature and the Augmenting Similitudes

The basis of Khaled Hosseini’s *The Kite Runner* and Atiq Rahimi’s *Earth and Ashes* is found in factual history of the ravages of war in Afghanistan that started with Soviet invasion in 1979, leading to the war that continued for 10 years, followed by clashes between factions after the withdrawal of the Soviet troops. However, a question does arise here: how do Hosseini and Rahimi, being writers of fiction, deal with these historical facts and how do they approach these historically factual events in the novels? At this point, it is pertinent to discuss the fictional portrayal of history, the relationship between fiction and history, and the main goal of fiction writers for writing these history-related literary pieces. This part of the study highlights the differences, similitudes, and relationship between history and fiction, thus, bringing forth and highlighting the role of trauma fiction, or any fiction for that matter, in dealing with issues, which are historically factual in nature and status.

With the increasing number of discussions of the nature and role history and history
writing by the end of 20th century, it also brought inevitable impact on a certain branch of literature, which, through historical novel, has been closely linked with history or historiography. Regarding the relationship between history and the portrayal of historical events in fiction, critics, such as White (1973, 1999 & 2001), Ankersmit (2010) and Kellner (1989) brought about completely different perspectives as they started seeing the link between history and fiction, thus introducing the narrative turn, when it comes to debates about history. At this stage, a detailed analysis of how the contemporary authors such as Hosseini and Rahimi, and others deal with history in a bid to bring forth and remember their past, the way they maneuver their cultural productions for this purpose, and what sources they use to incorporate in their fiction is in place in order to know the similitudes as well as the differences between history and narrative. Every author uses his own way of incorporating historical facts in his fiction in order to bring his past on record from a personalized, yet truthful, view.

For an understanding of the relationship between history and fiction, it is pertinent to, first of all, discuss the two terms with their respective connotations. Little (2008) provides an answer to the question what history is, thus taking the definition into the domain of the philosophy of history, by saying that “history is a temporally ordered sequence of events and processes involving human doings, within which there are interconnections of causality, structure, and action, within which there is the play of accident, contingency, and outside forces.”(p. 1) The aforementioned definition highlights the key concepts of human element, chronology, and interaction. Moreover, the hallmark of the philosophy of history is its emphasis on objectivity while recording
incidents of the past, and a due attention to the ways in which the records of history are recovered, the limits of the scale on which historical account should be studied, and to see if there is a pattern in the related history. What matters a great deal in this discussion is the claim of history on objectivity, which is something of interest when it comes to the relationship of history with fiction. Objectivity is the factor that plays an important role in the philosophy of history; however, this is the same phenomenon that separates history from fiction.

Keeping in view the aforementioned objectivity issues, Ankersmit (2001) asserts that the very phrase of historical novel seems somewhat self-contradictory. As everyone knows that the crux of historical writing has been to bring forth accounts of the past which are based on facts; while, on the other hand, what is held about novel by most of the people is that it is fictional. Thus, historical novel can be defined as “a novel that has as its setting a period of history and that attempts to convey the spirit, manners, and social conditions of a past age with realistic detail and fidelity (which is in some cases only apparent fidelity) to historical fact.” (Little, 2008, p. 1)

Groot (2010), while discussing the traits of historical novel, outlines various forms in which it can appear, saying that some of the genres of literature in which it appears are fantasy, gothic, and romance, adding that it can appear in several other forms as well. He says that the most crucial traits of historical novel is its ability for “intergeneric hybridity” (p. 2), adding that the most striking criticism of this novel is that it can change facts and, at the same time, drive readers to believe in these facts despite the fact that
they know about the reality and also the fact that they are being misled. Groot (2010) argues that several writers, being fully aware of this characteristic ability of historical novel, write an explanatory note about the fact that the account they have presented is fictional in nature and that what are the ways in which they have related the content to the actual event in history. Groot further elaborates this point, saying that: “The form is obsessed with pointing out its own partiality, with introducing other voices and undermining its authority.” (p. 8)

In this manner, writers of fictional narratives admit how strange the genre, how crucial the act itself has been, and, more importantly, how the fictional narratives travel on the layers of reality and history. The explanation that the novelists present introduces the reader to the metafictional nature of the work and let the readers know about the artificial standing of the novel.

Compared to a novel that deals with or captures history, the way historiography thinks and writes about history is completely different from that. Discussing this different, yet related set of phenomena, termed as historical novel and historiography, Kellner (1989), who belongs to the fiction side of the dichotomy, draws on Huizinga, saying that: “[if] history is the way in which a culture deals with its own past, then historical understanding is a vital cultural enterprise” (Kellner, p. xi), adding that the way we record our past is, in fact, a vital part of our historical imagination. Here, the human intervention in the making of the stories has been greatly emphasized. Thus, it is quite clear that history comes into existence on the basis of the sources, while the utility of narrative comes into play in the
sense-making process. Kellner explains this phenomenon in these words, “Narrative exists to make continuous what is discontinuous; it covers the gaps in time, in action, in documentation.” (1989, p.55) Kellner’s argument is in line with what White (1973) and Ankersmit (2010) stress on the issue, putting forth the fact that the historian, while recording history, is basically performing an essentially “poetic act”. (White, 1973, p.x) Rather than highlighting and further intensifying the differences, the aforementioned similitudes hint at the commonalities between historiography and novels that portray history.

Brady (1973), while commenting on the link between history and historical novel in his book titled Memory and History as Fiction, brings about the differences between the two fields, saying that:

History ... refers to a “real” past, a belief or set of beliefs about that past, and purports to report the “truth” about that “real” past. The historical novel, on the other hand, like the autobiographical novel, refers to a “real” past but neither aims nor claims to reproduce it with scrupulous accuracy. (p. 17-18)

After outlining the aforementioned differences, where the similitudes between the two discourses seem far more than the differences, Brady says that the concern of historiography is to cater for memory, which does not happen to be an entity of stable nature. He further explains that the hallmark of memory is its ability of reconstruction, which appears or comes into existence in the form of fiction. He says that the pivotal point in memory is being referred to as memory, adding that the writing that is based on history is fiction. He elucidates that “the historical novel is distinguished not by its being fiction but by the greater degree of fictionalization involved and by the consciousness or
explicitness of this fictional status.” (Brady, 1973, p.18) Thus, despite the differences, the two discourses are highly related to each other and enjoy a greater set of similitudes when it comes to catering for memory of the past.

The debates in history can be better understood if, at this stage, a careful perusal of the evolution of the present history-related discussion is carried out. Gossman (1978) argues that the scope of history has always been under discussion, saying that Cicero recommended that a historian should be able to remain true to three principles, namely, “he must speak the truth, cannot omit any information and must be objective. (p. 3) As Cicero contributed a great deal in this field by providing important inputs related to the general past, historians and history at large, Gossman (1978) asserts that during Cicero’s time the domain of literature was so extensive that history was considered a part of it, adding that Cicero was the person who, even at that time, made a distinction between literary writings, which are based on history, and the mere recording of facts. In the same vein, Ankersmit (2010) argues that Aristotle also discussed the differences between a historian and a poet, saying that the former presents what had happened, while the latter writes about what may have taken place.

By the end of eighteenth century, literature happened to be seen as a completely different domain from historiography, mainly because this was the time the definition of literature began to change a great deal. This was the time when theorists and critics started questioning the factual nature of historic writing. As Gossman (1978) quotes from Chladenius, a German theologian from eighteenth century, saying that “a narration
wholly abstracted from its own point of view is impossible,” (p. 6) he argues that historical writing in, its essence, goes on to create a narrative. Romantic era being in the vogue in eighteenth century, it is no surprise that this idea came into existence in that period, thus emphasizing individual expression and fertility of ideas to cater for originality in this sphere.

The role of literary critics such as Kellner, Ankersmit and White is important in generating the aforementioned debate and focusing on discussions on history-related issues such as its narrative character, subjectivity and truth claims. They rejected the view that the historian remains absent from the account of history that he records, further explaining that the process of history-making actively involves the historian. The involvement of the historian in the process of history making, as put forth by the movement, goes against the spirit of history as advocated by Cicero, who says that “a historian must be objective.” To support this point and to negate the concept of adding subjectivity to the process of history making, Little (2008) asserts that “perspective-free history” is a concept that does not exist.

Referring to the idea of how a historical study, at the end, produces a text, Gossman (2008) says that the emphasis on the linguistic existence of historical narratives in the recent debates in historiography is the most radical and pertinent point in this field, adding that “History constructs its objects, and its objects are the objects of language, rather than entities, of which words are in some way the copies.” (p. 29)
White (1973) remains to be one of the most influential critic in the field of literary criticism and history as he is considered to be the first theorist whose contribution in the aforementioned debate on historiography is well known due to his introduction to the concept of narrative turn. Through his famous book titled *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (1973), he became famous throughout the related academic circles in the second half of the twentieth century with his poststructuralist focus on language. Starting the thesis with a distinct emphasis on language, both White and Kellner argue that history can be accessed through language only and that it should be first written before it can be accepted as history, adding that the whole discourse and the processes involved thereof can have several modes, connected to the past through a discourse that is related to it. To this end, White (1999) asserts in *Figural Realism* that “historical discourses typically produce narrative interpretations of their subject matter,” (p.3) where he uses the phrase historical discourse in order to mention historical fiction in this whole debate.

Just like Ankersmit (2010), White also argues that the main function of the narratives of history is to provide readers with “metaphorical insight” that is not the information of factual nature. (Pihlainen, 2002, p. 40) White further explains the value of these narratives, saying that these writings are not offering information that is completely new in nature but that it interprets the incident that has already taken place. Thus, as White suggests that both discourses use narrative techniques, historiographical and literary writing augment each other in making use of the content that is common for both. At this stage, he goes on to bring the idea of using factual events to create narrative of literary
nature, calling the whole project as ‘troping’ (p. 9)

Challenging the chronological ordering of events in the records of history, White argues in *Figural Realism* that as these events are ordered by the historian in a certain order based on his cultural knowledge of the setting, the writer of a narrative also uses the events in a variety of plot structures of his choice in a bid to make the story more appealing. He says that the choice for a certain plot structure by the historian to make a certain point is as vital as the event that he is going to record, adding that a narrative, similarly, cannot be taken as a pack of historical facts which have been put forth for reading from a highly neutral point of view. He explains that the use of real life events for fictional writing are also available in historical accounts of every incident, further elucidating this point, as he says,

Tropology is especially useful for the analysis of narrative historiography because narrative history is a mode of discourse in which the relations between what a given culture regards as literal truths and the figurative truths expressed in its characteristic fictions, the kinds of stories it tells about itself and others, can be tested. (p. 18)

Thus, it is pertinent to note at this point that fictional narratives from the past let the readers know how the culture remembers the events which took place in the past, what it deems important to remember and inform the readers about, what it considers as important in its history, and what legends it shares with the rest of the world to read about and consider.

White challenges the view that the narratives of history are removed from reality, saying
that “It is absurd to suppose that, because a historical discourse is written in the mode of
a narrative, it must be mythical, fictional, substantially imaginary, or otherwise
“unrealistic” in what it tells us about the world.” (p. 22) He advocates the fact that every
fictional narrative gets some of its content from the world that is real, and that the reader
is offered with some knowledge of that real world in the form of the narratives of history.
However, he also warns that it does not mean that the whole past will be reflected in a
narrative of the past. This is against Cicero’s second principle, according to which, “the
historian cannot omit any information;” however, the capturing of the whole past is
impossible, and at the same time, the question of being able to know about the whole past
has also been a pertinent issue in historiography.

Moreover, it is impossible to portray and bring forth every single detail of an event that
has taken place in the past. Beside, the narratives cannot cater for the readers’ need to
have a conclusive as well as definite view of the past incidents. As, “can we know the
past?” remained the most pertinent question in historiography in the nineteenth century,
there is every possibility that such narrative of the past will inevitably move on to
engender further interpretations of the past events, more fictional narratives of the past,
and increased discussions, based on such literary productions. If every single narration of
the past event is an interpretation of its own nature, it means that the greater the number
of narratives about an event in the past, greater the number of versions of that incident
exist. White says that it can happen that a writer portrays an event in the form of an epic
while another writer represents the same event in the form of a farce, adding that it does
not mean that one account is more truthful than the other, because it is all a matter of
Elaborating White’s aforementioned theory, Ankersmit (2010) argues in his essay titled “Truth in History and Literature” that White’s concentration on the literary dimension of historical writing can obscure other possible routes. On the one hand, the movement of White’s argument is from the novel to history; while, on the other hand, Ankersmit’s focus is to see what can or should be the novel’s truth by starting his argument from history to the novel. Making a comparison of the two discourses from a cognitive point of view, Ankersmit asserts that the facts related by a historian and a novelist are in no way different from each other, adding that the facts related by the novelist are imaginary facts. Considering the historical novel as a genre that brings both history and novel together, he argues that a historian will defend, explain and emphasize the sources that he selected for recording the incident, while a novelist does not provide such an explanation or defense. He further says that the commonality between a historian and a novelist is the fact that both are free to decide what aspect of an event they want to cover and what they want their readers to pay attention to in their works.

One of the differences between history and novel, according to Ankersmit (2010) is how the main characters in a historical novel are represented to show the historical knowledge that they are representing. Unlike history, historical novels show how the common people, whose names could not find a place in the records of history because their profiles were not that high to affect the happening of events, experience the past. Thus appreciating the role of the historical novel, Ankersmit asserts that “The historical novel
gives us applied knowledge of the past.” (p.45) It is in place to mention here that the study investigates Dastaguir’s character in Rahimi’s *Earth and Ashes* to see how, as an ordinary Afghan, he and many others like him, witnessed the traumatic attack by Soviet forces. The novel does not portray people from the high ranks of the government, but deals with Dastaguir, who is an ordinary Afghan who lost most of his family when his village came under attack by the Soviet forces. Moreover, the study also investigates the trauma of Amir, his Baba, Hassan and Sohrab who are common Afghans to see how they survived the ravages to war, as portrayed in *The Kite Runner*, and to see how they had to leave their own country to save their lives amid the war on their soil.

Ankersmit further says that a historian is different from a novelist in the sense that the former will explicitly say whatever he has to portray about the past, while a novelist is more occupied with showing whatever he has to tell about the past because he feels that a historical novel, just like the reality itself, should be multifaceted and open for interpretation on part of the reader. He argues, “For this is what we expect of novels: they give us an epiphany of reality itself,” (Ankersmit, 2010, p. 45) adding that the reader is provided with an idea of how the past was but then he is left to interpret it on his own.

Little (2008) enumerates three basic purposes on part of writers to write about history, saying that a writer writes about history due to,

[T]he idea of learning some of the facts about human circumstance in the past; the idea of providing a narrative that provides human understanding of how a sequence of historical actions and events hangs together and “makes sense” to us; and the idea of providing a causal account of the occurrence of some historical
Despite the fact that White terms a fiction writer and a historian to serve the same purpose of creating a narrative, one of the differences between the two is their motivation, intent and ultimate goal behind their writing about history. The prime objective of a historian, while writing about an event in the past, will be to remain truthful to the ultimate level; while in the case of a fiction writer, who may also be adhering to not to lose the truth value of his fiction, his goals and motivations for writing the fiction are many. The historian may be writing with the sole purpose of writing history in order to remain true to what has taken place, while a fiction writer may be writing to satisfy his inner self, to pay the debt of his soil, and to record his personal experiences with a motif that may be other than the truth, portrayed by a historian.

Unlike a historian, who is supposed to make every possible effort to stay absent from the narrative that he composes, the personal involvement of a novelist is quite evident if and when he incorporates certain details of his own life into the fiction that he is producing. This can also include the personal involvement of the writer of fiction if he includes his family members in the literary product, thus the novel turns into a research that has been carried out on the life of the writer and his family, yet depicting the truth of the time and events. This part of the discussion can easily lead one to the conclusion that a novelist is completely different from a historian and that his novel does not have anything to cater for history. However, as discussed earlier that it is not possible that an author can be completely absent from his own narration, Gossman (1978), quoting, Besancon, says that historical research in all its manifestations is in fact “recherché de soi-même which
means introspection.” (Gossman, p.28) The end product that a reader receives in the form of a narration has always come into existence after the researcher and the source have interacted with each other. Moreover, if a writer writes with the goal of recording an event so that it should never be forgotten, he is in fact linking history, which hallmarks trauma theory that also caters for the same objective.

The task of a historian is also to record the event and remember it for the whole community that is related to it. According to Little (2008), the basis for a historical representation is the inclusion of facts in the narrative, adding that “We use facts in the present to support inferences about circumstances and people in the past.” (Little, part1) Moreover, a historian will always be very careful in the accurate rendering of personal names, dates, and place names in order to fully record a certain event and to strictly remain truthful to the details. These are the elements which are vital in the text produced by a historian, providing stability and veracity to his text and making it truthful for readers. Moreover, the chronological flow of events is also equally important as the historian is expected to provide dates for the event in the order in which that took place. In the same vein, a writer of fiction also strives to remain true to the aforementioned details, but the only difference is that the names and dates that he provides to readers are mostly imaginative, yet the events are based on factual observations.

White (2001) argues that the historian, after carrying out his research into a certain event, has to turn the records into a well written piece that would be based on the records of history. He explains, the historian, at this stage, is like a fiction writer because he has to
use the linguistic strategies of the fiction writer in a bid to equip his words with the meanings of connotative, primary and secondary nature, so that, just like the work of a fiction writer, his work is also taken and read as texts laden with symbolic values. He suggests that the element of interpretation provides an air of narrative fiction to a record of history and also differentiates a discourse on history from a draft on events which have been carefully catalogued in a chronologically ordered fashion. This takes us back to the already discussed concept of emplotment by White, who says that in this way the events are not recorded as bits and pieces but put together in the structure of a plot, based on the priority and choice of the researcher.

As Nwahunanya (1991) asserts that “The historical novelist combines the techniques of the historian (documentation) and that of the novelist (imaginative re-creation of the events) in the fictional evocation of the past,” (p.2) the novels which are being discussed in the fourth and fifth chapters of the study serve the same purpose in the sense that they recreate the events that they are dealing with history in a bid to provide their perspectives of how they see the trauma of war in Afghanistan. Using the techniques of historiography, the novelists deal with events, which are factual but their portrayal here is fictional, thus, making a point that, as an event can have several angles of presentation in historical accounts, similarly, fictional narratives also endeavor to present one such perspectives out of the many angles available but with a ting of imagination. The novelists use the names of characters and locations in a history-like factual manner, and go on to deal with an incident that really took place in the history of Afghanistan; thus, making every effort to present it as realistically and factually as possible, so that it
can be read in conjunction with history.

The aforementioned discussion shows that the job of a fiction writer in cases of documenting an incident of factual nature is to present his perspective on the event because if a reader will read that account in order to get knowledge about what really took place at that time, he will take this fictional account as one of the modes or forms of what has really taken place. In this way the selected novels, which deal with the trauma of war in Afghanistan are not factual in nature, mainly because, unlike the historian who says what he has to record, the fiction writer presents the perspective from which he sees the incident. In this way, the selected writers present the war trauma in Afghanistan with all its multifaceted form and leave it for readers to interpret and get the meaning from it.

The aforementioned review of literature on the work already done in the field of trauma fiction shows how pervasive the scope of trauma studies has been. However, this detailed appraisal also brings forth the fact that there is no mention of the fictional narratives which deal with the trauma and its ensuing sufferings, caused by a continuous war in Afghanistan. As outlined in the introduction section of this study, the people in Afghanistan have been subjected to witness the ravages of war for a long time. The Afghan novelists have been narrating the histories of these sufferings in their fictional accounts, thus recording the trauma filled lives of the people in Afghanistan.

Craps (2008) criticizes the aforementioned Eurocentric blind spots of trauma theory, arguing that trauma theory has been produced in Europe and the United States in the 1990s, and since then, it has been discussing traumas like the Holocaust, and then later
on, the 9/11. Moreover, he asserts that “trauma with equal, if not greater regularity” has been seen and experienced elsewhere (p. 9). To fill this gap that Craps mentioned in 2008, he investigates, in 2013, the literary productions which concern the trauma of racial manipulations in the Caribbean, and then goes on to find resonances between partition of the Indian Subcontinent, colonialism and the Holocaust.

Following Craps’s recommendations for a more inclusive and culturally sensitive trauma studies, this study endeavors to explore an important aspect of the Afghan fiction in English, namely, how the writing and portrayal of trauma in fiction contribute towards bringing to fore the history of Afghanistan, during the Soviet invasion. It argues, in conjunction with certain noted literary theorists in the field of trauma, fiction and history that the history of a traumatic incident is incomplete, if taken merely as a record of events without catering for individuals’ accounts of trauma. The individual accounts of history are pertinent for consideration; else, the world will be limited to the binary categories of the ones who are considered as powerful and thus the makers of histories and, on the receiving end, the ones who are no more than just objects of those histories (Ahmad, 2000). Thus the study endeavours to investigate how the Afghan fictional narratives of trauma have been covering the ravages of war and what are the ways these narratives show the characters cope with the trauma, thus ensuring that this work on Afghan trauma fiction finds its belatedly due niche in the field the world over.
CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 The Methods of Analysis

Relying heavily on secondary sources for this qualitative research, the research project, in a bid to know the essence of trauma studies and its relationship with history, focuses on most of the related material on trauma with special focus on the works of Cathy Caruth, Dominic LaCapra, Kali Tal, Shoshana Felman, Judith Lewis Herman, Ann Whitehead, Stef Craps, and others.

In order to look for the symptoms of trauma in individual characters, it is, first of all, pertinent to gain the requisite background knowledge about trauma theory. Therefore, a detailed reading of the works of the aforementioned writers provides the knowledge that is required to gauge the trauma of individual characters. At this stage, the researcher endeavored to read and record the relevant material on trauma in literature in a bid to come forth with the characteristics of trauma fiction as well as the stages of Acting Out and Working Through in particular. Here, special attention was paid to the models by Miller (2000) and Herman (1992), as discussed in detail in this chapter on Research Methodology.
One of the approaches to this research has been interdisciplinary in nature because the present endeavor draws heavily from psychological trauma as well as literature. The study, time and again, refers and alludes to the tenets of trauma literary theory, which has basically come from psychoanalysis or for that matter psychology, and then goes on to see if these fictional accounts, analyzed with the yardstick of psychoanalysis, go on to add something to history, a completely distinct discipline in itself. This approach towards the investigation is in place, mainly because Caruth (1995) and Tal (1996) advocate the fact that the incident which causes trauma is saved in the mind of the survivor, and that the survivor can recall these moments without adding to, or subtracting from, the details that s/he has witnessed. Thus, taking this concept ahead, the study discusses if the accounts of the traumatized characters can add or supplement anything to history, because what the survivor has been saying about the incident is something that has been saved by the incident on his/her mind, and that s/he is continuously haunted by the flashbacks of that experience, which is anything but something other than whatever s/he witnessed.

One more method that is used to answer the research questions in the light of trauma literary theory has been the descriptive method, which mainly states a phenomenon as it is. The descriptive method of investigation helps the study to outline the tenets of literary trauma theory and the various stages that the theory has undergone with the passage of time. Thus, this method plays an important role in discussing and bringing to the fore trauma literary theory along with its relationship with history.
The biographical method of investigation also finds a place in the study as it traces the life story of the writers in the fictional narratives. This method is used in the investigation to see how the Afghan diasporic novelists have depicted their life stories in portraying various characters in the novel. This method is especially helpful in seeing how much the writers are haunted by the accounts of their own lives and if the flashbacks of their past find any room in their writings or not.

The researcher, then, looked for and recorded the incidents of violence, as mentioned in the novels, from the Afghan history of war, both internal and in the form of foreign aggression. Recording the very flashbacks of such traumatic incidents, as mentioned in these novels, has been vital for this study, because this becomes the yardstick to see if the novels qualify for the very definition of trauma fiction as outlined by Caruth.

Keeping the traits of trauma fiction in mind and following the models, as mentioned in the chapter on research methodology, the researcher approached the novels by the Afghan writers under consideration. In this manner, the study carried out a thorough perusal of the traits of trauma literary theory as well as the aforementioned coping with trauma models as the yardstick to analyze war trauma in these novels. This has been an extensive qualitative research to study and analyze the novels. The APA style of referencing with in-text citations has been used throughout this research endeavor.
3.2 The Theoretical Basics of Trauma Analysis

In order for trauma to address the issues of witnessing, memory and representation, the questions of referentiality need to be intrinsically literary. This is the reason why Freud, every now and then, referred to literary productions while discussing his theories of psychoanalysis. Even in the contemporary investigations, theorists take a perusal of literature in a bid to culturally understand the trauma-related problem, look for its effects and analyze its aftermaths.

The ideal status of literature for the representation of trauma has been acknowledged by both Caruth and Felman in their writings. The unclaimed moment of trauma finds a place to work as a witness to the actual incident of trauma and thus arrange for its belated enactment. The very oft-quoted definition of trauma that Caruth (1996) provides, according to which trauma is like a wound that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available, shows how Caruth incorporates literary or metaphorical language to explain the very phenomenon of trauma itself. She argues that as Freud referred every now and then to literature to support this phenomenon, the language that is used in the depiction of trauma is literary, adding that the commonality between psychoanalysis and literature is the fact that both look into the complex relationship between knowing and not knowing. She asserts that trauma’s epistemological crisis of (non-representability) not knowing and the possibility of belated
enactments (knowing) work as a commonality between trauma, psychoanalysis and literature.

Caruth explains that it is at the specific point at which knowing and not knowing intersect that the language of literature and psychoanalytic theory of traumatic experience precisely meet. Discussing the relationship between literary language and the representation of trauma, Felman and Laub (1992) state that a belated, figurative and literary representation of traumatic experience displaces referential truth. Besides, way back in 1895, Freud showed his surprise at the case studies that he wrote, saying that he felt impressed while reading his case studies because they sound like no less than short stories.

According to Douglas and Volger (2003), the introduction of trauma studies into humanities has, in the form of a trauma event, come back to the discourse in the mainstream, adding that the traumatic event is similar to referent or signified phenomenon that is always absent from the poststructuralist approach. They assert that the traumatic event, in this case is always supposed to be referred to retrospectively and that what highlights the exceptionalism of this inclusion is the fact that it brings forth the real without using the historical discourse that is a discredited notion of transparent referentiality. What they stress is the fact that the real can be experienced only when it is represented in literature. In other words, the real – the empirical or historical origin – cannot be known as such because it presents itself always within the resonances or field of the traumatic (Hartman, 1995). He stresses that literature and art have the ability not
only to represent the culture with its violence, but the study of trauma also has something quite inherent that enables the reader to transcend to the real world through the written text.

Trauma-related works of literature present a social critique by analyzing the root cause of a certain social abuse. Literary productions, which depict trauma, deal with issues and functions, which in essence are historical, cultural, sociopolitical, ethical and pedagogical. Trauma fiction, while depicting a traumatic event, performs an ethical task through highlighting the causes and consequences of that event from an integrated and more personalized angle that is broader in scope than it can be carried out by any other discipline, dealing with trauma.

Literary studies into trauma are in no way attempting to replace the examinations into trauma carried out by psychology, scientific research and historical investigation; rather it is benefitting from the research carried out in these fields and is also contributing to the stock of knowledge that can be of use for these fields dealing with trauma. According to Vickroy (2002), trauma related literature, through its function to provide a sociocultural critical analysis, provides a window of knowledge for the readers to see how people live the ideology and public policy, adding that as literature takes help from the research carried out in the fields of psychology and history, it also helps in providing the necessary supplement to other fields of study. Endorsing this role of trauma literature, Horvitz (2000) argues that trauma fiction, through bringing forth the cultural or sociopolitical setting that caused traumatic incident, unmasksthe oppressive ideologies
which either produce or legitimized the incident.

Several trauma scholars stress the authenticity of the depiction of trauma incidents in fiction. Writers and theorists such as Granofsky (1995), Vickroy (2002) and, Whitehead (2004) assert that the depiction of trauma is more effective as well as authentic when it is done through more stylistically innovative methods. Vickroy, who wrote a book titled *Trauma and Survival in Contemporary Fiction* (2002) on the portrayal of trauma in colonialism as well as subjugation related narratives written by Larry Heinmann, Dorothy Allison, Pat Barker, Marguerite Duras and Toni Morrison, argues that fictional narratives, through innovative techniques of portrayal, have the ability to portray incidents of trauma in a more authentic way than the testimonies of survivors, adding that the use of techniques such as symbolization, which is used in the structure of these works, takes into consideration the processes, rhythms, and uncertainties of the incidents of trauma. He also asserts while covering the works of these writers that the use of these innovative techniques brings trauma in the access of the readers because they, through the figurative language, portray trauma and its relationship with fragmented memories, shattered identities and feelings of dissociation in the post-traumatic setting.

In the same vein, Whitehead (2004) also suggests the need for a fictional representation of trauma. Through yoking together trauma theory, through the works of trauma theorists such as Cathy Caruth, Shoshana Felman, and Geoffrey Hartman, with the literary trauma, through narratives by Pat Barker, Binjamin Wilkomirski, Caryl Phillips, and Toni Morrison, she compiled *Trauma Fiction* in 2004, in which she stresses that in order for
trauma to be portrayed through literature, it is imperative for writers to disenchant themselves with the traditional literary realism.

She asserts that the writers’ extensive reference to the supernatural in a bid to cater for the reader’s need to suspend disbelief in cases where the rupture of symbolic order is supposed to be conveyed can no longer be used to portray the reality of trauma. She advocates for the novelists to replace the aforementioned traditional method of portraying the reality with the more experimental forms being used in the postmodernist and postcolonial fiction. Stressing the need for an intensification of the traditional modes of narration in fiction, she advocates the need to use devices such as intertextuality and repetition on the levels of plot, narrative and reference in trauma fiction.

Emphasizing the use of the postmodernist genre for the depiction of trauma, Granofsky (1995) holds that new subgenre, named trauma novel, has been visible in the works produced after 1945, adding that this trend can be seen in the works of J. M. Coetzee, William Golding, Doris Lessing, and Margaret Atwood. He explains that despite the fact that modernist writing gave birth to trauma novel but the fact remains that it is due to the use of its more of the postmodernist techniques that it stands in the middle of the modernist and postmodernist writings. He adds that what happens in the trauma novel is that it investigates the mind of an individual to see how it is impacted by a collective disaster by looking for the responses of the protagonist. It also uses figurative language to see any possibility of recovery from the trauma.
On the other hand, there are certain theorists and critics who opine that either realistic, non-realistic or an amalgamation of both modes can be used for the representation of trauma. Kaplan (2005) asserts that there are cases when the realist mode of the rendering of a traumatic incident is more effective and powerful than the unrealist one. She wrote *Trauma Culture: The Politics of Terror and Loss in Media and Literature* in 2005, in which she observes that her reading of the account written in a realist mode of rendering the trauma by Sarah Kofman in her memoir titled *Rue Ordener, Rue Labat* has been more impressive and powerful than Marguerite Duras’s *The War (La Douleur)*, which has been written through the unrealist mode. However, Kaplan goes on to assert that the writers who portray incidents of trauma from the unrealist mode of rendering have the luxury of having more space and opportunity in the form of a variety of strategies to depict the incident the way they feel about it.

Other writers, such as Horvitz (2000), feel the need for an amalgamation of the realistic representation of trauma along with special attention to fantasy and imagination as the unrealistic modes. Analyzing psychological and cultural masochism in the fictional works of American women writers between the nineteenth century and the twentieth century, she investigates the works of Margaret Atwood, Joyce Carol Oates, Leslie Marmon Silko, Charlotte Perkins, and Gayl Jones in her *Literary Trauma: Sadism, Memory, and Sexual Violence in American Women’s Fiction* in 2000. She states that a new genre is coming into existence in which the theoretical genres of realism and postmodernism have been brought together, adding that this new genre is termed as postmodern realism or post-structural realism. She further says that individuals provide a
more personalized and unique interpretation of the world through providing innovative metaphors, fantasies and symbols.

The fictional representation or portrayal of trauma does not exclude referential truth and realism. Hartman (1995) stresses that “The symbolic […] is not a denial of literal or referential but its uncanny intensification,” adding that the present discussion on the fictional representation of trauma is very similar to the discussion in psychoanalysis in the past on the question if trauma originates in the life in fantasy or in real.

Explaining the real versus unreal dichotomy, Hartman explains that the traumatic knowledge of a certain event that is beyond the grasp of a victim upon occurrence and which is found only in the form of dissociated pieces of memory is the reality, while on the other hand, literature is more of an emphatic and effective portrayal of the whole incident with special attention to the mental processes of the victim. It means that the literal works of the temporal level about a traumatic event that cannot be registered upon occurrence, while the symbolic level corresponds to the spatial because this is where the split psyche provides dissociated reactions to the event.

In traumatic representation, the symbolic mode complements literality by signaling the spatial side of traumatic memory. Thus, both realist and figurative expressions are vital for the representation of trauma because the spatial and temporal references are presented in the form of key stylistic devices.
3.3 Cathy Caruth’s Theory of Double Trauma

The first name that comes to the mind, when a discussion on trauma studies takes place, is that of Cathy Caruth. The first theory that this research enterprise uses in this investigation comes from this author who is the author of *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995) and *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* (1996). Her contributions made her a pioneer in the field of the trauma studies, and researchers use her theory as the foundation stone in their works in the field. Her concept of the inherent latency of trauma, according to which, the survivors of a traumatic incident will experience the flashbacks of the traumatic incident that they experienced after a lapse of sometime, is in accordance with what Sigmund Freud said in 1896. Caruth explains that the traumatic incident is traumatic because it is beyond the usual human experience, adding that it is because of this fact that the survivor is unable to understand the incident in immediacy.

Moreover, Caruth asserts that the survivor of a traumatic incident experiences a double trauma in the sense that he or she has witnessed the trauma of other people’s death, and paradoxically, the survivor sees his very survival as a trauma itself. Caruth further explains that the survivor sees his existence as a trauma because he is constantly haunted by flashbacks of other people’s death. So, the survivor goes through a double trauma i.e the trauma of death and the trauma of survival.
However, what really made Caruth’s work come in the spotlight is the fact that she came up with the idea that the survivors of trauma, when they are haunted by the flashbacks of some traumatic incident, are basically telling the ‘real history’. She explains that the survivors of trauma are the ones whose minds have recorded the incident in pure actuality and they, while replaying those incidents, are unable to either add or subtract things from that incident that is recorded in their mind. Thus, Caruth concludes that the flashbacks, haunting the survivors of trauma, are actually real histories which the survivors are telling, and their listeners are people, who did not witness the incident.

The work of Cathy Caruth play an important role in investigating the trauma of the characters portrayed in the selected novels for this study. This leads the researcher to why some of the characters are not able to tell about their traumatic memories and why is it that they take some time before they inform others of the trauma they witnessed. Moreover, it is helpful in understanding why the survivors of trauma, usually, curse their existence and why is it that they wish death for themselves? The contributions of Caruth are also helpful in understanding how these flashbacks of the survivors of trauma create historical accounts and what is the truth of such histories.

3.4 Dominic LaCapra’s Theory on Victim’s Reaction to Trauma

This research further uses the trauma-related work of Dominic LaCapra as outlined in her book *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (2001). The writer explains ‘acting out’ as a
state “in which one is haunted or possessed by the past and performatively caught up in the compulsive repetition of traumatic scenes. Acting out is as if one were back there in the past reliving the traumatic scene” (LaCapra 2001, 21). By ‘acting out,’ the writer means that it happens with some survivors of trauma that they are haunted every now and then by the traumatic incident and the severity of these incidents is so high that they are unable to come out of it. The writer further explains that such survivors, when struck by these flashbacks, are no more able to differentiate between the moments that they lived in that moment of trauma and the moments they are living outside of that trauma, adding that while in the moments of flashbacks they act as if they were transcended into the very moment of trauma.

LaCapra’s other concept that the researcher uses is the concept of ‘working through,’ according to which the survivor of trauma is able to separate the moments of trauma from the moments of everyday life. At this stage, as LaCapra elucidates, the survivor can talk to other people about what actually happened in the traumatic incident. Here, the survivor is capable of differentiating between the past, the present and the future and s/he can mourn whatever happened. At this stage, the survivor is able to take the traumatic incident as a part of life and s/he can return to normal life.

LaCapra’s concepts of ‘acting out’ and ‘working through’ are applied on several characters of the novels because there are individuals who are affected so much by a certain trauma that they can hardly come out of it. They keep on repeating what they
witnessed. However, there are the ones who are either not hit that hard by the trauma or they have the required mental strength to ‘work through’ the traumatic incident and have a recourse to everyday life. This distinction is very helpful in analyzing the trauma of individual characters.

3.5 Kai Erikson’s Concept of Secondary Victims of Trauma

While analyzing the trauma of characters, portrayed in the novels, through the trauma theories by Caruth and LaCapra, this research also takes help from the works of Erikson. Erikson (1994) highlights the impact, on individuals and communities, of natural and technological catastrophes. The writer explains how incidents of destruction can impact people who did not witness the catastrophe and who were not physically present there.

Erikson’s study is relevant here because not only the people who witnessed the trauma are badly impacted by the incident, but the ones who came to know about it later on are also getting its effect. In this case, the ones who listen to the accounts of the survivors of trauma are very much likely to be affected by what they hear. In this way, the impact of trauma, though not in the same severity as the survivors themselves felt, is transferred to and felt by the ones who were not present at the occurrence of the incident.
3.6 Judith Lewis Herman’s Coping with Trauma Mechanism

Following the major theoretical insights of Caruth and LaCapra in analyzing these novels, the study uses the coping with trauma mechanism of Judith Lewis Herman. Belonging to the same 1990’s, Herman (1992) lists three stages as the mechanism for coping with trauma. The writer particularly takes into consideration the trauma of the survivors, resulting from sexual abuse. However, this mechanism and the related three stages have already been used by researchers while analyzing other traumas such as the Holocaust and the 9/11. So, this research also uses Herman’s coping mechanism to track the behavior of the survivors of trauma in the novels.

In her definition of trauma, Herman (2001) asserts that the human body and mind develop traumatic reactions during the conditions of being restricted in action, especially when neither escape nor resistance is possible. She adds that this condition leads the human self-defense to be overwhelmed due to the problems and is thus more organized. As a consequence, further lasting modifications in emotions, cognition, memory and physiological arousal take place. Herman says: “the traumatized person may experience intense emotion without a clear memory of the event, or he may remember everything in detail but with no emotion” (p. 34). She supports her thesis by referring to Janet’s work, which outlines dissociation while discussing the critical pathology in Hysteria. She also discusses the work of Abram Kardiner, who asserts that:
When a person is overwhelmed by terror helplessness, the perceptions become inaccurate and pervaded with terror, the coordinative functions of judgment and discrimination fail... the sense organs may even cease to function... The aggressive impulses become disorganized and unrelated to the situation in hand... The functions of the autonomic nervous system may also become dissociated with the rest of the organism. (p. 35)

Herman (2001) divides the traumatic symptoms into three parts; namely, hyper arousal, intrusion, and constriction. According to her, hyper arousal among the survivors of trauma is: “the human system of self-preservation going into permanent alert, as if danger might return at any moment” (p. 35). Explaining hyper arousal she says: “the traumatized person startles easily, reacts irritably to small provocations, and sleeps poorly” (p. 35). Herman, then goes on to refer to other researchers in order to back her thesis. She quotes from Kardiner who asserts:

The nucleus of the traumatic neurosis is a psychoneurosis. He believed that many of the symptoms observed in combat veterans of the First World War – (startle reactions, hyper alertness, vigilance for the return of danger, nightmares and psychosomatic complaints) - could be understood as resulting from chronic arousal of the atomic nervous system. The irritability and explosively, aggressive behavior of traumatized men as disorganized fragments of a shattered fight or flight response to overwhelming danger (p. 36).

While discussing intrusion as the second symptom of trauma, Herman says that this can happen to survivors even when the danger has passed and the trauma is no more happening, adding that this is as if the survivors are reliving the moment of trauma. She further explains that this is the symptom that prevents the survivors from resuming their normal lives, adding that this has already been discussed by Freud, Kardiner and Janet
According to her, Janet declared his patients, who were suffering from hysteria, as the ones being driven by an “ide'e fixé” (p. 37), which means intrusion. She also refers to Sigmund Freud, who after accumulating enormous proof of combat neurosis during the Word War I, said that “The patient is, one might say, fixated to the trauma...” (p. 37). Herman, then, also quotes from Kardiner, according to whom the survivors of trauma experience nightmares for years because the memories of trauma “are not encoded like the ordinary memories of adults in verbal or linear narratives” (p. 37).

According to Herman, the third symptom of trauma is constriction which entails the fact that the survivor of trauma enters the state of surrender and becomes completely powerless in the face of the trauma. She says that this is the stage where the self defense system of the survivor of trauma stops working, resulting in the individual’s shifting of his/her state of consciousness. She, while supporting her thesis, draws an analogy between such survivors of trauma and the condition of animals which completely freeze when they sense imminent danger to their life.

She explains that the situation in a traumatic incident is recorded cognitively by the survivor of trauma; however, it is due to the severity of the trauma that it detaches the elements from the ordinary or routine meaning. It, according to Herman, thus results in numbing or distorting the perceptions of the survivor. This is the reason why it sometimes alters the survivor’s sense of time, making the survivor think as if the
incidents are happening in a slow motion mode.

Herman further adds that it can happen to an individual that s/he may consider him or herself as someone outside of that trauma and not a part of the traumatic event. She adds that s/he can feel him or herself as someone outside of that body of events, adding that this change in consciousness or dissociation can be considered as a protection against unfathomable tragedy and that it can also be seen as mercy from the nature.

Herman (2001) says that the survivor feels two fluctuating reactions of intrusion and constriction when s/he goes through a traumatic experience. She asserts that it may happen to a survivor that he may no more be carrying the symptoms of trauma; however, certain triggers and reminders can revive the symptoms long after the traumatic incident has passed. This altered state of consciousness leads the survivor to sever any personal and social connections.

Herman stresses the fact that her 30 years of working with the survivors of trauma show to her that the survivor of trauma is prone to limit him or herself to isolation because s/he questions relationships between families, friends and also love. She suggests that the impact of the traumatic event on the survivors can be alleviated provided the people living around the survivors play a supportive role, adding that any kind of negativity or hostility towards the survivors will further increase the traumatic effect on the victim. While criticizing unwanted condemnation from the people living around the survivor, Herman also warns against unsighted acceptance for the survivor, adding that both
criticism and unprecedented favors for the survivor will further impede the recovery of the survivor.

Herman (2001) proposes that it is vital for the society to openly acknowledge the survivor’s trauma, adding that the people living around the survivor should take certain actions in this regard so that the survivor does not consider him or herself aloof from the rest of the community. Giving the example of traumatized soldiers, who return from war, the writer asserts that the soldiers look forward to the people living around them to tell them how they look at their actions in the war. She further notes that the soldiers always have this fear if their actions are being seen as honorable or the other way round, adding that they are also doubtful of the fact whether their sacrifices are being given due credit. She advises that it is the responsibility of the society to bridge the gap between the survivor and the society and to take actions in this regard in a bid to remove the concerns of the survivor.

3.6.1 The Establishment of Safety

According to Herman, the first stage in this coping with trauma mechanism is that safety should be established in the life of the survivor of trauma. This means that the survivor should not only be physically safe but s/he should also have the sense of safety. This, Herman explains, goes on to show that the survivor should come out of the constant state of fear and s/he should be sure that s/he is out of danger.
3.6.2 The Ability to Remember Trauma and Mourn

The second stage of Herman’s coping mechanism is that the survivor of trauma should be able to remember and mourn the incident. Here, the survivor should be able to relate what trauma s/he has gone through. Herman says that in this manner the survivor “transforms the traumatic memory, so that it can be integrated into the survivor’s life story” (Herman, 1992, p.175). Herman further explains that the survivor of trauma should be able to get out of what s/he has gone through and that the mourning can take place only if the survivor is sure that safety has been established in his her life. The writer says that this act of remembering and mourning the losses establishes the fact in the mind of the survivor that s/he is no more in the conflict zone and that s/he is moving towards recovery from the whatever s/he has experienced.

3.6.3 Reconnection to Everyday Life

The third stage of this model is that the survivor should be able to return to everyday life. Herman asserts that the survivor, after remembering and mourning the loss, should reconnect to everyday life and start a new beginning. Herman’s model has been very helpful in tracking the post-trauma lives of characters. The three stages in the model show how the lives of characters are leading toward normalcy and to what extent they are recuperating, or otherwise, from the impact of trauma they witnessed. The study uses this model extensively to track the behavior of the characters in the post trauma scenario.
3.7 Miller’s Problem-Focused Versus Emotions-Focused Coping with Trauma Model

In conjunction with Herman’s coping mechanism, another model that the study uses to track the behavior of characters in reaction to the trauma, concerned, is the one by Joy Elrichman Miller (2000) as outlined in Love Carried Me Home: Women Surviving Auschwitz. Miller, originally, used this model for women who went through the trauma of being prisoners at the Auschwitz concentration camp during World War II. After carrying out interviews, and studying the testimonies, of these survivors of trauma, Miller (2000) outlined two kinds of coping with trauma techniques i.e “problem-focused coping” and “emotion focused coping” (p. xxii). Moreover, the writer, after carrying out a proper analysis of these accounts, proposes specific methods for these coping with trauma techniques.

Miller (2000) indicates various techniques for problem focused and emotion focused coping. Basically, problem focused coping is action centered and “is utilized when something solid can be achieved, for example, stealing blankets or additional portions of food (p. xxii). On the other hand, emotion focused is to a greater extent a “thinking strategy.” When something tangible is not feasible, methods, for example, “fantasy,” “numbing,” “humour,” and “relationship with others” are all alternatives for shielding oneself from the effect of the trauma notwithstanding when not keeping the trauma from happening. Miller (2000) brings up the idea that for some detained in Auschwitz, emotion
centered coping was the main technique accessible since there was almost nothing one could do to effect one’s physical environment. In spite of the fact that her work was produced through meetings with women survivors and the center of her study is on their stories, her work can positively be connected to numerous trauma writings. She offers, for instance, a fine setting through which to peruse the regularly examined Night by Elie Wiesel (1960).

Another intense Holocaust content, Rena’s Promise (Gelissen, 1995), tells the story of Rena Kornreich who was detained for an outstandingly long time. In light of the definite chronicling of Rena’s agony, Rena’s Promise can rapidly overpower readers. Utilizing Miller’s (2000) apparatuses, a reader can contextualize Rena’s story in the connection of adapting methodologies and build up a system for reading the awful repulsiveness of her years in Auschwitz.

Outside of Holocaust studies, Miller’s (2000) methods keep on acting as a device for investigation. In Jacobo Timmerman’s personal history, Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number (1988), Timerman composes of his two year detainment by the Argentine government in an Argentine jail. The majority of his time when he is detained has gone through in isolation where the only human contact takes place just when he is being tortured and investigated. Since there is practically nothing he can do to affect his physical surroundings, Timerman depends fundamentally on emotion centered coping procedures for his survival. He spends innumerable hours in his cell fantasizing about a bookshop he will create, including such specifics as “the size of the main room, the name,
the typography of the letters printed on the windows, [and] the types of books” to be sold (1988, p. 37). His fantasy gives him a break from life in isolation; it is safe, breathes easy, and is under his control.

Timerman, likewise, utilizes alliance with what he finds, through the peephole in his cell entryway into the peephole of the cell over the corridor, another detainee. This contact with another person is strange in the jail, and Timerman reacts specifically when he perceives that there is an eye taking a gander at him through the opening. He makes a history to run with this obscure individual, an identity, a physical make-up. The two start to correspond with each other through eye and eyebrow development, and the connection lifts him colossally, issuing him trust and a feeling of humankind in the midst of the torment he has encountered. Timerman observes, “that night we conquered death . . . we were immortal” (p. 6). At the point when later Timerman is informed that the individual over the way has passed away, he declines to accept the news and depends on his expanded quality and confidence in humankind to keep up trust in his own particular survival.

Miller’s (2000) depiction of how one can adapt to trauma empowers readers to acknowledge and appreciate what Timerman did to add to his own particular survival. In what had all the earmarks of being a totally defenseless circumstance, he figured out how to take back some level of force, and Miller issues us a model that helps us to see how Timerman has done this.
Miller’s (2000) model is particularly valuable when examining the sort of collective trauma that is reflected in writings of the holocaust and other traumas of a collective nature. By utilizing Miller’s “problem focused coping” and “emotion centered coping” as a general lens through which readers can comprehend the predicament and plightful moves of the characters, Holocaust and other trauma literary works get to be more available as well as less overpowering for readers.

As researchers have used this model to study the trauma literature of the Holocaust and the 9/11 and other traumatic incidents, this study uses this model to see how the trauma-hit characters cope with their condition. Furthermore, a textual analysis in the light of this model and the one by Miller is helpful in how the characters deal with trauma.

So, heavily relying on the aforementioned groundbreaking works by Cathy Caruth and Dominic LaCapra in carrying out the textual analysis of novels included in this qualitative study, the coping with trauma models by Herman (1992) and Miller (2000), as discussed above, are used to approach and analyze the behavior of characters in the selected novels. It is pertinent to mention here that the trauma of individual characters, being the mouthpiece of the society under the impact of the traumatic incident, is analyzed in the light of the aforementioned theories.

Here, the study makes an endeavor to see if the trauma of the characters is limited to the individual characters or the writer uses them as the representatives of the society as whole.
in a bid to show that the trauma is experienced by the social group as a whole. In this particular case, the study uses the text of the novels as of primary importance to see if the accounts of trauma of the individual characters are mere individual incidents or they are highlighting a collective societal reality that is the very essence of a historical truth as outlined by Cathy Caruth at the start of this chapter.

In a bid to know the essence of trauma studies and its relationship with history, the researcher, first of all, reads all the related material on trauma with special focus on the works by Cathy Caruth, Dominic LaCapra, Kali Tal, Shoshana Felman, Judith Lewis Herman, Ann Whitehead, and Stef Craps. In order to look for the symptoms of trauma in individual characters, it is, first of all, pertinent to gain the requisite background knowledge about trauma theory. Therefore, a detailed reading of the works of the aforementioned writers provided the knowledge that is required to gauge the trauma of individual characters. At this stage, the researcher endeavored to read and record the relevant material on trauma in literature in a bid to come forth with the characteristics of trauma fiction as well as the stages of Acting Out and Working Through in particular. Here, special attention was paid to the models by Miller (2000) and Herman (1992), as discussed in detail in this chapter.

The researcher, then, looked for and recorded the incidents of violence, as mentioned in the novels, from the Afghan history of war, both internal and in the form of foreign aggression. The recording of the very flashbacks of such traumatic incidents, as
mentioned in these novels, has been vital for this study, because this becomes the yardstick to see if the novels qualify for the very definition of trauma fiction as outlined by Caruth.

Keeping the traits of trauma fiction in mind and following the models, as mentioned above, the researcher approached the novels by the Afghan writers under consideration. In this manner, the study carried out thorough a perusal of the works by Cathy Caruth and Dominic LaCapra as the yardstick to analyze the trauma of war in these novels. This has been an extensive qualitative research to study and analyze the novels. The APA style of referencing with in-text citations has been used throughout this research endeavor.

3.8 Data and Rationale

“The survivor-witness bears a terrible burden - a duty to both the living and the dead to testify, to tell the world of the horrors s/he has seen.” (Tal, 1996, p. 56).

Criticizing the Eurocentric blind spots of trauma theory, Craps (2008) goes on to assert that trauma theory has been produced in Europe and the United States in the 1990s, and since then, it has been discussing traumas like the Holocaust, and then later on, the 9/11. However, he adds that “trauma with equal, if not greater regularity” has been seen and experienced elsewhere (p. 9). Following a detailed discussion on trauma theory, Craps (2013) investigates literary productions, which concern the trauma of racial manipulations in the Caribbean, and then goes on to find resonances between partition of
the Indian Subcontinent, colonialism and the Holocaust.

Following Craps’s recommendations for a more inclusive and culturally sensitive trauma studies, this study endeavors to explore an important aspect of the Afghan fiction in English, namely, how the writing and portrayal of trauma in fiction contribute towards bringing to fore the history of Afghanistan, during the Soviet invasion. It argues, in conjunction with certain noted literary theorists in the field of trauma, fiction and history that the history of a traumatic incident is incomplete, if taken merely as a record of events without catering for individuals’ accounts of trauma. The individual accounts of history are pertinent for consideration; else, the world will be limited to the binary categories of the ones who are considered as powerful and thus the makers of histories and, on the receiving end, the ones who are no more than just objects of those histories (Ahmad, 2000).

By now, it has become well known to everyone that the official accounts which are termed as “History,” with a capital “H,” are the records of incidents, put together and saved, from the vantage point of the ones who were in power to write History (Pachay, 2007). As a result, these official accounts of Histories include details which were considered to be of interest to the ones in power, and thus disregarded the accounts of the traumatized people, who, being traumatized and thus powerless, were never heard or taken a note of. All narratives, as Foucault (1972) stresses, are in one way or another discourses of power. Thus, the accounts of trauma, portrayed in fiction, are all the more important, because this is where the survivors of trauma come up with the ‘real history’
of a nation and a society (Caruth, 1996).

So, the purpose for selecting *Earth and Ashes* for this study attempts to explore the effect of war trauma of the past on the present and its representation in Afghan fiction in English in the backdrop of Cathy Caruth and Dominic LaCapra’s theories of trauma studies.

This part of the research endeavors to investigate individual traumas, portrayed by Afghan writer, Atiq Rahimi, in his novel *Earth and Ashes*. The study, thus, tracks and records the sufferings of the traumatized Afghan people, through the individual accounts of the characters, during the Soviet invasion in 1979. Using the theoretical and critical framework of trauma studies, this qualitative study investigates how traumatic experiences flash back in the accounts of fictional characters and provide a history that has not been catered for and accommodated in the conventional records. This novel has been selected for the study because it presents the trauma of the Afghan people who, just like the writer of the novel, witnessed the ravages of war during the Soviet invasion.

As Trauma studies came to fore as an area of cultural research during the early-to-mid-1990s. In literature, it investigates how traumatic incidents are portrayed by and through fiction. Trauma theory helps in comprehending the variety of modes through which traumatic incidents are portrayed or repressed in literary and historical texts. Investigating and analyzing the accounts provided by the survivors of trauma, this field of study endeavors to look into the histories, not recorded in the official accounts. These
narratives provide readers with an insight into a traumatic experience. According to Caruth (1996), who is considered as a pioneer in the field of trauma studies, this textualist approach to investigation will provide us with a unique access to history. She adds that the investigation of the accounts of trauma provides us with the possibility to rethink about and reinvestigate whatever happened in the past, adding that this will enable us to understand history as it actually occurred.

Putting forth the trait that differentiates trauma studies from other fields, Caruth says that in “a catastrophic age trauma itself may provide the very link between cultures” (p. 11). Thus, the very foundation of trauma studies is laid upon the concept of establishing a link between the seemingly unrelated traumatic events. Listening to the trauma of another will not only bring forth the real history but it will also create harmony among different cultures.

However, the aforementioned commitment to create harmony among cultures by means of cross cultural studies is not found in the works of the pioneers of trauma studies. As Craps and Buelens (2008) assert that the works of the founding members of trauma studies, such as those of Cathy Caruth deal with the experiences of trauma of “white Westerners and solely employ critical methodologies emanating from a Euro-American context” (p. 1). They stress that this approach of ignoring the non-Western trauma will lead to widening the gap between the West and the non-Western world.
Before an analysis of the novels, here is a brief summary of the plot. *Earth and Ashes* tells the story of the elderly Dastaguir, the protagonist, whose village has been destroyed by the Russian tanks during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. He, along with his young grandson, named Yassin, who has gone completely deaf due to excessive bomb blasts, is travelling to the mines where his son, Murad, works. These two are one of the few survivors of the attack as the Russian tanks turn the whole village into rubble. Dastaguir, amid all the flashbacks of destruction that he witnessed, travels to see his son in order to tell him what happened to his family and the village. While waiting for the bus at a checkpoint, the protagonist, Dastaguir, and his grandson meet the incommunicative guard, Fateh, and a well-educated and kind Mirza Qadir, with whom he shares his trauma-filled account of destruction that he witnessed. Here, Dastaguir recalls how his village wife and daughter-in-law Zaynab were humiliated and killed and how village was destroyed. This is where both Dastaguir and Yassin share the flashbacks of trauma with Mirza Qadir, and thus give an insight to the unrecorded history of the trauma of war.

The second novel for this study is Khaled Hosseini’s *The Kite Runner* which is a careful overview of the history of Afghanistan and the life of Khaled Hosseini. First of all the phrase kite runner and kite running has a background in the Afghan culture which is as follows:

Disallowance of kite running was just one of hundreds of laws whose point was to make Afghanistan more pure and religious (as per Taliban’s assessment). This and many other steps were aimed at taking the Afghan people back to the medieval period. Barely ever
could any Taliban leader envision that the news of it will reach the faraway American broadcast and motivate a conventional doctor with Afghan roots, who simply happened to watch the news to write a book. This book called *The Kite Runner* came to the fore a couple of years after the kite running boycott took place, and when Taliban were being militarily fought against. This was the time when Afghanistan was searching for one way or another into a respectable place in the comity of nations. Without overstating, it can be said, that the novel has not only changed the views of many people who are not living in Afghanistan but has also provided an opportunity to look into the Afghan way of living, comprising of their culture with a complete code of life.

Khaled Hosseini’s debut novel, *The Kite Runner* came out to be read in 2003. The writer, an obscure yet refined internist living in Los Angeles, utilized his memories from right during the time of his youth that he spent in Kabul and all the learning of Afghan society to the present day Afghan history. Despite the fact that he had not gone to his country for about twenty five years when he began to compose his novel, he succeeded in catching his audience with his cherishing depiction of the old Kabul and an unfortunate story of the companionship, disloyalty and the last expiation. He, himself, remarked on his method for portraying the situation in Afghanistan under Taliban without having by and by experienced it with the accompanying words:

On the one hand, I was hoping I’d got it right, that I didn’t screw up. On the other hand, what I’d written was so terrible, part of me was kind of hoping that it wasn’t quite that bad. The reality was that it was actually worse (Grossman, 2007).
Brimming with feelings and sentiments which have the capacity to interface individuals crosswise over distinctive sorts of society and countries, since its first production, The Kite Runner has turned into a universal smash hit. It has been distributed in more than 70 countries, translated into 40 languages and got numerous honors including the South African Boeke Prize and Penguin/Orange Readers’ Group Prize (Penguin Group.com, 2012) and although part of its success lies in the increased interest in Afghanistan after the 11th September, 2001 (Kipen, 2003), there is much more to be found in the book.

As Miller (2012) states, Hosseini has constrained individuals to think hard about companionship, great and malicious, working through, and redemption. These topics are truly general in the way that there is no motivation to be amazed, and that his prosperity is so incredible. Besides, he has helped us to comprehend the way of life and the course of occasions in the present day history of his nation. He has changed the Western way of looking at Afghanistan from a distance. A number of his readers no more see it as one of the numerous nations experiencing war and neediness; however, they find themselves able to relate to it. In short, because of its qualities, this novel is one of the books which individuals of all societies and ages read and experience forceful feelings through reading, and this viewpoint is in the setting of showing presumably the most critical.
CHAPTER 4

TRAUMA AND TECHNOLOGY: MEMORIES CREATING HISTORY IN RAHIMI’S EARTH AND ASHES

4.1 Trauma and Technology

“If Freud turns to literature to describe traumatic experience, it is because literature, like psychoanalysis, is interested in the complex relation between knowing and not knowing, and it is at this specific point at which knowing and not knowing intersect that the psychoanalytic theory of traumatic experience and the language of literature meet.” (Caruth, 1996, p. 28)

Globalization resulted in a complex set of interconnections among people across the world. People migrated, media exchanges interlinked, capital travelled across the globe, and cultures acquired mobility; thus, bringing forth new ‘civilization of clashes’ between people (Appadurai, 2006, p.16). These clashes multiplied the possibilities of the erstwhile limited occurrence of trauma, which may seem too minuscule or ordinary to be recorded under the spectrum of the official account, called history.

Following the detailed discussions on trauma and its manifestations in literature in the chapters on literature review and research methodology, it is now clear that the expression ‘trauma’ assigns a few, on occasion opposing, components such as: it is a
mental sickness, a recorded occasion and an accumulation of symptoms. It is consequently an idea that transgresses disciplinary limits, confusing on the courses, in which trauma can be comprehended and connected in different fields, as Luckhurst (2008) remarks that trauma is the breaking of disciplines. Earlier, Caruth (1995) clarifies this by recommending that the phenomenon of trauma has seemed to become all inclusive, but it has done so precisely because it brings us to the limits of our understanding. This limit needs to do with the way that trauma is concerned with the mind, a part of humankind that is as yet being investigated and challenged. It likewise brings into inquiry the relationship of self to experience, or to reality.

Luckhurst (2008) asserts that the foundations of trauma theory lie in psychoanalysis, and its advancement can be nearly joined with the idea of the development of technology. As Stonebridge (2008) clarifies that trauma is current, on the grounds that the experience of modernity makes considering about and encountering the world harder, even as modernity has evidently made things simpler. Luckhurst further explains modernity in these words:

The fixity of place, the dense network of social relations and local traditions typical of the village, for instance, is dislocated by a new orientation of the individual to an abstract, national and increasingly international space. Similarly, the local rhythms of time are replaced by a standardized time that routinizes labour time and co-ordinates national economics and transport systems. Individuals are ‘disembedded’ from cyclical rituals and traditions and experience to a release from narrow expectations that is at once liberating and angst-ridden. Self-identity, in other words, is uprooted from traditional verities and subjected to a kind of permanent revolution. (P. 20)
Similarly, Stonebridge (2009) further says:

It [trauma] is modern, because the experience of modernity makes thinking about and experiencing the world harder even as technology has supposedly made things easier. Modern war, the marriage of technology with barbarism as it was thought of by many in the middle of the twentieth century, has become the highly charged emblem of a moral, psychological, and existential paralysis of thought. (p. 194)

The increasing speed of time through quick travel, fast urbanization and industrialization tested people’s impression of their reality. The extension of the railroads, and the mischances that took after accordingly, brought the impacts of overwhelming industry and industrialization into individuals’ homes, as it influenced the overall population instead of the limited bounds of factories. Luckhurst (2008) calls attention to the fact that although, there is a great deal of spotlight on the railroad accidents causing trauma, it was indeed the mishaps in production lines that demonstrated the beginnings of traumatic experiences. In addition, the railroad mishaps, additionally, destabilized the medical world, as regularly victimized people got away physically unharmed but showed indications of hysteria.

This intermittent mischance prompted a meaning of a mental condition known as the “railway spine” (p. 6), which, as Hacking (1995) says, balanced the meaning of the word trauma from an absolutely physical wound to a mental one. Later, the modern way of fighting amid the First World War brought about a comparable conundrum: a fighter could be physically unharmed, however, mentally damaged, or “shell shocked”. The advancement of the idea of psychological wound or trauma could, hence, be seen as a reaction to the fast modernization and industrialization of individuals’ lives. Luckhurst
(2008), likewise, joins trauma to modernity in his investigation of trauma’s lineage, and proposes that,

“humans might regard technology as the prosthetic extension of their will to mastery, yet nearly every new technology hailed in this way also attracts a commentary that regards it as a violent assault on agency and self-determination. This ambivalent commentary nearly always invokes the traumatic.” (2013, p. 20)

Thus, technological advancement not just brought about more fierce mishaps and physical injuries, but its extreme advancement destabilized individuals’ view of their reality and was felt as a traumatic attack. Terdiman (1993) demonstrates that this fast modernization, particularly amid the nineteenth century, additionally convoluted the relationship between history and memory. He says that any transformation, any quick change of the givens of the present, places a general public’s association with its history under pressure, adding that innovation leads to a gigantic interruption of the customary manifestations of memory, and that inside this lies the working of memory and history, where the basic distractions are the push to thoroughly consider the modern. Terdiman draws on the works of Walter Benjamin, Gustave Flaubert, Charles Baudelaire, Marcel Proust and Sigmund Freud, to show how memory was at the core of an endeavor to comprehend modernity as depicted by essayists, analysts, critics and writers of the time.

Moreover, this crisis of memory was clear in the hypnosis construction, as Leys (2000) clarifies that hypnotic purgation of emotions came to the fore as a method for understanding a crisis of memory that irritated the integrity of a person under the burden of modernity. Thus, the relationship of memory with history, imperiled by modernity,
was witnessed in the centrality of memory to trauma theory, as critics found the harming impacts of the aforementioned kind of memory. Trauma and memory, in this way, developed as hazardous thoughts both inside psychoanalysis and culture.

In spite of the fact that trauma theory grew because of modernity and history, psychological problems and hysteria did not abruptly emerge with the rise of modernity. In this way, it is just conceivable to the discussion of the idea of trauma as being connected to history, not the basic mental condition, which is not limited to history only, due to the fact that rape, incest and other types of violence cause trauma but are not connected to history.

Inside trauma theory, an event from history and its traumatic impact are frequently laced together, and in reality the theory has grown generally in a reaction to the numerous occasions from history, which really scrutinized and influenced the way the world, and the people inside that world, were seen. The most noticeable scholars of trauma, for example, Cathy Caruth, Bessel van der Kolk, Dori Laub, Shoshana Felman and Dominick LaCapra put great emphasis on the interrelationship of trauma with history. Caruth (1996) applies a deconstructive perusal to Freud’s work on trauma to see the courses in which it was influenced by contemporary developments of historical importance.

McFarlane et al (2004) see the relationship between history and trauma as inseparable, as they say that experiencing trauma is an essential part of being human; history is written in
blood. However, several critics also challenge this aforementioned indispensable relationship between trauma and history. They ask if trauma takes place and lives in history or that it happens and resides in psyche (Alexander, 2004; Radstone, 2007). Trauma has grown along historical events, making it appear to be as though it is history that damages. In reality, the term PTSD was authored and characterized by the American Psychiatric Association in 1980 because of the increasing psychological issues which were seen in Vietnam War veterans. To some degree, this considerable concentration on history as the damaging or traumatizing factor is due to the noticeable quality of the investigations of Holocaust inside trauma theory.

The way that trauma theory, to a great extent, grew through the investigation of Holocaust survivors and their testimonies makes the Holocaust, as Luckhurst calls it, amazingly transmissible. Felman, Laub and Caruth base a huge part of trauma related work on the trauma of the Holocaust. Laub, a survivor himself, has directed innumerable meetings with Holocaust survivors while Caruth has concentrated on the effect of the Holocaust on the written work of different famous writers of the twentieth century. All three theorists portray both the Holocaust and trauma itself as something that can’t be comprehended and understood by the human mind, adding that it is something that will always remain beyond the perception of human beings.

Friedlander (1992) terms it as, “an earthquake, which would be so powerful as to destroy all instruments of measurement” (p. 5). This disturbance in ethical, linguistic and moral structures, through which one can comprehend the Holocaust makes this as an extremely
challenging task to grasp that moment in history. Caruth recommends with reference to trauma that “we seem to have dislocated the boundaries of our modes of understanding” and that “we can no longer simply explain or simply cure”, mirroring the courses, in which the Holocaust is conceived (1995, p. 4).

The aforementioned eradication of structures, through which to comprehend the Holocaust, has led to a great deal of burden on the very idea of testimony. Laub and Felman (1992) have recommended that the Holocaust is an occasion without a witness and that not only did the Nazis attempt to annihilate the physical witnesses of their wrongdoing, but the innately unintelligible and illusory psychological structures of the occasion blocked its own particular seeing, even by its very victims. By this Laub implies that the cruelty of the Holocaust evacuated all capacity of the victimized persons to speak to another human, or even to themselves as human, and hence the occasion couldn’t be recorded. There were no witnesses from outside of this universe either, as no onlooker could stay untainted, and nobody could remain integrated as a completely normal being, capable of remaining uncompromised and unharmed by the very act of witnessing.

Levi (2008) has proposed that there can’t be a witness to the Holocaust as nobody has survived it to the extreme end. In his investigation of Levi’s written work on the Holocaust, Agamben (2002) characterizes the incomprehensible witness as the Musselmann, explaining that “the Musselmann is the non-human, the one who could never bear witness,” and “the one who cannot bear witness is the true witness, the absolute witness” (p. 150). Agamben’s definition is not only exclusive but also leads to a
position of impasse. This notion of an absolute witness and the nonexistence of its very presence make the Holocaust, what Laub calls, “the black hole”. As an occasion that can’t be gotten to in any way as it always stays outside representation and cognizance, it gets to be stopped in the mind in strict frame yet can’t be gotten to, investigators van der Kolk, Laub and Caruth consider trauma in these terms.

Various other critics disagree to see the Holocaust through such position of extremity, asserting that such an approach nullifies the testimonies of the Holocaust survivors and that this approach ultimately leads any genuine enquiry to an impasse (LaCapra, 2001; Eaglestone, 2004). Irrespective of what position one uses to look into this phenomenon, it is essential to note the colossal impact of the Holocaust inside the cultural idea of how difficult it is to access the traumatic event. Van der Kolk, for instance, changes Laub’s meaning of the Holocaust as a “black hole” and goes on to say that it includes the whole trauma as a “black hole”: the two have ended up synonymous (p. 29).

The idea of an absence of witnessing, the inconceivability of the event that took place, and the complete moral and ethical breakdown exemplified by the Holocaust have additionally prompted its being portrayed as a unique event. Using a theory that is taking into account an occasion that can have no correlations is loaded with troubles, on the grounds that it proposes that the Holocaust is actually equivalent to different other traumas. Then again, it is just as difficult to separate trauma theory from Holocaust, where the very roots of this theory belong. Thus, to have the capacity to connect with the
theory of trauma, one needs to place one’s investigation inside a particular historical and social setting, and in this way highlight its distinction from the Holocaust.

This uniqueness problematizes the utilization of trauma theory to other traumatic occasions, for example, those of the war in Afghanistan. As Luckhurst proposes that the more the Holocaust is declared an “exceptional” and unique trauma, the more it indeed turns into a relative measure and similitude for all atrocity. This similar inquiry influences the examination of other generally disastrous occasions, as Toker (2000) asserts: “I do not claim more urgency for Gulag narratives than for the literature about other mass atrocities: each historical phenomenon must be studied in its specificity. [...]” (p.7)

Despite the fact that it appears that trauma theory may block a comprehension of specific calamities due to its nearby association with the Holocaust, it additionally demonstrates that the theory needs investigation and development to incorporate a more varied view of what the expression ‘traumatized’ stands for. One of the issues with the utilization of trauma theory to calamitous occasions is decisively the emphasis on the incident and the desire of certain traumatic manifestations, which ensued due to that incident. Radstone (2007) takes exceptions to the idea that it is the incident that causes trauma.

Building her theory in light of Ruth Ley’s lineage of trauma and Laplanche’s study of Freud, she proposes a counter theory to the one recommended by Caruth and Laub et al.
Radstone uses Leys’ division of the mimetic and antimimetic perspective of trauma to show how trauma has ended up synonymous with the occasion that brought about it, to the impairment of a more profound comprehension of the human mind. Trauma, as Radstone proposes, is not absolutely a nonappearance of knowing, rather it likewise includes profound, frequently oblivious, methodology of meaning-making and memory affiliation. As she clarifies:

In the psychoanalytic theory that has developed in parallel to that drawn on by trauma theory, then, a memory becomes traumatic when it becomes associated, later, with inadmissible meanings, wishes, fantasies, which might include the identification with the aggressor. What I take from this is that it is not an event, which is by its nature ‘toxic’ to the mind, but what the mind later does to the memory. (Radstone, 2007, p. 17)

The emphasis on the incident that causes trauma has grown in reaction to the perspective that trauma is constituted in and by the psyche. In Leys’ (2007) terms, the antimimetic theory of trauma is a response to the mimetic theory. The mimetic theory recommends that trauma is hypnotic identification of imitation, known as mimesis - an experience that, in light of the fact that it seemed to smash the victim’s cognitive-conceptual limits, made the traumatic scene inaccessible for his/her memory. Hypnosis for Leys is not an apparatus to uncover memories, rather it is a psychic state in which the impersonation of identification with the culprit is conceivable.

The antimimetic theory, which was developed in response to this, endeavors to secure a dichotomy between the incident and the independent subject, therefore permeating
history with a traumatic significance. As Radstone (2007) and Leys (2000) both demonstrate, this antimimetic perspective of trauma is at the base of Caruth’s, Laub’s and Felman’s speculations of trauma, all of which find trauma inside the occasion instead of the mind. This issue of the mind versus the event is maybe the central issue which convolutes the use of trauma to cases of varying natures. As Radstone inquires:

“If trauma theory’s encoding is extraordinary, then can that ‘encoding’ become the foundation for a general theory of representation? [...] For is it that theories of trauma are taken to illuminate the relation between actuality and representation in general, or is it that actuality is beginning to be taken as traumatic in and of itself?” (p.13)

It is this uncomfortable connection between trauma, history, and psychoanalysis that makes a portion of the issues in applying trauma theory crosswise over disciplines and cultures. It goes on to show that each comparative occasion ought to prompt comparable traumatic results, which is not always the case with incidents of trauma.

Notwithstanding, as both Leys and Radstone recognize, the division of the mimetic and antimimetic part of trauma theory is not a clear one. Radstone calls attention to the fact that Caruth’s, Laub’s and Felman’s emphasis on the traits of trauma based on the unexperienced nature an incident positions their investigation to the mimetic model,; on the other hand, their attention to the occasion aligns their theory to the antimimetic paradigm. It appears that both camps - Leys and Radstone, and Caruth, Laub and Felman - concede to the trauma driven symptoms, and discuss the victim’s inability to access memory. But, they vary in their views of the unconscious.
While Radstone (2007) proposes that the victim’s association of the meaning with a specific memory causes trauma, Caruth et al. say that the memory is an inaccessible and literal portion and blocked inside the brain yet outside the victim’s grasp. One of the perspectives that Radstone recommends makes the hypotheses fundamentally diverse is their view of subjectivity. In her lineage, Leys (2007) recommends that one of the essential explanations behind the development of the antimimetic theory was the way that the mimetic model presented danger to the concept of individual responsibility and autonomy, as it demonstrated the single person to be prone to suggestion. Regarding trauma as an absolutely external event, it permitted the perspective of the single person as an autonomous, provided he is a passive victim.

For Radstone (2007), proposing that trauma happens inside the unconscious mind as opposed to being subject to an outside incident opens up the theory to two key focuses: that the victim was hit by circumstances not all of which are accessible for the conscious to recall, and that not every incident in history is traumatic to the same extent, especially keeping in view its impact on the mass of people as a whole. Supporting her view, she says:

I make this point not in the interest of diverting attention from the actuality of historical catastrophes and the suffering caused, but to stress that cultural theory needs to attend to the inter- and intra-subjective processes through which meanings are conferred, negotiated and mediated. (p.18)

In fact, Caruth seldom mentions to whom trauma is occurring and in what connection; her discussion is concerned with a deconstruction of a philosophical or literary content,
which is the reason why her theory has been of such awesome worth. And this is the reason why her theory has been used in literary studies on such a large scale (Middleton et al, 2000; Vickroy, 2002).

The many controversies that hover around the theory are due to the fact it blurs various disciplines. It is the smearing of controls that trauma appears to induce that is part of the way in charge of the numerous contentions of the theory. Alexander (2004), for instance, conveys trauma theory to an investigation of cultural construction and just as contradicts the very perspective of an incident that is as innately traumatic, adding that trauma is not something regularly existing in the surroundings; rather it is something developed by society.

Like Radstone’s contention about the meaning-making, ascribed to a traumatic experience, Alexander (2004) further demonstrates that incidents become traumatic because we associate such meanings to them. Interestingly, his perspective of culture looks like quite similar to Radstone’s notion of the mind. Thus, the relationship between an occasion and the resulting trauma is not one of a clear circumstances and end results, in either cultural domain or psychoanalysis.

Talking about the mimetic and antimimetic models of trauma, Luckhurst (2008) states that the swaying of these posts rules the historical backdrop of trauma back to its genealogical roots in the nineteenth century. So, it is not inside the scope of this
dissertation to examine them top to bottom and pick one over the other. On the other hand, it is fundamental to problematize the relationship between a historical incident and its resulting traumatic impact that may come about because of it.

This study looks absolutely at the relationship between the two as it is communicated through testimony, which is the central entry point to the talk of trauma. In spite of Radstone’s critical analysis of the prevailing trauma theory, the symptoms as characterized by Caruth, Laub and Felman are of incredible significance in understanding and dealing with trauma because these are judged through testimony. Nonetheless, as Radstone states above, permitting the psyche to join in the meaning making procedure, even when the consciousness is unaware of it, makes a subject that is not passive, but is actually involved one way or the other in the process of meaning making.

On the other hand, not considering the incident as trauma and also moving away from the related event subject provides enough room to deal with the traumatic incident and develop a narrative in the middle of experience and representation. Moreover, concentrating on the processes of inter and intra-subjective nature permits one to coordinate and negotiate with more than the traumatic experience inside the person’s constitution of the self and thus to look beyond the traumatic experience.

Keeping in view the aforementioned discussion on trauma and history from the perspective of Holocaust studies, it is now apt to discuss Rahimi’s *Earth and Ashes.*
Before embarking on an analysis under literary trauma theoretical framework, an introduction to the writer and his novel will put the work in perspective.

4.2 Atiq Rahimi: An Introduction to the Novelist

Atiq Rahimi was born to a senior public servant in Kabul in 1962. After attending high school in Lycée Esteqlal, he left Afghanistan due to the Soviet invasion. He lived in Pakistan for a year as a refugee, followed by shifting to France after getting political asylum in 1985.

Rahimi, after completing his studies, joined a production company in Paris, and went to produce several commercials as well as seven documentaries for French television. In the late 1990s, Rahimi started working on his first project to write in literature. He published Earth and Ashes in Dari language in 2000 and it was the strength of his writing that the book proved to be the bestseller in South America and Europe. The fame of the novel was so immense that Rahimi directed a movie, which was based on it. In the Cannes Film Festival of 2004, the movie got the Prix du Regard vers l’Avenir. Not only this, the movie was able to get the best feature film award, the Golden Dhow award, at the Zanzibar International Film Festival, and it won a total of 25 awards after being featured in 50 festivals held around the world.
After 17 years of exile, Rahimi returned to Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban in 2002. He took pictures of Kabul with his 150-years old camera. The pictures got so much appeal from people that the Victoria and Albert Museum in London bought six of the photographs.

Rahimi’s another novel *Syngue Sabour* was able to win the 105-year-old Prix Goncourt which is the most prestigious literary prize of France. The novel that was termed by Christine Abanel, the French minister for culture, as ‘sober and alive, was translated into English as *The Patience Stone*. This was Rahimi’s first novel in French, portraying an Afghan woman whose is left with her paralyzed husband as a result of the war in the country. In the novel, the woman tells her husband about how she lived her life when he was away fighting the war and how she tolerated all the problems that she faced as woman before and after getting married to him.

As soon as, Rahimi returned to his homeland in 2002, he started working as senior creative advisor at Moby Group, the country’s largest media group. Moby Group that was launched by Jahid Mohseni, Zaid Mohseni and Saad Mohseni has been running Lemar TV, Afghan Scene Magazine, Barbud Music, Arman FM, Lemar TV, Tolo TV, Kaboora Production, Arman FM, and owns several other media outlets. In a bid to develop and groom new Afghan directors and filmmakers, Rahimi has been working between Paris and Kabul and continuing to work with the group’s endeavors by helping them develop programs in various genres.
In one of the endeavors for the group, Afghanistan’s first soap opera titled “Raz ha een Khana” (Secrets of this House) was possible because it was developed and created by Rahimi. The show was aired on Tolo TV. The popularity of the endeavor was immense as, in October 2008, it was able to grab the Special Award at the Seoul Drama Awards.

The author’s test of skills did not end with the direction of Earth and Ashes; rather he co-authored a screenplay with Jean-Claude Carriere that was based on “Syngué Sabour” or The Patience Stone and went on to direct it as a movie. The movie was selected, though not nominated, at the 85th Academy Awards, as the Afghan entry for the best Foreign Language Oscar. Iranian actress Golshifteh Farahani featured in the movie as the main actress.

4.3 Earth and Ashes: An Overview of the Novel

“These days the dead are more fortunate than the living. What are we to do? We’re on the eve of destruction. Men have lost all sense of honor. Power has become their faith instead of faith being their power. There are no longer any courageous men.” (Rahimi, 2003, p.33)

Earth and Ashes, a little novella, packs feeling and more power into its pages than most different books do in many pages, and few, if any, readers will rise up out of it unscathed. The writer Atiq Rahimi, an Afghan national now living in France, has reproduced Afghanistan he recalls when it was invaded by the Russians from 1979 to 1989. He was seventeen at the time, and his life as well as the lives of his people have not progressed
ahead from that point forward. Just the foes have changed, and they now incorporated numerous groups from inside. Rahimi’s grim picture of life in his town of Abqul incorporates the occupiers’ easygoing homicide of people, the devastation of families, the demolition of towns, and at last the annihilation of entire societies doing a reversal to the past times. Without preface or any extensive setting of the scene, the novelist presents the main character who is confronted with a family emergency from which he might never recuperate, then recounts that story in plain, coordinate, and clear language which picks up the effect from its exceptional straightforwardness.

Dastaguir, a grandfather joined by his little grandson, is strolling along a dusty street from his town of Abqul towards the coal mines of Karkar. The Russians, in the wake of plundering his town one day, had given back the following day to blaze it to the ground. Dastaguir, upon his coming back to his town, has found that his wife, children, his daughter-in-law who is the mother of his grandson Yassin, and various villagers, are dead. In spite of the fact that little Yassin has gotten away from the flames, he is currently absolutely and all of a sudden deprived of his hearing ability, and he is confounded at this out of the blue turn of events. He doesn’t comprehend why jujube stones which used to click against one another when he played with them, are presently noiseless; why Dastaguir won’t answer him when he addresses him, and why the world is altogether silent.

The story unfolds as Dastaguir and Yassin are strolling, determined to discover
Dastaguir’s surviving child, named Murad, who is Yassin’s father and who fled the town to work in the mines four years back, and who came back to the town just a couple of times since his departure. Dastaguir trusts that Murad will reconnect with his child, particularly now that the town and whatever remains of the family are gone. As they walk, Yassin requests for help and asks for water, which is hard to find. Afterwards he eats pieces of fruit or stale bread. Dastaguir himself appears to make due on naswar, a sort of damp snuff.

Immersed in the overwhelming impact of this extraordinary incident and while conversing with himself always through the miles, Dastaguir takes a completely different perspective of himself, alluding to himself dependably as “you.” “To whom are you talking?” he asks himself. “To Yassin? He can’t even hear the sound of stones, not to mention your weak voice.” He starts envisioning meeting with Murad at the mine and has bad dreams which join antiquated stories with the destruction of his town. Also, when a retailer tries to be agreeable, Dastaguir needs to remind himself to respond: “You needed to converse with anybody about anything. Presently, here is somebody who’ll listen to what lies in your heart, whose look alone is a solace. Say something!”

As he mulls over his God, he chooses in his distress that “in all actuality God isn’t concerned with you,” and afterwards understands that he has been cursed: “Damn the enticements of Satan. Damn you.” He proceeds on his walk.
All through the novella, the writer specifies the Persian epic *The Book of Kings* by Ferdusi, which interlaces Persian myths, legends, and authentic occasions to tell the historical backdrop of Iran and its neighbors from the making of the world to the Arab success in the seventh century. Three characters in that book freely parallel characters and activities in this novella, and as Dastaguir starts to find out about the force of the occupiers to change the reasoning and duties of their young male subjects, the parallels get to be clear here.

For a novel in which the actions that include the reader are basically responses to the past occasions, with next to no new action or plot, the novelist sorts out how to arouse some intense passionate feelings of the readers to be implicated in the sorrows of the war affected people in Afghanistan. The readers tend to Dastaguir on the grounds that he responds with general human sentiments. Yassin, obviously, cannot be blamed for the way he reacts to the incident; however like all youngsters, he needs what he needs and is willing to cry and control to get it, something that Dastaguir endures in light of the fact that Yassin is still confounded about his deafness and its lastingness. The sensitivity created for the characters makes the somber consummation considerably all the more intense. With its straightforwardness and its watchful decision of the right detail at the right minute, *Earth and Ashes* takes after a portion of the absolute best short stories by Steinbeck, Hemingway, and Andre DuBus, every one of whom pack, pack, and afterward pack some more the pictures and points of interest with which the reader goes to a full comprehension of the novelist’s motives.
According to Solomon (2002), *Earth and Ashes*’s story is just eighty-one pages long, more the length of an epic poem than a novel. It shares with poetry a simultaneous richness and discipline of language – one feels the economy of expression in every sentence, but there is lushness, too, in the barren context of the narrative. The most lyrical writing is inside quotation marks, the author giving his characters a more poignant eloquence than he claims for himself, an eloquence that the translation seems to sustain. A shopkeeper says to Dastaguir, “You know, father, sorrow can turn to water and spill from your eyes, or it can sharpen your tongue into a sword, or it can become a time bomb that, one day, will explode and destroy you.” Yassin has gone deaf from the sound of the bombs, but he attributes the quiet to the world rather than to himself, and he says, “The bomb was huge. It brought silence. The tanks took away people’s voices and left. They even took Grandfather’s voice away. Grandfather can’t talk anymore, he can’t scold me.”

The book is partly allegorical: The characters represent the problems of Afghanistan and stand in for a much larger ravaged population. It conveys with heartbreaking clarity the quality of a destroyed country and its courageous, nearly annihilated inhabitants. What is perhaps most terrifying of all is that this book is set during the Russian invasion of Afghanistan; this is how bad things were before the *mujahideen* and the Taliban. We have become somewhat inured to the horror, so much of which we witnessed on news broadcasts, until we thought we knew it.

Here it is once again made incomprehensible to us. Dastaguir and Murad and Yassin are
the voices of this national despair, but the book is also the compelling narrative of individual afflictions. Your heart is in your throat as Dastaguir approaches the mine; you are deeply pained by the sadness and confusion with which he approaches a world broken beyond recognition; and you are filled with wonderment at the unbreachable fact of his survival. We get lost in his dreams and in his fears and most of all in his immediate quandary: Is it better to go and tell Murad what has happened, to bring such miserable news to someone who may now be innocent of it, or would it be better to turn around and go home, leaving Murad some further time to live without this knowledge, which cannot do anything but injure him? Then again, would it injure him less to hear of it from his old father than to hear the dread words from a stranger?

For all the sympathy the book generates, the characters remain in many ways bewildering to a Western reader. Here one is forced to accept a culture different not only on its surface but also in its very conception of human relations. These characters think things we would never think and act in ways we would never act. *Earth and Ashes* opens a way into Afghan life but keeps that life unfamiliar. This is one of its triumphs: It does not allow its readers the arrogance of identification. (Solomon, 2002)

There is no carping to be done with the details of a book such as this, because the text so manifestly serves noble purposes of consciousness and of conscience. *Earth and Ashes* is an ethical act that must be taken as a whole; it transcends the ordinary categories of literature. Rare is the book that warrants, for its moral illuminations, such pure esteem (Solomon, 2002).
4.4 Dastaguir’s Trauma and the Temporal Elision of Memory

The novel begins with showing Dastaguir journeying with his grandson to see his son, Murad, and to tell him the story of the destruction of his village. The setting of the novel is the Russian invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and the tale of devastation faced by the Afghan people during the 10 years long Russian occupation of Afghanistan from 1979 to 1989. In the novel, the Russian tanks have destroyed Dastaguir’s village, demolishing all the houses and killing almost everyone present, but he is on his way to see his son and inform him of how the Russians turned everything into rubble. This is typical of the reactions to trauma where a person, who witnesses a traumatic incident, either represses the memory, or makes an endeavor to remember the episode and tries to fit into the scheme of things (Uytterschout, 2008). The elision of memory that Cathy Caruth (1996) mentions while saying that a traumatic incident can result in the loss of memory for a while, and which is also termed as ‘the latency of trauma’ (Freud, 1886, p. 166), is evident in the character of Dastaguir when he feels as if he is losing his memories altogether.

The experience of seeing the destruction of his village haunts him so much that he almost forgets about his surroundings as he exclaims, in front of the guard: “My God, you remember everything … It’s me who is losing my memory” (Rahimi, 2002, p. 6). This feeling of the sense of nothingness is identical to what Christ (1986) mentions as the first stage of trauma. Here the victim of trauma sees himself as someone who has has been completely stripped of his objectives of life. Dastaguir has been in the same position
because he has been deprived of his wife, daughter-in-law, his relatives, his home, and his village. He feels the pinch of the disaster.

Dastaguir’s story of the destruction of his village is not limited to an individual who is the creation of Rahimi’s imaginative capabilities; rather, his account is symbolic of many such Dastaguir’s who lost their dear ones in the war in Afghanistan. As Little (2008) asserts that there is no perspective free history, White (2001) also argues that the novelist, like a historian, shows a certain perspective of the history, adding that as an event can be described in a variety of ways, the narration by a novelist is one of those ways or perspectives of narration. Hence, the way Dastaguir has been presented in the novel and the way his account has been put forth by the novelist shows the way how the novelist wants his culture to be remembered.

As Jakob (2001) asserts that the triangulation of data can provide validity to research findings, the study takes help from personal narratives of Afghan survivors and witnesses of war to see how it converges with the fictional testimonial accounts. In this vein, Dossa’s (2005) study of interviewing 15 low income Afghan women, who left Afghanistan to take asylum in Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada, provides details of the destruction that is quite similar to what the aforementioned fictional account is narrating. In her testimonial account, the first Afghan interviewee, named Meena, describes the destruction that she witnessed in Afghanistan in these words:

All our houses were bombed. Several bombs came to our neighbourhood. I am not saying that the situation was bad only for us. No - for everybody in that area.
When they bombed a neighbourhood close to us, eighteen families were killed…
Who cannot be happy in their own country? Who likes to be homeless and confused? Who? Don’t you like your home country? Everybody likes to live in their home country so far as there is peace, food and happiness.” (Dossa, 2005, p. 31, 32)

The aforementioned evidence from a factual account by a survivor of the war in Afghanistan who witnessed the sufferings herself attests to what the fictional characters portrayed by Rahimi are bringing forth. It shows that writers of fictional narratives usually bring to the fore what the community concerned has been actually going through. The aforementioned accounts by Yassin and Dastaguir are no different from what Meena has witnessed and stated in a factual account. It proves that such fictional narratives are, in fact, a representation of the overall ethos of the community at large.

As the inability to express a traumatic incident is the hallmark, usually found in the behavior of survivors of a traumatic incident, as put forth by Freud (1886) and Caruth (1996), it is also visible in the character of Dastaguir. When inquired by Mirza Qadir about the purpose of his journey, he is simply unable to gather his thoughts together. Despite the fact that he has been waiting for someone to ask him about his grief, and now when Mirza Qadir is lending him his ears, he is simply not able to speak his mind. The grief of losing his wife, daughter-in-law and the whole village is so big for him that he simply cannot express his feelings of grief. This inability to speak is symbolic of what Caruth terms as the elision of memory.

What Caruth means by saying that the victim found the incident overwhelming is that the mind of the victim was not ready for this unusual experience. In this case, the victim was
not prepared to go through this feeling of pain, a phenomenon that, according to LaCapra (2001), is named by Freud as *Angstbereitschaft*. Caruth goes on to say that since the traumatic incident is beyond usual human experience, it cannot be grasped in its actuality by the victim, adding that the victim needs time to comprehend and then relate what actually happened that s/he witnessed.

This elision of memory or the inability to grasp what has taken place on part of the survivor deprives the ones who record history of maintaining a record of the incident. As the survivors are not able to remember and unable to tell the historian or anyone else about whatever they witnessed, the history cannot keep record of the incident. Thus the duty of bringing in the details is left to the writers of fiction to, later on, put the records straight.

On the other hand, as Erikson (1994) highlights the impact, on individuals and communities, of natural and technological catastrophes. The writer explains how incidents of destruction can impact people who did not witness the catastrophe and who were not physically present there.

Erikson’s study is relevant here because not only the people who witnessed the trauma are badly impacted by the incident, but also the ones who came to know about it later on are getting its effect. In this case, the ones who listen to the accounts of the survivors of trauma are very much likely to be affected by what they hear. In this way, the impact of
trauma, though not in same severity as the survivors themselves felt, is transferred to and felt by the ones who were not present at the occurrence of the incident.

Erikson (1994) uses Caruth’s theories concerning trauma and says that trauma is a blow to the mind, adding that trauma possesses the mind of the victim. He says that the memory of the victim will repeat to him/her the incidents that s/he witnessed until he comes to terms with them. He further explains that the memory of trauma will haunt the affected people until their mind is able to cope with the experience. This is perfectly in accordance with what has already been discussed here, namely that the victim of trauma will usually experience flashbacks of the incident when he goes through the acting out stage. Erikson, while explaining the symptoms of trauma, asserts that the victims of trauma experience a variety of feelings which range from restlessness and agitation to numbness and bleakness. Erikson goes on to say that the victims of trauma usually distrust the world and they do not hope any good from the world, adding that they feel how destructive the people in the world can be.

In concordance with Erikson’s model, the listener, Mirza Qadir, empathizes with the survivor and explains the unbecoming attitude of the guard, saying that:

It’s sorrow that has ruined him … You know, father, sorrow can turn to water and spill from your eyes, or it can sharpen your tongue into a sword, or it can become a time bomb that, one day, will explode and destroy you .. The sorrow of Fateh the guard is like all three. (Rahimi, 2002, p. 23)
The way in which Erikson’s (1994) definition of trauma is different from those of the others is that he does not talk about trauma as a force inflicting wound on the individual mind; rather he emphasizes that trauma injures the community as a whole. He asserts that even if the wound of the trauma is inflicted on individual minds, it goes on, by combining the traumas of the individuals, to create a common mood or an ethos, which he describes as a group culture. He asserts that the intensity of this group culture, based on the traumas of the individual, is a lot more than the intensity of the individual traumas put together. Quoting from Caruth, he says that unlike the individual trauma, which is limited to the individual victim, this collective trauma has certain social dimensions.

Explaining the impact and intensity of collective trauma, Erikson (1994) says that this collective trauma can be so powerful that it can create bonds and feelings of unity among the victims, adding that such bonds are no less effective and no less vital than the bonds of common language and common background. This can happen because people who go through the same trauma identify themselves with each other and differentiate the whole group from the ones did not go through that trauma. Thus, they look at the people who have gone through the trauma just like them as individual from their own group and they own them too, creating a bond of oneness.

The same bond of unity is established between Dastaguir and the rest of the Afghan characters because they have all been suffering from the ravages of war. The guard, named Fateh, has two completely different kinds of attitude for his countrymen and the foreigners respectively. He feels the pain of his people and knows the ones responsible
for it too, as the shopkeeper describes him, “When he comes to see me, his sadness flows out in tears. If he remains alone in his hut, it becomes a bomb … When he steps out of the hut and sees others, his sorrow turns itself into a sword and he wants to …” (Rahimi, 2003, p. 23)

The same bond of unity is also evident when Mirza Qadir, the shopkeeper, listens to the sorrowful account of Dastaguir’s village, feels for him, and says, “Venerable father, these days the dead are more fortunate than the living. What are we to do? We’re on the eve of destruction” (Rahimi, 2003, p. 33). This, as Erikson (1994) asserts, kind of bond on the part of the listener for the survivor plays an important role in coping with trauma also.

Putting forth the main difference between individual and collective trauma, Erikson (1994) says that the individual trauma consist of a blow to the mind of the individual, and that the blow takes place so suddenly that individual mind does not have the chance to react in a proper manner or to come up with a defense mechanism. However, Erikson (1994) asserts that collective trauma is like a blow to the very basic tissue of social life, adding that it damages the bond that attaches people together and that it harms their sense of communality.

This liking for one group and utter disliking for another is shown in the novel as Mirza Qadir who has not seen the incident of the destruction of Mirza Qadir’s village develops a strong disliking for the Russians. He, as mentioned above, draws an affiliation with Dastaguir and develops disliking for the Russians, as he tells Dastaguir, “The law of the
war is the law of sacrifice, there is either blood on your throat or on your hands.” This show how sympathetic he has been towards Dastaguir by telling him that he has sacrificed his family in the war and that this is how wars are fought.

Thus, on the one hand, it creates a group which shares the same loss and is bonded together, but on the other hand, it creates an animosity towards others who played a role in inflicting the trauma. Thus collective trauma, damages the very social fabric and divides the society into groups, where individuals are not seen as full-fledged living beings differing from each other yet remaining similar to each other, but as mere units comprising those groups. Erikson’s (1994) concept of collective trauma and its application on the novel is in part an answer to the second research question: In what ways can the trauma of the individual characters in the selected novels be ascribed to the collective trauma of Afghan society as a whole, and how does this narrativization of their accounts highlight the collective war-impacted ravages in the Afghan society?

As Caruth (1996) asserts that people are implicated in each other’s trauma; therefore, the description of the sorrowed guard enables Dastaguir to speak his mind. Thinking about Mirza Qadir and the guard as someone going through the same agony of grief and loss as he is, Dastaguir musters up courage and describes the destruction, brought upon his village by the Soviet troops. He describes how he saw his house reduced to rubble, his wife going mad and then killed due to the destruction, how women were buried alive, how his daughter-in-law was dishonored and how she, while he sees her naked, disappears into fire, and how his house had become a grave – “grave for my wife, a grave for my son, his wife and their children” (p. 31). It is due to this excessive grief, which is
beyond usual human experience that makes Dastaguir unable to speak his mind at the start. It is only after he is implicated in the trauma of the guard that he is able to gather his thought together and start sharing his trauma.

4.5 Flashbacks of Dastaguir and Yassin and the Creation of ‘history’

Discussing the relationship between history and narrative, White (1973, 1999 & 2001) remains to be one of the most influential critics in the field of literary criticism and history because he is considered to be the first theorist, whose contribution in the debate on historiography is well known due to his introduction to the concept of narrative turn. Through his famous book titled *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (1973), he became famous throughout the related academic circles in the second half of the twentieth century with his poststructuralist focus on language. Starting the thesis with a distinct emphasis on language, White argues that history can be accessed through language only, and that it should be first written before it can be accepted as history, adding that the whole discourse and the processes involved thereof can have several modes, connected to the past through a discourse that is related to it. To this end, White (1999) asserts in *Figural Realism* that “historical discourses typically produce narrative interpretations of their subject matter,” (p.3) where he uses the phrase historical discourse in order to mention historical fiction in this whole debate.

Just like White, Ankersmit (2010) argues that the main function of the narratives of history is to provide readers with metaphorical insight that is not the information of
factual nature. (Pihlainen, 2002, p. 40) White further explains the value of these narratives, saying that these writings are not offering information that is completely new in nature but that it interprets the incident that has already taken place. Thus, as White suggests that both discourses use narrative techniques, historiographical and literary writing augment each other in making use of the content that is common for both. At this stage, he goes on to bring the idea of using factual events to create narrative of literary nature, calling the whole project as ‘troping’ (p. 9)

Following White (1973, 1999 & 2001) and Ankersmit (2010) who argue that narratives are metaphorical insights into the events which have taken place, the present study investigates Rahimi’s *Earth and Ashes*, in a bid to get this particular perspective of the reality that has been portrayed metaphorically. The claim of narrative to present the reality in a metaphorical way becomes even more strengthened when the characters portrayed in the narrative are traumatized, because Tal (1996) asserts that the survivor keeps the most untainted and realistic record of history, such accounts provide a detailed and multifaceted account of history. The role of such literary pieces can provide a peep into the psychological processes in the form traumatic impacts of such tragic incidents. Vickroy (2002) says that trauma related literature, through its providing a sociocultural critical analysis, provides a window of knowledge for the readers to see how people live the ideology and public policy, adding that as literature takes help from the research carried out in the fields of psychology and history, it also helps in providing the necessary supplement to other fields of study. Endorsing this role of trauma literature, Horvitz (2000) argues that trauma fiction, through bringing forth the cultural or
sociopolitical setting that caused traumatic incident, and thus unmasks the oppressive ideologies which either produce or legitimized the incident.

Despite the fact that Dastaguir is suffering from the survivor’s guilt, he does not want to be dead because he has the burden of serving as the first-hand eye witness to the tales of destruction. The accounts presented by the survivors of trauma give a genuine account of historical events because, Tal states that Caruth draws an analogy between the survivor’s mind and a videotape, where the survivor’s mind serves as a videotape, which has the incident recorded on it. Tal adds that no matter how long that videotape (in this case the survivor of the traumatic incident) remains, the video (in this case the traumatic incident) will still remain intact in its original form. “This precision to recall is what creates history” (Caruth, 1995, p. 22). Tal further explains that it is out of this sense of debt to the dead that Dastaguir wants to be heard. He waits and waits for a long time to hear someone ask him what had happened to his village. It is out of this duty that he “wants to talk and listen” (Rahimi, 2003, p. 6).

The protagonist’s troubles are further exacerbated when he comes to know that his grandson, Yassin, has gone deaf due to the excessive bombing by the Russian forces. Yassin, without knowing what ‘deafness’ means is suddenly unable to hear anything. He does not know that he has gone deaf; rather he thinks that the other people around him and all the things that he can see have lost their voices. He feels that the world, all of a sudden, has gone silent. There are no more voices in the world, but then he inquires: “Why are people moving their mouth? (Rahimi, 2003, p. 9)”
The only sense that the young Yassin can make of the destruction brought upon his village by the Russian forces is that they took away everyone’s voice. Yassin’s spontaneous reaction, whenever he sees his grandfather crying, is to say:

“The bomb was huge. It brought silence. The tanks took away people’s voices and left. They even took grandfather’s voice away. Grandfather can’t talk even more, he can’t scold me …” (Rahimi, 2003, p. 32)

This is typical of the videotape-survivor-analogy, which is drawn by Tal (1996) to explain Caruth’s assertion, according to which the accounts provided by survivors are very helpful in creating highly truthful histories. This is also typical of Dominic LaCapra’s (2001) assertion, according to which the survivor of trauma will always be having something that is from the past, adding that this can be in the form of a presence that is haunting the survivor’s mind on a continuous basis. He further adds that when the survivor mentions the traumatic experience, s/he, in his thought, goes back to the same scene of trauma and is thus performatively caught up in the same situation.

Yassin’s account of the bombing of his village and the ensuing destruction is validated by what Dossa’s (2005) interview project with the survivors and witnesses of the Afghan war caters for. Remembering the destruction of her village during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Dossa’s interviewee named Nargis says:

They took everything from us. Everything was destroyed, even our homes were bombed. Three or four times we had bombs in our house ... For a minute all our houses were shaking. Mirrors got broken and shattered glass came like rain on our head. Blood everywhere and people were dripping in blood because of all those ruins. So we had a very bad situation in Afghanistan.
Many people lost their legs, hands and other body parts. (Dossa, 2005, p. 35)

Being deprived of the ability to hear after he witnessed the bomb blast and the attack, Yassin relates everything to that attack. The only justification for not being able to hear voices is that the Russian tanks might have taken away everyone’s voice. After not being able to listen to the voice of the people at the shop, he asks his grandfather:

“Have tanks come here, too? … They must have come and taken the voice of the shopkeeper and the voice of the guard … Grandfather, have the Russians come and taken away everyone’s voice? What do they do with all the voices? Why did you let them take away your voice? If you hadn’t, would they have killed you? Grandmother didn’t give them her vice and she’s dead. If she were here she’d tell me the story of Baba Kharkas … No, if she were here, she’d have no voice …” (Rahimi, 2003, pp. 38, 39)

Yassin’s inability to work through the trauma has led him to act out the incident that he has witnessed. As the victim is continuously haunted by the traumatic experience, s/he is livening in a continuous state of fear and tragedy. At this stage, the victim has no respite, whatsoever, because s/he is not only have nightmares but also the flashbacks of the nightmares related to the traumas. S/he considers himself to be living in the past and in that exact moment when the traumatic incident took place. Hence, the victim has no sense or understanding of the past, the present or the future.

Acting out, according to Codde (2009), is not supposed to be taking place only through nightmares; rather it can happen in the form of committing unintentional acts, tendency of forgetfulness, and memory loss. According to Freud (1924), the victim, reacting to his feeling of memory loss, repeats doing what he did at the moment of the incident of
trauma, in order to remember whatever he witnessed. In this case, the victim no more remembers what actually happened around him; rather he acts that out. “He reproduces it not as a memory, but as an action; he repeats it, without, of course, knowing that he is repeating it” (Freud, 1924, p. 150, original italics). The victim’s haunting by and obsession with the moment of trauma is symbolic of his/her inability to differentiate between the moment of trauma, which is the past, and the normal condition, which is the present. The victim is not capable of differentiating the memories of trauma from his/her present status.

For the impressionistic mind of Yassin, it is a very difficult incident to cope with and differentiate from everyday life. Hence, whenever his mind is triggered by the teardrops of his grandfather, he repeats exactly the same account that he has witnessed during the Russian attack. Thus, whenever, he sees his grandfather crying, he, just like a videotape, starts narrating whatever is recorded on his mind.

The scenes of destruction which young Yassin have witnessed, haunt him every now and then. The only thing he needs to repeat whatever is recorded in his mind is the trigger which in this case is his grandfather’s mourning. The moment he sees his grandfather mourn the destruction and the moment he feels his head pressed against his grandfather’s chest, he says: “Grandfather’s crying. My uncle’s dead. Mother’s gone … Qadir’s dead. Grandmother’s dead!” (Rahimi, 2003, p. 32)

Unlike Yassin’s acting out the trauma, Dastaguir, being a mature and more powerful
person in terms of mental strength, compared to that of Yassin, has the ability to work through the trauma. Here, the victim is able to break the continuous spell of repeating whatever s/he has witnessed and starts differentiating between the moment of trauma (the past) and the moment filled with the memories of trauma (the present) by starting to share with others what s/he went through. At this stage, as LaCapra (2001) asserts, the victim has the ability to put his grief concerning his moment of trauma and the life beyond that.

The most important thing in this transition from the acting out stage to that of working through is that survivor should be able to break the repeated continuity of the moment of trauma and s/he should be able to talk to someone and share his grief, related to the moment of trauma.

As the victim of trauma goes through the pain of loss, the listener, who listens to the traumatic account and goes through the vicarious experience, should still be able to differentiate between the feeling of loss that the survivor has and his own feeling of absence that s/he can witness in the victim. Once into the vicarious experience, the listener usually forgets this difference between absence and loss. This happens when the listener identifies himself with the person who has lost some loved one, thus feeling the loss as the victim himself feels. In this case, the listener should be feeling the absence of someone from the life of the victims rather than feeling the loss as felt by the victim.

The listener, working as a secondary witness – the victim of course being the primary witness – should remain somewhat objective in order for him not to oversympathize with the victim and run the risk of feeling the feeling of loss that should be exclusive to the victim. This feeling of loss will turn into a huge generalization of historical trauma if the listeners of a traumatic account forgets about this difference between absence and loss.
Once caught in the feeling of loss, where it should have been the feeling of absence, while listening to an account of trauma, the listener enters the victim-specific melancholy, the trauma of the victim is turned into the trauma of everyone who is unable to differentiate between absence and loss (LaCapra, 2001).

Despite haunted by the continuous spells of memories related to the attack, Dastaguir is able to look beyond the incident. This is the reason why, instead remaining drowned in the sorrowful impact of the incident, decides to see his son, Murad, in order to tell him how he had been deprived of his whole family and what physical as well spiritual injuries had Zaynab succumbed to. Dastaguir, though, misses no opportunity to tell the world of the horrors he has seen, remains resolute to see his son in the mines, as he, while on his way to see Murad tells Mirza Qadir:

“No. brother, I’ve come only to see him … He knows nothing of the misfortune that has struck the family. On the one hand there’s misery of the bombing, on the other, the misery of telling such a thing to my son. How should I tell him? I don’t know.” (Rahimi, 2003, p. 35)

LaCapra adds that as the victim of trauma goes through the pain of loss, the listener, who listens to the traumatic account and goes through the vicarious experience, should still be able to differentiate between the feeling of loss that the survivor has and his own feeling of absence that s/he can witness in the victim. Once into the vicarious experience, the listener usually forgets this difference between absence and loss. This happens when the listener identifies himself with the person who has lost some loved one, thus feeling the loss as the victim himself feels. In this case, the listener should be feeling the absence of
someone from the life of the victims rather than feeling the loss as felt by the victim.

The shopkeeper, after listening to Dastaguir, who thinks that it would be very difficult for Murad to tolerate the whole account of destruction, does identify himself as Dastaguir. He does not feel the pinch of the incident to the extent Dastaguir has been feeling because that would have stopped him distancing himself from the pain Dastaguir has been feeling. As LaCapra advises, the shopkeeper who acts as a listener can feel the absence of comfort from Dastaguir’s life but he does not feel the pain to the extent Dastaguir has been feeling. As a result, he is in a position to help Dastaguir work through the pain, as he tells him about his son:

“He’s strong, father. You must tell him. He must accept it. One day or another he’ll find out. It is better that hear it from you, that you tell him you are with him and share the burden of his sorrow. Don’t leave him alone. Make him understand that man’s fate contains such things, that he is not alone…” (Rahimi, 2003, p. 36)

The listener, working as a secondary witness - the victim of course being the primary witness - should remain somewhat objective in order for him not to over-sympathize with the victim and run the risk of feeling the feeling of loss that should be exclusive to the victim. This feeling of loss will turn into a huge generalization of historical trauma if the listeners of a traumatic account forget about this difference between absence and loss. Once caught in the feeling of loss, where it should have been the feeling of absence, while listening to an account of trauma, the listener enters the victim-specific melancholy, the trauma of the victim is turned into the trauma of everyone who is unable to differentiate between absence and loss (LaCapra, 2001).
Despite seeing intense problems in telling Murad and others about the destruction that he has witnessed, Dastaguir considers it as a duty to the dead to look for an opportunity to tell the world of what had happened. Tal (996) asserts that the survivor has this duty to tell the world of the horrors he has witnessed. Dastaguir always looks for an opportunity to tell the world of the destruction he has seen. When asked by Mirza Qadir about the destruction caused by the Russian forces in his village, Dastaguir says:

“I ran towards the house through dust and fire. Before I arrived, I saw Yassin’s mother. She was running, completely naked … She wasn’t shouting, she was laughing. She was running around like a mad woman. She had been in the bathhouse. A bomb had hit and destroyed it. Women were buried alive and died. But my daughter-in-law … If only I had been blind and hadn’t seen her dishonored. I ran after her. She vanished into the smoke and flames… The house had become a grave. A grave for my wife, grave for my other son, his wife and their children …” (Rahimi, 2003, p.31)

The moment of destruction is too extraordinary for Dastaguir to adjust to. This is the reason why that moment keeps on haunting him as he fears for his son, Murad, that he might also burn in the same fire that had engulfed the rest of his family. He keeps on thinking about that moment and feels as if he has been seeing that incident taking place in front of him every now and then. When haunted by these flashbacks, he is simply unable to separate the reality from imagination. He takes his fears for real as he says: “It’s as if you live only in these images and dreams. Images and dreams of what you have witnessed and wish you hadn’t…” (Rahimi, 2003, p.13).

Quite similar accounts of the ravages of war have been portrayed in personal narratives
by Afghan survivors of the war. In Dossa’s (2005) interview with such witnesses of the war in Afghanistan, destruction of the aforementioned nature that is quite similar to what Rahimi portrays in his novel has been recorded. One of Dossa’s interviewee named Nargis, who lost her husband and witnessed the destruction in Afghanistan, says:

I was in pain, a lot of pain. But I was not alone. Everybody lost someone: brother, sister, mother, father, son, daughter. It was war. Everyone got killed there. People got killed in huge numbers. (Dossa, 2005, p. 37)

Just like Dastaguir, the young Yassin has also not been able to have a sound and peaceful sleep as he is also haunted by the dreadful images of the attack. His sleep has also turned into “full of images, dirt, fire, screams, and tears…” (Rahimi, 2003, p. 13). This is the reason why Dastaguir does not yearn for a sleep like that of Yassin; however, he wishes that he may be able to sleep like any other child who does not have images and memories of the past. He wishes for a sound sleep because he has been perturbed a great deal by the haunting memories of destruction. As a result, he looks out for an opportunity to share these memories with someone in order to mourn the grief and feel some ease.

The moment when Dastaguir saw his daughter-in-law, named Zaynab naked during the attack, has been torturing him continuously. He imagines her running naked from one tree to another and he also imagines young Yassin naked with his mother. He calls for again and again but to no avail. This image has been haunting him again and again throughout the novel, emphasizing how torturous an experience it had been for the survivor. As soon as Dastaguir comes back to his senses and start mourning the loss, this
proves to be a trigger for the young Yassin to be haunted by whatever he witnessed, as he says: “Uncle’s dead, Mother’s gone … Qadir’s dead, Grandmother’s dead! Grandfather cries…” (Rahimi, 2003, p.45).

Moreover, Dastaguir, having lost every one of his blood relatives except Yassin and Murad, and having been deprived of his house and everything that he had in his village still lives. He still lives but with a burden on his mind. He does not succumb to the agony of destruction that was brought upon him and others by the Soviet tanks. He knows that he cannot avenge the destruction of his village. But he still lives. He lives for a purpose that he has not opted for out of a conscious effort; rather he lives for a reason that is typical of the trauma survivors. However, in order to be living he has to relate the incident of destruction to everyone he comes across. He tries to do so, in vain though, when he meets the guard at the checkpoint; he repeats the same account of trauma when he approaches Mirza Qadir called; and he is resolute to see his son, despite all odds, so that he can speak his mind to him and inform him of what had happened to his family and the village. The reason is that the survivors did not only need to survive so that they could tell their stories, they needed to tell their stories in order to survive (Felman & Laub, p. 56).

Thus, as White (2001) challenges the view that the narratives of history are removed from reality, saying that “It is absurd to suppose that, because a historical discourse is written in the mode of a narrative, it must be mythical, fictional, substantially imaginary, or otherwise “unrealistic” in what it tells us about the world,” (p. 22) the devastation
caused by Soviet forces, depicted by Rahimi in the novel, presents the reality with a metaphorical insight. White (2001) advocates the fact that every fictional narrative gets some of its content from the world that is real, and that the reader is offered with some knowledge of that real world in the form of the narratives of history.

Rahimi’s choice for the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan is a reality that took place in 1979; the portrayal of destruction provides a careful reader of history with many details of the war and its destruction. However, White also warns that it does not mean that the whole past will be reflected in a narrative of the past. This is against Cicero’s second principle, according to which, “the historian cannot omit any information;” however, the capturing of the whole past is impossible, and at the same time, the question of being able to know about the whole past has also been a pertinent issue in historiography. Moreover, it is impossible to portray and bring forth every single detail of an event that has taken place in the past. Beside, the narratives cannot cater for the readers’ need to have a conclusive as well as definite view of the past incidents. As, “can we know the past?” remained the most pertinent question in historiography in the nineteenth century, there is every possibility that such narrative of the past will inevitably move on to engender further interpretations of the past events, more fictional narratives of the past, and increased discussions, based on such literary productions.

If every single narration of the past event is an interpretation of its own nature, it means that the greater the number of narratives about an event in the past, greater the number of
versions of that incident exist. White (2001) says that it can happen that a writer portrays an event in the form of an epic while another writer represents the same event in the form of a farce, adding that it does not mean that one account is more truthful than the other, because it is all a matter of emplotment of the truth concerned. Rahimi’s portrayal of the destruction, caused by the Soviet forces in Afghanistan, is yet another emplotment of the truth about the war in Afghanistan.

Thus, by being continuously haunted by the memories of the war, Yassin and Dastaguir are recording history in as pure a form as possible. They are informing everyone of the destruction caused by the Soviet forces. Thus, this part of the study answers the second and third research question: In what ways can the trauma of the individual characters in the selected novels be ascribed to the collective trauma of Afghan society as a whole, and how does this narrativization of their accounts highlight the collective war-impacted ravages in the Afghan society?, And, following Cathy Caruth’s footsteps, can the portrayal of trauma of the individual characters in the selected novels add something to the history which is recorded under the traditional documentary evidence?

4.6 The Survivor’s Guilt and the Overwhelming Nature of Trauma

Another trait of trauma is that the survivor of a traumatic incident goes through a double trauma. As a common understanding, the survivor of trauma, after going through all the required medication, therapies and counseling, should be more than happy for the fact that s/he, despite all odds, is still alive. But that is not the case. As discussed earlier in the
light of what Freud (1895) and, later on, Caruth (1995) explained that it is not possible for the human mind to register an incident of trauma as soon as it occurs; rather its impact is more severe when it haunts the mind much after it has taken place. Moreover, as Caruth (1996) asserts that it is not the traumatic neurosis in a traumatic event but the typically disturbing survival that the survivor goes through and that disturbs him/her more than anything else.

It is because of this trauma that Dastaguir’s enigma of survival haunts him so badly that he deplores his existence. His survival leads to the feelings of guilt and unworthiness, which are the direct results of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (Uytterschout, 2008). The paradox of the memory of destruction and the conundrum of testimony to relate the account of destruction entails a double trauma i.e the trauma of death and the trauma of survival (Caruth, 1996). The survivors of war, as in the case of Dastaguir, repent over their survival because the trauma that they are faced with is too big for their mind, as Dastaguir says: “Why wasn’t I killed before I reached home? What wrong had I committed to be condemned to witness …” (Rahimi, 2002, p. 30). This is in line with what Christ (1986) offers as the first stage of trauma, saying that when the victim is hit by the overwhelming nature of the incident, he enters the state of being where he is haunted by the sense of nothingness. Dastaguir does not see in goodness in his life anymore because the incident that has hit him has been of an overwhelming nature. As a result he considers his survival as curse on himself.
However, instead of committing suicide, Dastaguir has been able to cope with the trauma and work through it. Despite feeling the extreme pinch of the moment when he has lost most of his loved ones, and when he has been deprived of his home to see his grandson who, has gone deaf due to excessive bombing by the Russian tanks, Dastaguir, though carries the sense of nothingness that Christ (1986) foretells, but he has been able to work through his trauma and consider his grief as a part of his life. LaCapra (2001) argues that this accommodation of trauma into the life of the victim by the victim himself is mandatory for the survivor to move on and avoid getting stuck in the moment of trauma, adding that a reconnection to life is extremely important at this stage. Dastaguir, despite all odds, has been able to cope with the trauma and avoid getting trapped in that moment.

This contradiction of mourning the deaths of his loved ones and cursing his own survival is mainly due to the fact that Dastaguir, the survivor, is faced with a very challenging situation. He is unable to comprehend the tragedy of the death of so many people, nor is he in a position to see the value of his own survival because the deaths of so many people take place around him, but he does not die and continues to remain alive. When the survivor thinks about the death of these people he asks himself why was he not killed when all others were; thus, the only way out that he sees to cope with this situation, just like so many other cases, is to commit suicide. Caruth (1995) asserts that the most terrible thing for the survivor is not the flashback of the traumatic incident but the moment when he becomes fully conscious of what had actually happened around him, adding that when the survivor dreams about the incident or has spatial flashbacks of the trauma, his
unconscious is involved; however, the real trauma hits the survivor with its full strength when the survivor wakes up and regains complete consciousness.

This guilt of survival is so pervasive in the war-torn Afghan society that another character, Mirza Qadir, who has not even witnessed the trauma yet is so much moved by Dastaguir’s account that he also regrets the very existence of the living people around him. This chain of traumas where one’s trauma reminds others of their own traumas and thus enables them to feel for each other is the hallmark of trauma studies, as Caruth (1996) says, “We are all implicated in each other’s trauma” (p. 24).

Mirza Qadir, after listening to the full of grief account of Dastaguir, says, “Venerable father, these days the dead are more fortunate than the living.” (Rahimi, 2002, p. 33)

For Dastaguir, this is, then, the time when he feels the intensity of how he survived when others around him were struck by the trauma. For the first time, the survivor comes to know through the flashbacks of the traumatic incident that he has survived the trauma. This is the point when, he, ironically does not ponder about his near death; rather s/he thinks about his mysterious survival (Caruth, 1996). The repetition of the flashback of the trauma is, as Caruth asserts, an attempt to comprehend the very fact that one has survived the incident despite all odds, adding that it is, in no way, an effort to say that one has almost died.
This shows how pervasive the experience of trauma has been in the novel. Although, trauma is associated with individuals, but the overall portrayal of characters, like Mirza Qadir and the guard, whose experience of traumatic incidents has not been covered in the story, are shown with the typical symptoms of the survivors of trauma. This shows how the writer, through the portrayal of individual characters, is bringing the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan as a societal trauma for the people in Afghanistan. The way Mirza Qadir sympathizes with Dastaguir and the manner in which the guard behaves differently with different people show that these characters are equally haunted by the memories of trauma in one form or another.

4.7 Coping with Trauma Mechanism by Dastaguir and Yassin

In order to cope with the debilitating effects of trauma, Herman (1992), being one of the pioneers in this field, came up with a coping mechanism to treat the survivors of war. The study uses this mechanism to track characters in Rahimi’s Earth and Ashes, which portrays individuals, who went through a traumatic experience of war.

Herman (1992) asserts that the first stage to cope with trauma is that the survivor should be sure that safety has been established in his life, adding that this sense of safety should include not only physical safety but also a sense and consciousness of safety in one’s surroundings, explaining that this sense of safety should be able to take the survivor out of the constant zone of fear. According to Herman, safety should be established in the life of the survivor of trauma. This means that the survivor should not only be physically safe
but s/he should also have the sense of safety. This, Herman explains, goes on to show that
the survivor should come out of the constant state of fear and he should be sure that he is
out of danger. As portrayed by Rahimi, the protagonist, only when he is out of the danger
zone, is in a position to recollect whatever happened to his village. He tells the story of
destruction only because he feels secure now.

After giving an apple to Yassin to eat, he puts “a pinch of naswar” (Rahimi, 2002, p. 2)
in his mouth and then looks into the mirrored lid of his naswar box to examine “the web
of sinuous lines” (Rahimi, 2002, p. 3) around his eyes. This shows that he has the sense
of safety that Herman (1992) recommends as the first stage to survive trauma. In the case
of Yassin, it is evident from the novel that he considers his grandfather’s presence as the
biggest sense of security one can have.

The second stage in coping with trauma that Herman recommends for the survivor of
trauma is the act of remembering and mourning. At this stage, it is very important that the
survivor provides an account of the traumatic incident. In Herman’s coping mechanism,
this is the stage where the survivor of trauma should be able to remember and mourn the
incident. Here, the survivor should be able to relate what trauma he has gone through.
Herman says that in this manner the survivor “transforms the traumatic memory, so that it
can be integrated into the survivor’s life story” (Herman, 1992, p. 175). Typical of this
second stage of coping with trauma, Dastaguir, after having some trouble relating the
devastating account though, is able to share with Mirza Qadir the account of destruction,
which he has witnessed. Dastaguir remembers the traumatic incident and mourns over the
destruction as he says that the Russians did not spare anyone and reduced the village to dust.

Dastaguir further recollects and describes, “…the Russians came and surrounded the village. I was at the mill. Suddenly, there was an explosion. I ran out. I saw fire and clouds of dust” (Rahimi, 2002, p. 30).

Contemplating about how to tell his son, Murad, about the incident, in which the Soviet forces killed every one of his family including his wife, he says, “My son, be strong! … If she was your mother, she was also my wife. She’s gone. When death comes, it makes no difference whether it is for a mother or a wife … My son, death came to our village …” (Rahimi, 2002, p. 54).

Yassin, being too young to understand the gravity of the incident, does not mourn but still remembers in a photographic memory what had happened in front of his eyes. Each time he sees his grandfather crying, he says, “My uncle’s dead, Mother’s gone … Qadir’s dead, Grandmother’s dead … The bomb was huge. It brought silence” (Rahimi, 2002, p. 32). This is what he remembers and this is what he can make of whatever he witnessed in his village. He is simply unable to understand why the whole destruction at the hands of the Soviet troops took place. Like many other children in Afghanistan as well as elsewhere, the incident is too big and overwhelming for Yassin’s grasp. What he has been saying about the death of his uncle, his mother, grandmother and Qadir is what his mind has recorded for him.
It is similar to what Tal (1996) says when he asserts that the survivor of trauma records the incident in the same manner as a videotape records a video, adding that no matter how much time passes, the quality of the video inside the videotape will remain intact. Just like that, Yassin’s mind, working like a videotape, has been continuously playing the things which he witnessed during the attacks by the Soviet troops as recorded on his mind. Thus, the details that the survivor of trauma is providing are as true as the incident itself (Caruth, 1996). Hence, in accordance with the second stage of Herman’s model, the act of remembering the incident and mourning the losses take place in the novel. These acts of remembering and mourning work as witnessing in order to record the incident with all its details.

In the third stage of this model, the survivor should be able to return to everyday life. Herman (1992) asserts that the survivor, after remembering and mourning the loss, should reconnect to everyday life and start a new beginning, saying that through continuous mourning, and remembering the trauma, the survivor “transforms the traumatic memory, so that it can be integrated into the survivor’s life story” (p. 175). Applying this phase of the model on the trauma-hit characters in Earth and Ashes, it is evident that as the novel covers a very short span of time, the characters, undergoing the trauma are still haunted by the second stage i.e remembering and mourning. Dastaguir, until the end, is haunted the ravages of this attack. The naked body of Zaynab, Dastaguir’s daughter-in-law, who went into the fire, still haunts his mind. He still thinks, “Zaynab threw her naked body headlong into the fire. She was burnt alive. She was burnt naked” (Rahimi, 2002, p. 60).
Being possessed with these flashbacks of trauma, Dastaguir has still been able to work through the incident. He decides to see his son and does not stay in the village to mourn the deaths of his loved ones. The trauma of the destruction of his whole family and village and then the mysterious reaction of his son, Murad, still haunt his mind. Despite all these things, Dastaguir seems normal despite the fact he has been dejected with the queer response of his son, Murad, for whom he travelled such a long journey from his village. However, he still has the will power to reconnect to life.

While returning from the mines, where he could not see his son, and with whom he could share his grief, Dastaguir seems broken from inside but he still tells himself: “Dastaguir, be strong! A man doesn’t weep” (Rahimi, 2002, p. 81). Being dejected and broken, Dastaguir still looks for a way out amid all the sorrows of the world and searches for his box of *naswar*. Unable to find the box, Dastaguir does not feel down with grief; rather he still *works it through* as he “takes a pinch of gray earth between his fingertips and place it under his tongue” (Rahimi, 2002, p. 81). The survivor mourns the losses as a result of the trauma and begins to construct a new life with self and with others. This depicts how this new history shows the Afghan people going through the traumatic incidents and are then left with no option but to reconnect to everyday life, no matter how dejected, broken and miserable their lives are.

In accordance with the third stage of coping mechanism as advised in Herman’s (1992) model, Dastaguir makes a concerted effort to return to life, despite the fact that he has been badly broken from inside. He, amid all the stresses and storms of the war ravaged
life in his country, compounded with the grief of his son’s indifference in not even meeting his father, is strong enough to work through it and return to life. The very broken inner self of Dastaguir when he tells himself that he should not cry as it is not befitting for a man to cry is significant in the sense that it tells the story of every Dastaguir who survived and witnessed an attack by Soviet tanks, or for that matter, any other invading force. The account tells the history of how devastating a war can be, not only for the ones who perish in these incidents, but also for those who survive the incident, mainly because they are the ones, whose whole fabric of existence is destroyed but are still doomed to survive. This shows how painful the concept of double trauma, presented by Caruth (1995), actually is, when the survivor not only mourns the death of his/her loved one, but also repents his own survival. The symbolic nature of the genre shows that this is the war related history of Afghanistan, and also the history of every Afghan who witnessed the destruction of his homeland but was still doomed to survive, in order to tell the world about his ‘world of hurt’ and whatever happened therein. (Tal, 1996)

After the analysis of the novel with reference to the coping mechanism by Herman, it is apt to discuss another coping mechanism by Miller (2000), who proposes two kinds of techniques for coping with trauma i.e “problem-focused coping” and “emotion focused coping” (p. xxii). Moreover, the writer, after carrying out a proper analysis of these accounts, proposes specific methods for these coping with trauma techniques.

Miller (2000) indicates various techniques for problem-focused and emotion-focused
coping. Basically, according to him, problem focused-coping is action centered and “is utilized when something solid can be achieved, for example, stealing blankets or additional portions of food (Miller, 2000, p. xxii). On the other hand, emotion focused strategy is to a greater extent a “thinking strategy.” According to Miller (2000), when something tangible is not feasible, methods, for example, “fantasy,” “numbing,” and “humour,” are all alternatives for shielding oneself from the effect of trauma notwithstanding when not keeping the trauma from happening.

In *Earth and Ashes*, for young Yassin, the incident of seeing Soviet tanks, destroying his house and the whole village, killing his mother and other family members, and ‘taking everyone’s voice’ is so overwhelming an incident that he is still stuck in that moment. Despite the fact that he is not able to listen to anyone, because he has gone deaf due to the bombing, he relates the supposed deprivation of the people of their ability to speak to the gigantic Soviet tanks that he has seen when his village came under the attack, and he says that the tanks have taken away everyone’s voice, adding that the people are moving their lips but they cannot talk.

Although his grandfather is lost in his thought and does respond to his questions, what he understands is that his own voice has also been taken away by the tanks. And every now and then, he tells the people around him of the devastation that has been caused by the Soviet forces in his village. Thus, for his impressionable mind, the incident is too big to deal with or work through. Since he is not able to work through the trauma, he is not in a position to cope with it. He is neither psychologically mature enough to devise an
emotions-based coping where he can look for a way out that may even be based on his imagination, nor is he able to use humor to dispel the effects of the trauma.

As he is completely dependent on his grandfather, he does not feel free to think about any action-centered coping mechanism to deal with the trauma. As a result, he stays in the moment of the trauma. He is simply unable to cope with it mainly because of the severity of the incident and his inability to work through it. Whatever he sees and feels is not beyond and out of the sphere of the incident that he has witnessed. For him, the bombing of his village by the Soviet tanks and the killing of his family members by the troops is everything that he can think of. He is stuck in that moment, and is simply unable to cope with the trauma through either emotion-focused strategy or actions-centered approach.

The trauma experienced by Yassin is limited to him only; rather Rahimi presents him as the representative of many other children who are subjected to witness the horrors of war in an age when they are simply unable to cope with the situation. Historical accounts definitely show the deaths of children and the injuries that they sustained, but the way these children get an impression of the incidents and how they look at the whole pack of incidents is best done by literary productions.

The novel stresses the fact that the children in Afghanistan are equally subjected to the traumatizing incidents of war and that they are at a greater loss as they would feel the pinch of these incidents at a later stage when they will grow up as Freud (1890) gives the concept of a belated response to trauma, discussed in detail on the chapter on literature.
review. The children do witness the incident but are unable to understand it; however, when they grow up, they understand the severity and actual impact of the incident, and that is the time when they suffer a great deal. Thus, the novel, unlike a record of history, where only names, dates and incidents are kept without catering for the related psychoanalysis of the people involved in the incident, brings forth the details which psychological processes, taking place, in the mind of the victim while responding to the incident of trauma. Therefore, in a bid to better understand history or gauge the severity of a traumatizing incident, it is better to read the related fictional narratives, where the very nature of this domain caters for and provides enough space for the writer to put forth the feelings of the survivors.

Unlike Yassin, Dastaguir’s reaction to the trauma of destruction in his village and the killing of his family members by the Soviet troops has been completely different, and understandably so, because he is mature enough to work through the tragedy. He has been able to deal with the trauma through the problem-focused coping mechanism as what he has been occupied with after being hit by the trauma is a tangible goal of telling his son about the incident. This is the reason why he concentrates all his energies on finding a way to reach to, and see, his son and tell him of the destruction that he has witnessed.

Despite the fact that he considers it extremely difficult to tell his son of the killing of all the family members and destruction of the whole village, he does not lose heart and does not succumb to the overwhelming nature of the trauma, because he has set a target for
himself to achieve. He does not look for an escape route from the situation that he finds himself and his whole family in. The way out strategy that he opts for is not based on any unrealistic aims for himself; rather he has a workable plan that he wants to materialize without being bogged down by the overwhelming nature of the incident. Although, he is haunted by the incident quite often but he does not give in. He sets a target for himself and that is to see his son in the mines and tell him of whatever he has witnessed. This is in accordance with Miller’s action-centered approach, as explained in earlier part of the chapter.

His goal is to see his son and tell him whatever he witnessed. The gigantic episode of misery does not let Dastaguir crumble. This helps him to cope with his trauma and concentrate his energies on the goal of telling the world the details of the destruction. The resoluteness on his part also suggests that no matter how old an incident of oppression has become in the pages of history, the survivors will continue telling the world about the details. His insistence on telling Murad about the devastation caused by the Soviet forces in his village is also suggestive in the sense that he wants the memory to be passed on to the next generation. He does not want to keep it a secret; rather he is unknowingly telling the world about the horrors he has witnessed.

The story of the Russian tanks as witnessed by him is something that he wants to be recorded in everyone’s memory through continuous repetition on his part; thus, making it so obvious to be dealt with as a part of history. Hence, it answers the first research question: Keeping in view the concepts of *Acting Out* and/or *Working Through* in trauma
theory, how do the traumatized characters in the selected Afghan fictional narratives in English articulate their witnessing of trauma, and what measures do the traumatized characters take to cope with the overwhelming incident of war in order to recover from the trauma and reconnect to everyday life?

Rahimi’s *Earth and Ashes* is indeed a work of fiction and cannot be considered as an exact account of the traumatized people, who underwent the ravages of the Soviet invasion. However, this novel and other such accounts of trauma, portrayed in other forms of literary productions are used as a heuristic meta-framework that guide us to investigate the Afghan people’s trauma and go beyond the knowledge, encompassed in the official accounts of History. Characters like Dastaguir serve as the mouthpiece of all the devastated Afghans to represent the societal trauma of the nation as a whole. Following the individual accounts of trauma, the overall societal experience of trauma is best judged when it comes to incidents, like war, which takes into its folds the society as a whole. Rahimi’s *Earth and Ashes* provides an insight into the condition of people, in Afghanistan, who went through the trauma of the Soviet invasion. This is all done through the lens of the writer who happens to be the eye witness of this whole tragedy. Investigations into the traumas of more individual characters, portrayed in such other literary pieces, coming from Afghan writers is recommended. This endeavor and others of this sort are in place for they are the past that flows into the present and then the present makes inroads into the future. Thus, the novelist, portraying the past, has invariably got a stake in the future. From bringing forth ‘true histories,’ as Caruth coins
the phrase, and clarifying the people’s view of the past, there is the possibility of a hopeful and just prophesy for the future.
CHAPTER 5

TIME, SPACE AND TRAUMA: UNSPEAKABILITY AND IDENTITY IN HOSSEINI’S THE KITE RUNNER

5.1 Understanding Trauma with Reference to Time and Space

Much of knowing is dependent on language [...] Because of the radical break between trauma and culture, victims often cannot find categories of thought or words for their experience. That is, since neither culture nor experience provides structures for formulating acts of massive aggression, survivors cannot articulate trauma, even to themselves. (Laub & Auerhahn, 1993, p. 288)

The emphasis of this part of the study is on the notions of space and time as well as their impact on trauma. This is the approach that resulted from the recommendations given by Caruth (1992), who advises this method for reading and discovering better approaches to cater for trauma and its impact. The comprehension of trauma, which the project uncovers in this part of the study, has been drawn to a great extent from the discussions developed in the literature review chapter of the study. The work in this chapter is established by keeping in view the theories concerning trauma, augmented by a viewpoint that is educated by, and indicating similitudes with, the compositions portrayed in the chapter on literature review; yet, it means to offer an alternate and an inventive option that not only questions but also supports the foundations, which are already set to study trauma. This section of the study expects to add to the scholarly trauma research by
using the concepts of time and space to rethink and grow the thought of speaking to and reading trauma. Other than the models mentioned in the chapter on research methodology and also used in the previous chapter, the model for this part of the study is based on the tenets of trauma theory that has been put forward by Cathy Caruth, as discussed earlier. Before discussing Hosseini’s *The Kite Runner*, what this portion of the study does is that it, in order to bring to the fore the concepts of time and space with reference to trauma, takes into consideration *Gerusalemme liberata* (Jerusalem Delivered) and its two scenes by Tasso. This discussion, then, goes on to study Hosseini’s novel in the same theoretical framework.

In the introduction to her *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (1996), Caruth begins her interpretation of another method of perusing trauma by returning to Freud’s composition in section three of “Beyond the Pleasure Principle” (1920) to discuss two passages from Tasso’s romantic epic of Tancredi and Clorinda. She discusses the daemonic way of the representation of trauma in perpetual repetition, or the death drive. Freud compresses the two scenes of the Gerusalemme story - which recounts the account of the attack of Jerusalem by the Christians in their first campaign in 1099 and the fights between the Christians and Muslims:

The hero Tancred unwittingly kills his beloved Clorinda, she having done battle with him in the armour of an enemy knight. After her burial he penetrates the strange charmed forest that so frightens the army of crusaders. There, he smites a tall tree with his sword, but blood gushes from the wound, and the voice of Clorinda, whose spirit has magically entered into that very tree, accuses him of yet again doing harm to his beloved. (Freud, 2003, pp. 60-61)
As indicated by Freud, Tancredi’s twofold injuring of his beloved has been done unawares, first in battling, where he doesn’t remember her in her shield, and afterwards in the forested areas, where she is buried in a tree and misrecognized once more, reveals insight into the impulse to repeat in traumatic despondency, by an apparently secretive power, i.e. a power for which the rationale is oblivious and can’t without much of a stretch be discovered. Tancred, thus, unwittingly reorders the traumatic moment. Tancred’s unknowing wounding of Clorinda demonstrates the inert impulsive nature of traumatic reiteration, in which the damaged people, unwittingly, are compelled to belatedly and repeatedly come back to the trauma just as “a daemonic current [is] going through their whole existence” (Freud, 2003)

Like Freud, Caruth (1992), in her discourse on trauma framework, concentrates on Tancredi’s experience of the transient way of trauma, which cannot be grasped at the moment of occurrence; however, which must be repeated later, yet while she sees in Tasso’s story [t]he most moving poetical portrayal of “an interminable redundancy of the same destiny” (2003b, p. 60), she sees Tasso’s account likewise as a “striking” example of “the moving and sad voice that shouts out, a voice that is incomprehensibly discharged through the trauma” (1996a, p. 2). At the end of the day, Caruth emphasizes the moral basic of trauma in the delayed setting created by the expression.

In Caruth’s examination, the voice from the trauma vouches for the “reality or truth” of the trauma that has gotten away from Tancredi’s awareness and speaks to that which is blocked off in some other way, directing the reader’s listening and seeing
“the address of the voice […] as the story of the way in which one’s own trauma is tied up with the trauma of another, the way in which trauma may lead, therefore, to the encounter with another, through the very possibility and surprise of listening to another’s wound” (1996a, pp, 4, 8).

As it were, Clorinda vouches for what Tancredi can’t recollect or know, thus rises as his double. The reader is then again thrown in the part of the victimized person and witness, dissolving the limits in the middle of time and space, self and other, so that trauma can’t be situated in any one individual or place yet rather is exchanged to interlock with, or implicates, everyone of us.4

In spite of the fact that Caruth (1996) comments in her explanation that Tasso’s account seems to light up not simply the worldly but “both the temporal and spatial aspects of the notion of trauma,” thus a point worth noting is that she doesn’t keep on contemplating on this connection in the middle of time and space in trauma or endeavor to characterize spatiality in a traumatic setting any further in her book (p. 114). It is true that the cited entry above shows both the temporal and spatial parts of trauma yet she neglects to address issues raised by the connection between these in Tasso’s story and does not

4 Caruth’s (and Freud’s) casting of Tancredi in the role of trauma victim is not devoid of problems, however. Sigrid Weigel argues that Caruth’s interpretation of Freud’s reading of Tasso’s tragic epic misreads Tancredi’s perpetrator guilt: “it is precisely this mode of trauma – a terrified perception, or the horror of recognizing the way in which one’s own history has become entangled in an act of killing – that may be of particular relevance for the aftermath of Nazism on the side of the perpetrators” which is overlooked by what she deems as Caruth’s effacing the specificity of particular traumatic events (2003: 91-92). Also Ruth Leys invokes Nazism, saying that the “chilling implications” of Caruth’s interpretation of Tancredi as a victim includes turning Nazis into “victims,” too (2000: 297). However, while Caruth’s claim does to some extent erode the borders between perpetrators and their victims, she never refers to the Holocaust in her argument. Yet interpreting Tasso’s Christian hero as a victim does raise questions of perpetrator trauma, of whether perpetration in itself causes trauma, and the complicated relation between aggressor and victim; suffice to say here that the passage from the poem exemplifies Caruth’s theory of reading trauma and that her interpretation communicates her central purpose to demonstrate how the reader is interpellated by the address and thus implicated in the trauma of the other (As explained by RodiRisberg, 2010, p. 30)
thoroughly consider the ramifications of this connection for comprehension of trauma and its representation. Nor does her new method of perusing propose how trauma can be investigated regarding space.

Consequently, the inquiries concerning why psychic trauma needs to be theorized, spoken to, and read through both time and space remain generally unaddressed and unexplored in her hypothesis. This study perceives and addresses this oversight or blind side and is dedicated to seeking after this issue, which appear to be critical to a comprehension of trauma and its representation, offering a marginally diverse problem by broadening the idea of space in this setting.

Beginning from Caruth’s and Freud’s insights about the disengagement that is inalienable in traumatic experience, this chapter recommends that references to time and space picture the traumatized personality, flagging the twofold way of traumatic experience as well as bespeaking thus the delicacy of our impression of these ideas even with trauma. Since these references signal towards a psychological part in trauma, they ought not be conjectured, read separately or translated independently. Rather, it is important to reevaluate their connection through the issue of trauma, to characterize trauma through this connection, and to figure out how to read trauma for interruptions and dislocations regarding these transient and spatial references separately.
Aside from lighting up a complex and a multifaceted worldly structure in traumatic repetition, what emerges about this entry in Tasso’s story is likewise how it shows a spatial side to trauma notwithstanding the fleeting in a more extensive sense than topping off the space of the brain - even a material, physical or mortal angle - to traumatic memory and enduring with gendered ramifications: the rough scene of the first killing of Clorinda in the twelfth of the twenty cantos in Tasso’s epic underscores the space of her body, and is in itself suggestive of sexual viciousness, not a phenomenal “weapon” of war.

Caruth’s comprehension of the spatial measurement of trauma is centered around the brain, nonetheless, and gets to some degree from Jean Laplanche, who underscores the route, in which Freud places the worldly story close to a spatial one that is not spatial in the physical sense but instead about expansion and borrowed from Jacques Derrida, who recommends that in Freud a geological structure is fundamental to the likelihood of a file (as the likelihood of memory) (Caruth, 1996)

5.2 Trauma and Identity

Memory negotiates the connection between trauma and identity. Trauma is closely joined with memory due to the fact that it is due to the memory of an incident that trauma occurs. As Luckhurst (2008) states that other than a bunch of physical implications, trauma disturbs memory, and consequently the identity of the victim, in exceptional
ways. Laub (1993) concentrates on the effect of trauma on memory and thus, the impact of memory on the victim’s comprehension of trauma. His theory is created from his work with Holocaust survivors, where he concentrates on the victim’s shifts of knowing and not knowing the traumatic incident. Trauma is seen as an occasion that is not completely grasped by the brain and consequently stays outside its typical working. Then again, it does have a very basic impact in the individual’s life as it returns regularly in a literal as well as comprehensive manner.

The victim of trauma may relive the very trauma but without the ability to connect with it; it is both known and unknown to the individual. In his investigation of different conditions of known damage to the mind, Laub distinguishes eight types of traumatic knowledge, for example fragments (decontextualized memories), overpowering narratives (the narrator is overtaken by a memory that obscures the present), not knowing (amnesia), witness narratives (distance and perspective is obtained), and fugue states (intrusive appearance of fragmented behaviours, cognitions and effects). The different manifestations of traumatic knowledge as shown above are also the well-known trauma symptoms. For example, disassociated images of an incident of trauma may haunt the victim in the form of flashbacks. Knowing and not knowing trauma is focal as in the individual can’t really understand the experience and express it in words it to endure witness to the occasion, some of the time not even to him/herself. This division of the self into a known and unknown part slices to the very center of the individual’s perception toward self and identity.
Caruth further clarifies this by recommending that an individual conveys “an impossible history within them, or they become themselves the symptom of a history that they cannot entirely possess.” (p. 5)

It is exactly her attention to the history and the particular incident that prompts Radstone and Leys to differ with Caruth’s trauma theory. Despite this, it does highlight the complex relationship of the self to history that is at the focal point of traumatic experience. In the meantime, turning into a mere symptom of history may also strip the single person of organization and dangers undermining the hallmarks of the essence of an individual.

Radstone further proposes that by withdrawing from the processes of the unconscious and concentrating on the incident as the focal point, Caruth et al. disregard two essential certainties: that inside the unconscious there is no division between the normal and pathological obsessive, and that the darkness not only cones from outside but it also resides inside the psyche itself. Thus, she proposes to substitute a fully passive yet sovereign subject with someone who is hit by circumstances in a way that all his conscious cannot grasp everything therein. Yet even this movement does not totally evade the idea of the split self, as contends that there is a perspective that cannot be known inside trauma, regardless of the fact that the unknowable part is not an event but a process of the unconscious.
This multiplying of the self into two in terms of a difficult to reach trauma and the self is likewise taken up by Robert Jay Lifton. In a meeting with Caruth, he clarifies that intense trauma shatters one’s sense of self to a great extent, adding that there a new traumatized self is created. Critics, analysts and writers demonstrate that this parting of the self happens in the survivor’s memory and the best way to mend from trauma is to reconstitute that memory through a sound and integrative narrative. Caruth (1995) asserts, “So the battle in the post-traumatic experience is to reconstitute the self into the single self, reintegrate itself.” (p. 128)

This reconstitution of the traumatized self happens through testimony where the survivor endeavors to make a reasonable narrative of the past with the assistance of a listener or a witness. Radstone proposes that this is the externalization of the internal meaning making that happens inside the psyche “a model of subjectivity grounded in the space between witness and testifier inside which that which can’t be known can start to be witnessed.” (p. 20)

It is exactly this space between witness and testifier that is the main area of investigation in this study, mainly because this is the place where language and fictional narratives become the focal points in creating identity and history with reference the particular incident of traumatic nature.
In the meantime as an integrative story must be made with the goal that recuperation should happen, a narrative additionally needs to show different contending and on occasion conflicting strands – one of which is exactly the knowing and not-knowing of the trauma. The self accordingly gets to be dependent on an account; a methodology that is near to Ricoeur’s (1988) reasoning around the self, story, and time. Luckhurst also uses Ricoeur’s thought of “concordant dissonance” to propose a route in which the story can speak of trauma. This perspective is near to Weine’s contention, according to which testimony is polyphonic in nature. Weine further recommends that a survivor could be seen regarding Bakhtin’s idea of Dostoevskii’s hero as somebody who is looking for “self-definition” and who is engrossed with getting to be self-conscious. It is through testimony that the individual has the capacity to draw in with both consciousness and the memory of the incident, which as per Weine can best be attained to through a dialogic and polyphonic account:

In polyphonic and dialogic testimony it is the elaboration, not the erasure, of the picture that is the important element. [...] It is also essential that this elaboration not stop at some boundary just outside of the self, and fail to consider broader social, cultural, political, spiritual, developmental, and ethical concerns and struggles. A more elaborated story may help the survivor to grow in terms of his or her consciousness and ethics. (p. 104)

Testimony is therefore both an entrance point to trauma and memory, and a pathway to mending. It is through narrative that the self is made and re-made. For Weine, testimony facilitates the development and growth of comprehending the incident in all its forms and manifestations. Besides, the joining of different historical, ethical, communal and social perspectives permits the individual to see themselves as more than simply a victim of trauma, and to see their trauma in a more extensive setting.
Regarding the Afghan experience of the trauma of war, it additionally considers the impact of the predominant individual perspective, which has been neglected by studies so far. Studies in subjectivity indicate how individuals were endeavoring to make their characters through expanding their progressive cognizance in narratives. In the same way, the witness endeavors to accommodate the self and character with its connection to trauma. Weine’s and Ricoeur’s perspective of narrative along these lines takes into account the reconciliation of these different perspectives without abandoning the account as a particular impression of trauma.

5.3 Trauma and Unspeakability

One of the biggest obstacles to making a narrative and subsequently a stable identity is the rupture of the individual perception of time and memory that the injury is caused by an incident of trauma. As recommended by Laub, traumatic memory is fragmented and internal, always interfering with an individual’s experience of time and life. Besides, this memory is voluntary but not accessible, as Caruth says: “The ability to recover the past is thus closely and paradoxically tied up, in trauma, with the inability to have access to it” (p. 152). So, narrative has to cater for representing this relationship of knowing and not knowing the memory of an incident of trauma along with its impact on the victim. Laub says that the putting into words of a traumatic incident is vital to understand the incident and making the healing possible, adding that:

“Much of knowing is dependent on language [...] Because of the radical break between trauma and culture, victims often cannot find categories of thought
or words for their experience. That is, since neither culture nor experience provides structures for formulating acts of massive aggression, survivors cannot articulate trauma, even to themselves. (p. 288)

On account of this absence of structures through which to speak to trauma, it is frequently portrayed as unrepresentable, unspeakable and that it is experienced as an absence. (Caruth 1995; Laub et al, 1998; Trezise, 2001). However, this appears differently in relation to the consistent reiteration of the traumatic occasion in the form of fragments of intrusive memory and the literal form of that memory. This is exactly what Caruth investigates in her work by studying the complex ways that knowing and not knowing are caught in the language of trauma and in the stories connected with it. Using Freud’s sample of Tasso’s “Tancredi and Clorinda” she proposes that trauma is not locatable in the basic brutal or unique occasion in a victim’s past, yet rather in the way that its extremely unassimilated nature comes back to haunt the survivor later on. This unassimilated nature can be associated with Radstone’s clarification of the space “in between” where trauma is seen, as opposed to either inside the occasion or totally inside the psyche. At the core of this issue is the conviction that trauma in its most genuine structure may be unrepresentable, as narrative can’t join both knowing and not-knowing all the while.

Regarding the very notion of un-representability, investigations press hard to look for the three implications of “unspeakable” in reference to the Holocaust. That firstly, it is “verbally unrepresentable”, secondly, it is “inexpressibly bad”, and thirdly, it may not or can’t be talked about as a result of the holy nature of the incident. What Trezise brings up is the strain between a real claim based on facts rendered as impossible and a moral
prescription against probability, both of which are dominant in the holocaust related discourse.

He demonstrates that the hindrance in talking about the Holocaust is by all accounts the language that seems inadequate to cater for this phenomenon, adding that it recognizes the fact that this insufficiency does not describe the structure in connection to some object that is lying totally outside of it, but that it mirrors the inside rupture of the system by a reality that surpasses its limits. The harm that the incident does to a medium of expression i.e language is like the way that a traumatic occasion is said to harm the psyche. The interruption is inside the language, as it is to the mind, and in this manner can’t be sufficiently spoken, as the words no more hold the same meaning. Other than that, the use of figurative or literary language as a part of connection to the Holocaust could be seen as if the generally meaningless phenomenon is being burdened with meaning that will ultimately lead to “aesthetic success and ethical failure .” (p. 45)

On the issue of representing traumatic incidents in narratives, Kolk and Hart (1995) question if it was not the desecration of traumatic experiences to reconstruct them in narratives. Stories about traumatic encounters are constantly postured against the conviction that to discuss trauma is like betraying it, yet talking it out is proposed as the main cure for the survivors. At the same time, there are times in history that join a few contending narratives, and, as Kelly (2005) recommends, there is evidence of communities which articulated trauma in a very successful manner.
The perspective of the unspeakable trauma is accordingly in peril of undermining traumas that are very much verbalized. It is likewise imperative to call attention to the view that unspeakability may also mean something that has not been spoken of as yet and that it may mean that there was no chance to discuss a particular trauma, which remained unnoticed and silent under several other narratives covering other traumas (Gheith, 2007). Merridale (2005) proposes that this unspoken perspective is definitely not pathological and in this way can’t be seen through the trauma framework of investigation. However, silence stands and speaks for some incident and that cannot be disregarded.

To recommend that the representation of trauma is a disloyalty of it would make several incidents of trauma go excluded and unnoticed just because they do not conform to the unspeakability mold of trauma. In the same vein, it is in the domain of literary language to look into and discuss the issues of representation and the impossibility of representation, the knowing and the not-knowing, and the inside and the outside of the phenomenon itself.

The reason behind this incursion is that fiction is the only possible answer for this unrepresentability because “the disjunction between experiencing (phenomenal or empirical) and understanding (thoughtful naming, in which words replace things, or their images), is what figurative language expresses and explores.” (Hartman, 1995, p. 540) Luckhurst (2008) further explains additionally proposes that: “if trauma is a crisis in representation, then this generates narrative possibility just as much as impossibility, a compulsive outpouring of attempts to formulate narrative knowledge.” (p. 83) Thus,
literary or figurative language is obviously not by any means the only way to deal with trauma; however, it is an approach that has the capacity to investigate it from without itself, that is, from alternate points of view that can be made through innovative narratives.

After the aforementioned discussion on trauma with reference to time and space, it is now apt to discuss the Afghan selected fiction with special reference to Hosseini’s *Kite Runner*. However, before embarking on the novel under discussion, a glance at the foreign invasions of Afghanistan will help the chapter put in perspective. The following brief insight into the war history of Afghanistan has also been discussed in the novel which then goes to record the reactions of the war hit characters,

5.4 Overview of the Modern History of Afghanistan

The first time when the Europeans came to know about Afghanistan was after Alexander’s journey into Afghanistan (Vogelsang, 2010). It was after Alexander’s historians and geographers visited Afghanistan that they told the rest of the world about the country. The British started establishing their influence in the country with the setting up of their diplomatic mission in 1808, followed by a number of attempts to rule the country. The main reason why the British tried to control was its close proximity to Russia. According to Gombar (1999), the British considered Afghanistan as a strategic location from where it could launch an attack on Russia, adding that this whole plan turned topsi turvi when Russia attacked Afghanistan in 1979.
The result of the British assault on Afghanistan did not bear the fruit the British were aspiring for. According to Mykiska (2001), the British underestimated the strength and independent way of living of the Afghan people, thus resulting in a crushing defeat for the British, costing them the death of 15999 soldiers in 1841. This defeat, which should have convinced the British of how independence loving the Afghan people are, was followed by yet another attack by the British in 1879, which resulted in control over Kabul and a renewed unity among the Afghan people for the ousting of the British. Gombar (1999) asserts that the British used economic means in the form of contracts and political negotiations to penetrate the country.

On the other hand, the Afghans remained tilted towards the Russians as their allies and continued maintaining formal relations with British, resulting in a contract between the British and King Amanullah of Afghanistan on November 22, 1921 (Mykiska, 2001).

By means of this contract, King Amanullah brought the international autonomy for Afghans; however, many of his opponents came to the fore due to his European-like reforms. As a result, his regime was ended in 1929. Later on, two more kings ruled in Afghanistan for a brief time when at last, a youthful, just nineteen-year-old Zahir Shah got to the throne. According to Vogelsang (2010), his policies were very effective, considering that the populace of his nation were all the while keeping old propensities including offering individuals to subjection like driving ladies, or to be exact young ladies, to marriage and afterward stoning unfaithful ladies to death. Through the new liberal constitution from the year 1964 and with the privilege for women to vote in the
year 1965 he and his legislature succeeded in bringing a number of positive changes into the life of Afghanistan. (Marek, 2006)

A generally steady run of King Zahir Shah going on for a long time from the year 1933 to the year 1973 was overthrown on the seventeenth of July (Marek, 2006). This change was led by Zahir Shah’s cousin Mohammad Daud Khan, who overwhelmed the power in the nation and proclaimed the Republic of Afghanistan. Despite the fact that Afghanistan changed from government to republic, Rezac (1993) asserts that it ought to be noticed that the change was more formal than functional as Daud named himself president yet led rather as a king.

The disagreeability of his changes and the climbing force of the Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) prompted an alternate overthrow which occurred in the year 1978. This pro-Moscow party, initially an underground compel, took an interest on the overthrow in 1973 when it helped Daud to get to the power. Notwithstanding, soon PDPA began to debilitate its previous associate Daud as it attempted to pick up the force in the nation. It likewise got more backing from the individuals who were not fulfilled by Daud’s administration furthermore from the Soviet Union. Along these lines, as Marek (2006) puts it, the April insurgency, called additionally Saur1 Revolution, occurred on the 27th of April 1978.

This revolution implied a change in the way Afghan individuals lived. According to
Vogelsang (2010), the communists executed the president and all his family. Then, on the 30th April, the new president, executive and general secretary of PDPA Nur Muhammad Taraki together with his closest colleague Babrak Karmal announced the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan on April 30, 1978 (Marek, 2006). Furthermore if the past endeavors to change the nation were considered as challenging, PDPA’s choice to make Afghanistan an advanced nation was really progressive.

On May 9, 1978, the new government announced its plan of action (Marek, 2006). According to Marek (2006), the arranged changes concerned modernization of the Afghan army, land reforms, diminishing of unemployment and illiteracy, free education for all, and equality for men and women. Afghan ladies were no more expected to be viewed as unequal to men, burqas were not compulsory, and purchasing of women for marriage ceased to exist. Albeit in the Western perspective, it may appear to be as a genuine change meriting applause, it was a step that went against the social fabric in Afghanistan (Ibid., p. 262). Consequently, very little changed in the lives of Afghan women.

The other tricky field was the presentation of the far reaching land reforms. The lands was given to the individuals who helped the PDPA amid the revolution or individuals serving the new administration. Then again, this was not a great move of the communist government as the Muslims were of the belief that land was given by Allah and no men was permitted to change this entitlement. Rezac (1993) asserts that although it was an exceptionally medieval state of mind, it was emphatically established in the mindset of
Afghan individuals and made them extremely disappointed with the new government. It prompted fortifying of the restriction of right winged powers and Muslim activists. In addition, they were upheld by the Muslims who originated from the neighboring nations to battle for the sake of Allah (Marek, 2006). These so-called mujahedin played an important role in the coming years which were occupied with wars.

Due to these problems, the overall situation in the country was becoming highly sensitive. Also as though the resistance from the outside of the PDPA would not result sufficiently in inconveniences, the battles for force began to rise inside the party. PDPA authorities acknowledged that they will be not be capable to adapt with the circumstance themselves. They more than once asked the Soviet Union to send their armed force to Afghanistan; however, the Soviet authorities, despite the fact that they painstakingly observed all the progressions in Afghanistan, over and over denied these demands (Sarin et Dvoretsky, 2001).

Amidst the year 1979, the Afghan Foreign Affairs Minister Hafiullah Amin essentially figured out how to get to the power and he methodically began to defuse all his political rivals - genuine or imaginary (Vogelsang, 2010). In October 1979, Taraki was executed by Amin’s troops (Sarin et Dvoretsky, 2001, p. 98). It is fascinating that Taraki’s closest associate Babrak Karmal spared himself simply because he was a minister in Czechoslovakia then, and when Amin got to the power, President Husak allowed Karmal to stay underground in his country and save his life (Marek, 2006, p. 264).
Despite the fact that Amin’s regime was full of bloodshed to the extent that he was known as the butcher of Kabul, he did not have enough power to hold to the power for a longer period of time. His appeals to the Soviet Union to help him battle mujahedins who were expanding in number and power also, were replied but in a manner he would not have anticipated. This was a lethal mistake because Amin was unaware of the fact how his bloody regime had hurt the reputation of the Soviet leaders. Mikyska (2001) asserts that Amin’s pattern and way of government had badly marred the reputation of other communist government and so something was supposed to be done to make up for this damage to reputation. On December 27, 1979, Amin was killed by his rivals and Soviet special military powers, he himself welcomed to Afghanistan (Vogelsang, 2010, p. 299). Soviet troops captured each army installation in Kabul and Amin’s royal residence. From that minute on, no one was protected in the nation and the most terrible and grisly section of Afghan history opened.

Instantly after Amin’s demise, Babrak Karmal, who came back from exile in Czechoslovakia, took over as the president of Afghanistan. (Vogelsang, 2010, p. 300). The principal thing he was expected to do was to quiet down individuals who were extremely furious but didn’t know what actually was going on in the country. In this way, Karmal’s new government pronounced the new program of the PDPA. The whole program was loaded with decent words, but as it was one more slogan among a host of fulfilled promises made by the previous regimes, the dominant part of Afghans did not accept it (Marek, 2006, p. 266).
Subsequently, the opposition, albeit split in two sections, were getting more compelling enrolling contenders from Afghan armed forces, and Soviet troops, most likely trusting they would let Afghan armed force secure another government and administration, were compelled to stay and battle an additional ten years (Sarin et Dvoretsky, 2001, p. 140). The primary point of Soviet troops was to keep mujahedin powers from ousting the authority of the Afghan government yet they never succeeded in eliminating the resistance.

The battles divided the whole nation among a number of unforgiving armed outfits. Additionally, as large as 33% of all populace were compelled to leave the country (Marek, 2006, p. 273). A large portion of them discovered their new home in Pakistan and Iran, where youthful men were prepared and returned once again to Afghanistan to battle the Soviets. Under these conditions, the new government was protected to present their new program and all the progressions went for improving life in Afghanistan, however they had truly no genuine backing from the Afghan populace and all the well implied upgrades were to no end.

As Sarin et Dvoretsky (2001) puts it, Soviet troops did not understand the Afghans comprehended them as trespasser. Much to their dismay how vital and deplorable part they played in partitioning the country of Afghanistan and a huge number of murdered or injured officers and regular folks were the main consequence of their intercession (Sarin et Dvoretsky, 2001, p. 145).
Amid a couple of years of battling, seven separate outfits were structured in the battle against Soviet troops. Their mentality were distinctive however their objective was the same as they, along these lines, united in the year 1983. Meanwhile, the outcast administration of Afghanistan was built in Pakistan. These two associations were upheld by the administration of Pakistan who was backed by the United States money related sources furthermore by Chinese, British or French ones (Marek, 2006, p. 275). The climbing force of the Afghan resistance powers, their mercilessness and cruelty of the fights, led to the negotiations about the Soviet presence in Afghanistan. It took a long time, however at last the Soviet forces left Afghanistan on the fourteenth February of 1989 (Vogelsang, 2010, p. 311). Notwithstanding, the mujahedins who had been united just because of their foe, began to battle one another after this one foe had been gone and the nation entered an alternate part of the civil war.

As was expressed some time recently, the end of occupation did not mean the end of the battling. President Najibullah, became the Afghan president in 1986, and the PDPA, albeit having at any rate budgetary backing from the Soviet Union was getting weaker. The armed outfits which were battling the Soviets for very nearly ten years did not stop the brutality (Vogelsang, 2010, p. 312). Thus, Najibullah had the capacity to keep the hope in the nation and the illusion that he will be able to bring stability to the country for a period of three years only. In 1993, he was defeated by the forces of Massoud and Dostum who entered Kabul the same year (Marek, 2006, p. 282 - 283). However, these two were not sufficiently solid to keep the force in their grasp. All the distinctive groups, which were in the past united just because of their one adversary – Soviet troops and
PDPA, lost the purpose of their shared unison. They were at that point battling with one another and the nation was partitioned into a few separate areas fitting in with different individual commandants. They were backed by distinctive outside, Western or Muslim powers. The most steady territories were Dostum’s northern part of Afghanistan and Massoud’s upper eastern part. The prospective home for the most powerful faction in the country called the Taliban was the southern and eastern parts of the country. (Ibid., p. 284).

The beginning of the expression Talib is the person who looks for reality and the first supporters of this development were youthful Afghans or Pakistanis, understudies of conventional Muslim schools called madrassa (Ibid., p. 285). Before long devotees from other Muslim nations joined Taliban, the majority of them were Muslim aficionados. In its starting the Taliban development implied a radical change for Afghan individuals, as they united the vast majority of the nation, helped the individuals, halted the individual officers from irregular slaughtering of individuals, assaulting and abducting ladies and battled against the opium mafia (Ibid., p. 288). On the other hand, when they entered Kabul on the 27th of September 1996 and pronounced the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and picked Mullah Muhammad Umar as their leader, an extremely retrograde religious administration was made (Vogelsang, 2010, p. 318).

All men were requested to wear a palm long beard, ladies needed to wear burqas once more to conceal their bodies totally. In any case much more regrettable things than this was that the ladies were definitely not permitted to go to schools, work or visit male
doctors, which implied, they could not get pretty much any medicinal consideration whatsoever. Each sort of profane amusement was prohibited, individuals needed to surrender their TV sets and radio was constrained to news and religious projects. Photography, dance, music and game were prohibited. Stoning, cutting limbs or whipping were given to people as punishment on a day by day basis (Marek, 2006, p. 289). Life was unendurable in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan became isolated from the rest of the world as the main countries which accepted the Taliban government were Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. The United Nations announced financial sanctions on Afghanistan in the year 2001. The answer from Taliban was devastating as they destroyed two Bhudda monuments of high historical value in Bamyan (Vogelsang, 2010, p. 322 – 323). However, after this incident, they could not remain as powerful as they were for a long time. After the assault on the World Trade Center and Pentagon in the USA, the main three nations tolerating the Afghan government separated themselves from the Taliban because the latter refused to stop protecting Al Qa’ida. Thus, the route for ousting Taliban of their power became open now (Marek, 2006, p. 292).

The US and British armed forces attacked Afghanistan on the seventh October 2001 and on the thirteenth November the Afghan North Alliance commended entering Kabul (Mykiska, 2001, p. 49). Albeit these days, we are a long way from saying that Afghanistan is a free and democratic nation, as the need of the International Security
Assistance Force unexpected sent by the United Nation Security Council demonstrates (Vogelsang, 2010, p. 325), there is much trust for the better future of Afghanistan.

Now that a brief overview of the history of Afghanistan, including all the major wars in this country, has been discussed, it is time to discuss Hosseini’s Kite Runner which also deals with the war history and the resulting trauma in this country. The aforementioned overview of the history of Afghanistan is mainly related to the wars that the country has seen. This outlining of the war history of Afghanistan is in place because it further justifies the present study which deals with novels that discuss the trauma of the Afghan people resulting from wars. Before moving towards the analysis of novel, the following is a short look the life of the novelist.

**5.5 Khaled Hosseini: A Brief Introduction to the Novelist**

The Hosseini family were prepared to come back to Kabul in 1980, yet by then Afghanistan had officially seen a socialist overthrow and the intrusion of the Soviet armed forces. Accordingly, the Hosseinis looked for and were conceded political haven in the United States. In September of 1980, Hosseini’s family moved to San Jose, California where Hosseini effectively moved on from secondary school in 1984 and enlisted at Santa Clara University where he earned a four year certification in Biology in 1988 (Hosseini, 2009). He proceeded with his learns at the University of California-San Diego’s School of Medicine, where he earned a Medical Degree in 1993 and he was a
rehearsing internist till the year 2004 (Ibid.). It may appear to be a pleasantly and uncomplicated route to an expert achievement, be that as it may, the outsider experience is never a simple one and regardless of from which nation the migrants come, they all experience something comparable. This may be one of the minor purposes behind *The Kite Runner’s* appeal and success. As Hosseini states:

I hear from non-Afghan immigrants - Africans, Indians, Pakistanis, Arabs in France - all the time. These people have had to redefine their lives, which is what my family went through when we came to the U.S. in 1980. My parents were reasonably affluent in Kabul. In the States we were on welfare, my mom became a waitress, and my father became a driving instructor (Ebiri, 2007).

At the point when securely established in California, wedded to a lawyer Roya, working in therapeutic practice, Hosseini happened to see a news report on television about the radical administration that controlled his motherland, Afghanistan. The report was a miniscule one yet it drastically changed Hosseini’s life. The Taliban had banned kite flying (Ferrell, 2010). It enlivens his, in the first place, extensively acclaimed novel around two young men, their fellowship, double-crossing and recovery. He began it in March of 2001 and in 2003, *The Kite Runner*, was distributed because of the support of Hosseini’s wife. The novel has turned into a universal success, distributed in 70 nations (Hosseini, 2009).

Hosseini’s depiction of the war wrecked Kabul was extremely exact. On the other hand, Hosseini needed to make it up as it was not until the year *The Kite Runner* was
distributed, when he found the opportunity to visit his nation of origin following 27 years. Notwithstanding, when he at long last came to Afghanistan, he says, his sentiments were:

“... very similar to the experience of my character Amir in *The Kite Runner*. Which is interesting, because I wrote his return to Kabul months before I actually went back myself. (...) I walked into a war zone. Entire neighborhoods had been demolished. There were an overwhelming number of widows and orphans and people who had been physically and emotionally damaged; every 10-year-old kid on the street knows how to dismantle a Kalashnikov in under a minute” (Hosseini in Mechanic, 2009).

This visit propelled him to begin composing an alternate novel, this time, from the alternate point of view and with more extensive introduction on Afghan history and to begin taking a shot at improving the life of Afghans. In 2006, he was named a goodwill emissary to UNHCR, the United Nations Refugee Agency (Hosseini, 2009). It can be said that the sympathy Hosseini exhibited as a doctor is apparent in his composition and philanthropy (Hosseini, 2003).

His second novel, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* was distributed in May of 2007. In that year, he made an outing to Afghanistan. It established a thought to create The Khaled Hosseini Foundation. Starting now and into the foreseeable future, Hosseini has been attempting to give humane help in Afghanistan through this association (Hosseini, 2009). Besides, he is taking a shot at *A Thousand Splendid Suns* film and on an alternate novel. He concedes that this novel does need to do with Afghanistan, yet I [Hosseini] think the take will be altogether different. It will be a ton more centered around story and on character as opposed to political occasions. I’m exceptionally careful about following my own particular footsteps (Hosseini in Mechanic, 2009).
5.6 Summary of *The Kite Runner*

In the novel, Amir reviews a twenty-six years old occasion that happened during his childhood in Afghanistan. He says his whole life was molded by that single childhood incident. That is the time when he lives with his Baba in a wonderful home in Kabul, Afghanistan. Their servants Ali and his child, named Hassan, belong to an ethnic minority, called Hazaras. Rahim Khan who is Baba's closest friend also visits their home on a regular basis.

The situation in the country changes for the worse when the Afghan king is ousted. One of the important incidents takes place when Assef, Wali, and Kamal stop Amir and Hassan for playing together. Assef approaches towards Amir to beat saying that he deserves a punishment because he has been playing with a Hazara boy; however, Hassan stops Assef by using his slingshot to rescue Amir. At this stage, the novel portrays the kite flying competition during winters in Afghanistan. The boys, who are flying kites use a variety of material to cut the strings of the opposing kites. They also run after the kite, which has been cut and comes down to drop down on the ground. This running to seize the kite is called kite running. Amir ends up winning the kite flying competition; however, Hassan runs after a kite that is going to drop down on the ground. Finding Hassan missing, Amir starts searching for him when he reaches an alley, where he sees Hassan being caught by Kamal and Wali, while Assef rapes him. Amir, instead of rescuing Hassan, leaves the site of the incident. When Hassan reappears with the kite in
his hand, Amir behaves as if he does not know anything about whatever happened to Hassan at the hands of Assef and his friends.

Burning in the fire of guilt, Amir does not want to see Hassan anymore because his face reminds him of how he could not rescue him, when it was needed the most. As a strategy to get rid of Hassan, who is a continuous source of flashing back Amir’s guilt, the latter leaves his watch and cash under Hassan’s pillow, showing that Hassan has stolen these things. Upon interrogation by Baba, Hassan admits that he had stolen these things despite the fact that he had not done that.

At this stage, the novel returns to March 1981, when the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan has forced Amir and Baba to leave the country. They are shown as sitting in a truck in a bid to leave Kabul and take refuge in Pakistan. They reach Pakistan only after completing a highly stressed journey. The novel then shows them settled in Fremont, California in 1983. Once a respectable person in Kabul, Baba now works at a service station in Fremont; similarly, Amir continues his education and gets admission in a college after completing studies at his secondary school.

Once both Amir and Baba see General Taheri, who is an old friend of Baba. In that meeting Amir meets, Soraya, who is General Taheri’s daughter. Amir develops a strong liking for Soraya, followed by Taheri asking him to ask for her hand in marriage. Meanwhile Baba is diagnosed with lung cancer, yet Amir asks him if he will be willing to
request General Taheri to wed Soraya with him. Upon General Taheri’s showing of willingness to get her daughter married to Amir, they decide to arrange the marriage ceremony without any delay because Baba’s health is deteriorating rapidly. A month after the marriage takes place, Baba passes away, thousands of miles away from his homeland. After that Amir resumes working on his writing tasks for living.

In a shift in the story, Rahim Khan makes a telephone call to Amir, telling him about his decaying health and asking him to visit Pakistan in order to see him. A week later, Amir reaches Pakistan, where he meets Rahim Khan, who tells him about the destruction caused by the war in Afghanistan. Rahim Khan tells Amir how the situation in Afghanistan deteriorated after the Soviet forces were pushed out of the country, adding that the Taliban, since then, have been ruling through violence. He also tells Amir about his kinship with Hassan, and also updates him on his problems, followed by a request for his help. He tells Amir that he has been taking care of their house after they left the country, adding that he, after some time, decided to search for Hassan and his wife, named Farzana, who, later on gave to birth their first baby whom they named Sohrab. He further says that he left for Pakistan for medical treatment and that during that period he received a telephone call from his neighbor in Kabul, telling him that the Taliban entered Baba’s house, shot dead both Farzana and Hassan and left Sohrab at an orphanage in Kabul.

After telling Amir about whatever happened to Hassan and his family, he asks him to
search for Sohrab and bring him to Pakistan. At this stage, he also tells Amir that Hassan was his Baba’s illegitimate son; thus Amir agrees to visit Kabul in order to search for Hassan’s son and bring him back to Pakistan. While searching for Sohrab in Kabul, Amir finds the orphanage but without finding Hassan’s son, named Sohrab, in there. He was told by the owner of the orphanage that Sohrab was taken away by a Taliban official a month ago. After doing a good deal of hard work in locating the Taliban official, Amir is able to arrange a meeting with him after he sees him in a football stadium where a man and a woman are stoned to death.

During Amir’s meeting with the Taliban official, he tells him that he has been searching for a child whose name is Sohrab. The Taliban official then orders the guard to bring Sohrab into the room. After a while Sohrab appears in front of Amir who sees him wearing mascara and is dressed in a blue silk dress. Amir comes to know about the official’s intentions, followed by the official attacking Amir, leading to break Amir’s ribs and bruising his lips. Sohrab uses his slingshot to hit the official and rescue Amir in this hour of need. This helps both Amir and Sohrab to flee the site of the incident and from the clutches of the Taliban. Once in safety, Amir requests Sohrab to shift with him to the United States of America where he will have a peaceful life. Sohrab accepts his invitation after showing some reluctance.

While processing the adoption papers of Sohrab, Amir is told by the officials concerned that it will very difficult for him to adopt Sohrab because he cannot prove the fact that Sohrab’s parents are dead. Due to this problem, Amir tells Sohrab that he may have to go
back to an orphanage for some time. Meanwhile, Amir and Soraya find out a way to take Sohrab with them to the United States; however, before they can tell Sohrab about this good news, he makes an attempt to commit suicide because he has been overburdened by the memories of whatever he has witnessed. He survives the suicide attempt and lives on, but he no more talks to the people living around him. Despite the fact that Amir and Soraya take him to California with them, he remains disinterested in any affair of the world. Amir then takes Sohrab to a Kite flying event where other Afghans are also present. Many people fly kites there and Amir wins the competition after he uses one of the most favorite tricks of his deceased friend Hassan. Sohrab feels somewhat relaxed during this event and as soon as they see a kite that has been cut during the competition, Amir, for the sake of Sohrab runs after and catches it.

5.7 War, Trauma and Coping Mechanism by Characters in the Novel

In the first large portion of the novel, Baba is introduced as a colossal Pashtun, a power of nature, who is something of a legend with a story that he had once wrestled a dark bear (Bond, 2003), a story no one ever sets out to disbelief. He is by all accounts assuming the part of a god or an alternate creature with otherworldly gimmicks because he is most likely the strongest character, about all-powerful and almost bigger than life (Whipple, 2003). Also he has to choose what was dark and what was white (Hosseini, 2001, p. 14). Who else than the God has the chance to choose about this? It is this God-like nature of his father that is so troublesome for Amir to achieve and fulfill.
Other than his qualities and force, Baba is respected for his strength and dauntlessness. Baba is without a doubt a fearless man. Not just in the way that he doesn’t demonstrate his trepidation and has the capacity to battle a bear, but he is likewise dominant in a manner that he takes after his dreams and does not permit individuals to change them. Actually, while doing something such a great amount of magnanimousness as building a shelter, he doesn’t permit other individuals to change his arrangements and he is not ready to listen to their far-fetched remarks (Hosseini, 2007, p. 12).

There are places in the book, when Baba’s boldness can practically make him resemble an extraordinary and inconceivable cartoon hero, (Bond, 2003) whose acting is difficult to comprehend for the viewers. This happens for instance when he is ready to confront a Russian soldier with a specific end goal to shield a young lady from being assaulted.

The bulldog-faced Russian raised his gun. Baba, sit down, please, I said, tugging at his sleeve. I think, he really means to shoot you. Baba slapped my hand away. —Haven’t I taught you anything? He snapped. He turned to the grinning soldier. —Tell him he’d better kill me good with that first shot. Because if I don’t go down, I’m tearing him to pieces, goddamn his father! (Hosseini, 2007, p. 101)

In this minute, Baba’s gallantry is tempered by Amir’s aside and makes the scene so much genuine and so justifiable. When it’s all said and done, Amir has no one left other than his father and there is the lady’s spouse who ought to remain behind her. However, he knows Baba well and understands it would not be Baba on the off chance that he would act in an unexpected way.

Do you always have to be the hero? I thought, my heart fluttering. Can’t you just
let it go for once? But I knew he couldn’t – it wasn’t in his nature. The problem was, his nature was going to let us kill all (Hosseini, 2007, p. 101).

However, there are considerably more diverse hues in Baba’s valor. He is not just gallant to remain against the strings of different kinds; he is also ready to acknowledge reality, however troublesome it is. All things considered, it costs much strength to face the way that his adored nation and home is no more a decent place to live in. He, when faced with leaving all the magnanimousness that he enjoys in Afghanistan, has the much-needed mental strength to *work through* the traumatic times. What’s more it expenses considerably more determination to take off for a completely strange country, where Baba is no longer going to be an honored legend.

As LaCapra (2001) puts it, the survivor of a traumatic incident should be able to differentiate the traumatic incident from the ordinary life and that he should be able to take the incident as a part of life. Baba, though still haunted by the past grandeur, is going to change. In spite of the fact that, his trademark peculiarities outlive, the outside conditions make Baba lose quite a bit of his previous acclaim. Yet, he experiences all with his average strength and wishes to furnish his child with opportunities to live and succeed in a free nation.

This is typical of the coping with trauma mechanism as put forth by Herman (1992), who says that the survivor, in order to recover from the impact of trauma, should be able to reconnect to life as soon as possible. Baba does make an attempt to get out of the
overwhelming power of the traumatic incident by making a concerted effort to look beyond this incident and to reconnect to everyday life. He, instead of mourning about his own loss of grandeur, shifts his attention to the better future of his son, as he says: “I didn’t bring us here for me, did I?” (Hosseini, 2003, p. 172)

The impact of this traumatic incident, caused by the war in Afghanistan, does not cease when he leaves his country; rather, as the conditions are changing, the relationship of Baba and Amir is changing too. It may be brought on by the climbing significance of Amir for Baba - it is nothing abnormal when worker folks need to depend on their kids. However, as Herman (1992) asserts that the last stage in coping with trauma mechanism is that the survivor should reconnect to life, Baba, in the same vein, reconnect of life as he starts thinking in terms of the future of his son. Anyhow, all the more presumably, it is created on the grounds that Baba has now a stand out child, to whom he puts his trust and wishes. All of a sudden, the profession of an author does not appear to be as unimportant, as it has been, in Afghanistan and Baba learns at any rate to attempt to comprehend his child. At last, their relationship reaches its climax, when Baba is willing to do something he refused in Kabul - he reads Amir’s stories (Hosseini, 2007, p. 150).

As Caruth (1992) asserts that the survivor of trauma will have memories of his past life that will continue haunting him, Baba, due to the fact that the new environment that is not that troublesome for him, continues to experience more flashbacks of his previous force and honor, which are shown by Hosseini now and then in the novel. When he rejects the welfare food stamps and when he orders Amir not to tell anyone about his infection, this
is the moment when his past influences his decisions in the present. Being in the present, he still lives in the past when he was enjoying a high position in Kabul. He, in other words, is not ready to accept whatever he has been deprived of due to the war in his country. The memories of his rich past still haunt him, not letting him to forego his identity in this new situation. Thus, he remains true to his values which he holds dear to himself and thus refuses to accept the ration cards in this new country.

The extent of how agonizing it has been for Baba to leave Afghanistan, due to the ravages of war, has been shown by Hosseini in the aforementioned account. The same situation has been equally validated by personal narratives of Afghan refugees who left their country. A number of such factual accounts have been provided by Amnesty International in 2012. This project covers the personal narratives of Afghan refugees who left their country and took asylum in Australia. One such Afghan refugee, named Najeeba, speaks out regarding her experience of leaving Afghanistan for good, as she says: “Leaving your country for good is one of the hardest decisions you can be forced to make. It means a break with all that you know – your family, your livelihood, your friends. All the familiar sights, sounds, smells and tastes…”

Another Afghan refugee by the name of Chaman Shah Nasiri gives reasons for why he was compelled to leave his country, relatives and friends, saying that “After I left, my father was tortured so badly that he died in prison. If I stayed in Afghanistan the same thing would have happened to me.” This validation of what Baba says through such
personal narratives of factual nature shows that a fiction writer represents what people feel and go through in reality. The instances of the aforementioned factual narratives grant credibility to the fiction under investigation by bringing it closer to reality.

Then again, it ought to be noticed, that these two demonstrations are propelled by his bravery as well as all the more presumably by his need to dependably take care of his honor. He fears that he would lose his respect, regardless of the fact whether he was living in a posh area in Kabul or a an ordinary place anywhere else.

Subsequently, if Baba is agonized over his honor, does he fear likewise something else? The answer is undoubtedly yes. He is all that much concerned with the character of his child, Amir, whom he values more than anything else. Hosseini shows the following love between Amir and Baba; Amir and Hassan; Amir’s love for his mother, the kite flying adventures of Amir and Hassan, and Amir inability to come to Hassan’s help when he was in trouble, in order to tell the reader how full-fledged human beings these characters are. The novelist does this intentionally in order for him to be, later on, able to foreground the intense trauma of war, dislocation, and terror against this background.

Baba has been a valiant and courageous man but, like many other father, he lacks the ability to know his child’s inclinations. Amir appears frail to him. There is one and only individual he can impart his stresses to. Furthermore, it is his best and closest companion Rahim Khan, who has the benefit to talk transparently with Baba and remind him of his
oversights; however, they appear to be so few. He is the one to whom Baba can trust his
disappointment with Amir.

—I know, I know. But he is always buried in those books or shuffling around the
house like he’s lost in some dream.

-And?

-I wasn’t like that. Baba sounded frustrated, almost angry.

Rahim Khan laughed. -Children are not colouring books. You don’t get to fill
them with your favourite colors.

-Sometimes I look out of the window and I see him playing on the street with the
neighborhood boys. I see how they push him around, take his toys from him, give

However, the war has not only deprived him of his lavish lifestyle and first rate
citizenship in Afghanistan but there is also more to mourn for Baba. Rahim Khan is the
main individual left to uncover to Amir about Baba’s greatest mystery and wellspring of
his most awful stresses; the mystery of Baba’s illegitimate child, Hassan. Having always
seen Hassan in front of his eyes and growing up alongside Amir all these years, now the
war has deprived him of his illegitimate son as well. He is no more able to see him again
and this is what has been adding to his pain.

The reason is that with Hassan, Baba’s most exceedingly awful emotions of trepidation
are constantly joined. Baba is continually caring for Hassan and treating him as
pleasantly as the circumstances permit, he pays him a restorative surgery to conform his
parted upper lift, he tries to invest just as much time with him as with Amir. He
demonstrates a guardian like trepidation for Hassan. Also when Hassan and Ali go out, Amir perceives the amount it moves his father. It is one of the minutes, when even god-like Baba is on his knees. The circumstance is stronger than him and he is not ready to change it. The power of the war is so huge that it can tumble this giant-like a man, called Baba. It has the power to make him mourn over the loss because as Herman says that the second stage in a survivor of a trauma is mourning over the loss. Baba has survived the war and he has been able to get out of his country but the loss is too big for a strong person like him. It is a fact that he does not succumb to this unusual as well overpowering experience because he has been able to work through it, but the fact remains that it is the beyond-human-exposure nature of the calamity that has made a person like Baba mourn:

Then I saw Baba do something I had never seen him do before: He cried. It scared me a little, seeing a grown man sob. Fathers weren't supposed to cry. —Please, Baba was saying, but Ali had already turned to the door, Hassan trailing him. I’ll never forget the way Baba said that, the pain in his plea, the fear (Hosseini, 2007, p. 93).

At that point, his forceful feelings are justifiable concerning his and Ali’s dependable companionship. This mourning on part of the survivor is the second stage for the survivor of trauma. This act of mourning the losses work like restricting the trauma that the survivor has witnessed (LaCapra, 2001).

It is not hard for researchers of trauma studies to envision how Baba must feel when he lives far away from Afghanistan in the security of a democratic state and hears all the news of executions and punishments in Afghanistan. Does he have any news about his
other child? There is no confirmation of it, presumably not. He can’t help contemplating
Hassan because the survivor’s guilt is like a two edged sword, where on the one hand the
survivor keeps on dreading how he survived the calamity and on the other hand, he keeps
on thinking why he survives to carry the burden of having witnessed the troubles of the
people to become a prey to the traumatic incident. Baba cannot resist recalling Hassan
whom he left in the middle of the war in Afghanistan, when he says on the occasion of
Amir’s birthday: “- rolled his head towards me [Amir]. I wish Hassan had been with us
today,” he said (Hosseini, 2007, p. 116).

The last yet one of the important trademarks of Baba which ought not be overlooked is
his ethical disposition and how he sees wrongdoings. He responds to Amir’s stresses that
he is a delinquent when drinking scotch in afterwards: “If there’s a God out there, then I
would hope he has more important things to attend to than my drinking scotch or eating
pork” (Hosseini, 2007, p. 16). As he has explained:

“There is only one sin, only one. And that is theft. Every other sin is a variation of
theft. (...) —When you kill a man, you steal a life, Baba said. —You steal his
wife’s right to a husband, rob his children of a father. When you tell a lie, you
steal someone’s right to the truth. When you cheat, you steal the right to fairness.
Do you see?” (Hosseini, 2007, p. 16).

At the point when, near to the end of the novel, Baba feels the guilt and considers himself
a delinquent who has stolen Amir’s sibling, Hassan’s father and their entitlement to know
reality. It would be excessively simple and poorly considered to see Baba as a negative
hero. As his companion Rahim Khan clarifies: “he was a man torn between two parts,
Amir jan: you and Hassan. He cherished you both, yet he couldn’t love Hassan the way he yearned to. (...) When he saw you, he saw himself. What’s more his blame?” (Hosseini, 2007, p. 263). It is clear that the amount Baba was pursued by the trepidation that his child may turn out the same delinquent as he himself. He urgently attempted to maintain a strategic distance from it and brought Amir up as an upright and daring man yet his exertion and requests on Amir’s character led on as opposed to Amir’s shortcoming and craving to be increased in value by his father which at long last pursued Amir into selling out Hassan. Later on, Amir acknowledges: “As it turned out, Baba and I were more indistinguishable than I’d ever known. We had both double-crossed individuals who would have given their lives for us” (Hosseini, 2007, p. 197).

Anyhow, it would not be reasonable to end the depiction of Baba without reminding that he for his entire life attempted to be a decent individual but was badly broken by the trauma of war. The main impetus for this was likely his regret created by his powerlessness to concede Hassan in his childhood. Now, in his old age, he is helpless due to the war in his country. He cannot go back to mend the things that he could not do rightly. At the same time, the thought processes in goodness are not after all so essential, the decency itself is what is important. Rahim Khan concludes:

Once in a while, I think all that he did, nourishing the poor in the city, constructing the orphanage, offering cash to companions in need, it was all his method for making up for himself. Also that, I accept, is the thing that genuine recovery is, Amir jan, when blame prompts goodness (Hosseini, 2007, p. 263).
Also in his quest for recovery, Amir truly ended up being Baba’s child. Amir is without a doubt the primary character of *The Kite Runner*. It is his confidence, the readers take after and his wrongdoing which is the moving power of the novel. At the outset, the readers are crashed into perusing by yearning to find what is Amir’s mystery and sin. And after that the results of it won’t let them put the book away. However, as Johnson (2012) notes, it ought to be understood that Amir himself is not the maker of each one of those activities, he is purported - stuck principle character, who is dragged through the tale of the novel by alternate characters. Presently Amir’s character will be talked about together with the impacts that made him a stuck character.

Amir’s life is foreordained by some significant components. But that he is naturally introduced to an exceptionally respectable and rich family and he finds himself able to appreciate all the benefit associated with his father’s status, alternate components are somewhat negative. He is certainly affected by the unlucky deficiency of his mother, who passed away amid the labor, and by the feeling of blame his father feels towards his other child, whom he can’t honestly acknowledge. Albeit these viewpoints are not known for the readers, they are entering Amir’s life and deciding all his activities and different occasions in the book.

The unspeakability of Amir’s trauma is so intense that despite having almost everything including Baba’s love, he still feels a strange emptiness inside him. He is so overwhelmed by the sense of guilt that he cannot rejoice the moment of happiness, as he says:
“It shouldn’t have felt this way. Baba and I were finally friends. We’d gone to the zoo a few days before, seen Marjan the lion, and I had hurled a pebble at the bear when no one was watching. We’d gone to Fatherkhoda’s Kabob House afterward...had lamb kabob with freshly backed naan...Baba told me stories of his travels to India and Russia...That should have been fun, spending a day like that with Baba, hearing his stories. I finally had what I’d wanted all those years. Except now that it, I felt as empty as this unkempt pool I was dangling my legs into” (Hosseini, 2007, p. 85).

This sense of guilt and the inability to have LaCapra’s (2001) work through capability, the trauma makes him feel himself as responsible for the bad luck of Hassan. He is not able to work through the moment of trauma and keeps on acting it out as he asserts: “There was a monster in the lake. It had grabbed Hassan by the ankles, dragged him to the murky bottom. I was that monster. That was the night I became an insomniac” (Hosseini, 2007, p. 86).

About the initial fifty pages of the book are spent on telling the account of pure youth, which is irritated occasionally by the depictions of Amir’s harried association with Baba, critical by the absence of Baba’s adoration. There is probably every child who needs love from their guardians, if one of them is not living, the other ought to assume role of the deceased to make up for the absence. Yet shockingly for Amir, he appears to have a mysterious powerlessness to procure the adoration for his magnanimously liberal however candidly withholding father (Kipen, 2003). Along these lines, Amir has two obstructed deterrents which hold him stuck: his yearning for a mother and his father’s adoration.
This longing to have a mother has appeared differently in relation to Hassan, whose mother is alive but she has left him since he was an infant. Hassan never talks about her and Amir does not have enough bravery to ask him. Thus, he can’t impart his agony even to the closest individual he has on the planet. He can just consider it as he envisions: “I generally thought about whether he [Hassan] imagined about her, about what she looked like, where she was. I thought about whether he ached to meet her. Did he hurt for her, the way I throbbed for my mom I had never met?” (Hosseini, 2007, p. 6)

Amir frantically aches for knowing something about his mother. This longing for having knowledge about and discussions on his mother is partly fulfilled. From this man Amir discovers that she had preferred almond cake with nectar and hot tea, that she’d once utilized the expression significantly, that she’d worried about her happiness (Hosseini, 2007, p. 219). In spite of the fact that, it is very little, it is a valuable memory for Amir and it is significantly more data than he has ever got from his father. As Amir reflects that Baba had constantly portrayed his mother to him in expansive strokes, in the same way as: “She was an incredible woman. (...) Baba took his memories of her to the grave with him. Perhaps talking her name would have helped him to remember his blame of what he had done as such not long after she had kicked the bucket. Then again perhaps his misfortune had been so extraordinary, his torment so profound, he couldn’t stand to discuss her. Possibly both (Hosseini, 2007, p. 219).

The reality, that his mother has never been discussed by his father, is only one more variable adding to their poor relationship. Amir accepts his father accusing him for his
mother’s demise and can’t overlook him for it (Hosseini, 2007, p. 49). As though it would not be sufficient for a young man to see himself as a reason for his mother’s demise, Amir likewise understands he doesn’t satisfy his father’s desires. This thought is affirmed when he catches the discussion of Baba and his closest companion Rahim Khan finishing with taking after words purported by his father: “If I [Baba] hadn’t seen the specialist haul him out of my wife with my own particular eyes, I’d never accept he is my son” (Hosseini, 2007, p. 20). At the point when considering Amir’s future missteps, these words ought to be taken at the top of the priority list, as they are extremely solid and ready to do a ton of damage in a kid’s spirit.

Taking a gander at all these viewpoints, what at the first look may have appeared to be a pure adolescence, is, as Flanagan (2012) states it, shadowed by a dim cloud; a disturbed association with his [Amir’s] inaccessible father. While perusing a percentage of the first pages, the readers effectively see the amount Amir experiences the absence of affirmation and enthusiasm from his father. He finds himself able to understand that more often than not Baba goes through his activities without appreciating them. Furthermore, he can likewise feel his father’s failure with him after the vast majority of these events. The flashbacks of the past keep on haunting him as he recalls: “I cried the distance back home. I recall how Baba’s hands grasped around the driving wheel. Gripped and unclenched. Basically, I will always remember Baba’s valiant endeavors to disguise the sickened look all over as we drove in quiet” (Hosseini, 2007, p. 19).
This absence of distinguishing from his father does not result in that Amir would not love his father. Very opposite, he cherishes him all that much and is glad to be his child: “He [Baba] motioned to me [Amir] to hold his cap for him and I was happy to, on the grounds that then everybody would see that he was my father, my Baba” (Hosseini, 2007, p. 13). It can be said that what Amir craves for most in life is the warmth from his father that he questions he will ever know (Johnson, 2012). Furthermore the best way to get this love and distinguishing is to fulfill the dream of his father.

After some disillusioning endeavors, for example, a soccer or Buzkashi competition, Baba has rolled out to improvement his child into a man, he proposes: “I think perhaps you win the [kite flying] competition this year” (Hosseini, 2007, p. 49). It is a defining moment for Amir. As Baker (2003) notes, winning a yearly kite-flying challenge, where young men fight for pride outfitted with kite strings covered in ground glass, may be truly Amir’s last opportunity to pick up his father’s adoration. Amir has a trust now. He is a decent kite contender and just in the event that he won. It would change a ton. Amir makes a determination:

I was going to win. There was no other practical alternative. I was going to win, and I was going to run that last kite. At that point I’d bring it home and demonstrate to it to Baba. Reveal to him for the last time that his child was commendable. At that point perhaps my life as an apparition in this house would at long last be over. I let myself dream: I envisioned discussion and giggling over supper … (Hosseini, 2007, p. 49).

Also truly, after an exceptionally exciting portrayal of the kite battles, Amir with the backing of Hassan, wins the competition. While Hassan, who is the best kite runner in
entire Kabul, begins his approach to discover their rival’s kite whose string he and Amir have cut, Amir envisions the scene when he and Hassan will as one bring the kite they have cut and found.

The aforementioned portrayal of everyday life in Kabul has been set forth by Hosseini, the novelist, in a masterly manner. The inclusion of kite flying, the love between a son and a father, the pinching absence of a mother in the life of a child, and the friendship between two children have been presented as events of everyday life from people who are full-fledged human being, thus setting the stage for something unusual to take place. Later on, the novelist, foregrounds the extraordinary trauma of war in the lives of these people and goes on to let the readers feel the difference between the two extremes of peaceful life in the streets of Kabul and the post-war scenario where these people yearn for their country which they have left due to the curse of the war.

After discussing the whole lot goodness hovering around Amir’s life, Hosseini then turns towards portraying the opposite, that is the ravages of war and it impact on Amir’s happy life. As expressions such as ‘happily ever after’ are uncommon outside the universe of tall tales, Amir wins the competition, yet loses something considerably more essential. Hayes (2007) calls it the loss of innocence, and burden to carry throughout his life. She says that: “he [Amir] was simply starting to consider some main problems in life, when the steadfast day of both triumph and thrashing changed his life until the end of time.
Growing up was no more progressive. He had all of a sudden been pushed into adulthood (Hayes, 2007, p. 12).

Amir loses his guiltlessness and finds himself underhanded. Tragically, he not just finds that there is shrewdness in his general surroundings (here displayed by Assef who assaults Hassan) additionally within him, when he abstains from helping Hassan. Presently, the distinguishing of his father does not appear to be so vital. Amir frantically needs to admit himself, to pick up reclamation; however, again, he has not overcome and sufficiently solid to face the potential outcomes. So, he stays in hush. This is the unspeakability of trauma, which has been discussed at the start of this chapter. Amir has been hit by the trauma of being unfaithful to his friend but he cannot speak about it, while he will, at the same time be haunted by the memories of that traumatizing scene. Amir says: “I opened my mouth, almost said something. Almost. The rest of my life might have turned out differently if I had. But I didn’t. I just watched. Paralyzed” (Hosseini, 2007, p. 73).

Amir feels responsible for what happened to Hassan. “School gave me an excuse to stay in my room for long hours. And, for a while, it took my mind off what had happened that winter, what I had let happen” (Hosseini, 2003, p. 91). The more Amir avoids reconnecting to everyday life, the more he will have problems in coping with and overcoming the trauma, as Herman (1992) suggests that the third stage in a traumatized person’s recovery is to reconnect to everyday life.
Moreover, as a survivor of trauma feels guilty for having survived the incident and blames him or herself for the mishap, Amir lashes out at himself in anger: “I hurled the pomegranate at him. It struck him in the chest, exploded in a spray of red pulp... ‘Hit me back!’ I snapped... I wished he would. I wished he’d give me the punishment I craved, so maybe I’d finally sleep at night” (Hosseini, 2003, p. 92). This is typical of the survivors of trauma that they consider themselves responsible for the trauma.

The association with Baba begins to chill off once more. Also as from wickedness normally emerges nothing else than fiendishness, Amir, who can’t stand being close to Hassan, shrouds some cash and his wrist watch in Hassan’s room and cases that Hassan took the cash as an approach to dispose of him. Amir is stuck once more; it is not a need of his father’s adoration yet his wrongdoing and regret which impact his life starting now and into the foreseeable future don’t permit him to be free.

In the wake of moving to America, Amir’s circumstances show signs of improvement and recovery from the trauma. He is currently ready to remain for what he needs. He doesn’t study pharmaceutical as his father wishes; however, he now deals with turning into an expert author and weds Soraya, a lady he adores, despite the fact that she is joined by an awful notoriety. Presumably, it may be the way that he knows she also committed errors throughout her life yet had the capacity to overcome them that makes him adore her significantly more. Together, they deal with Baba until he kicks the bucket of growth.
At last, both Amir and Baba have got the capacity to figure out how to one another. Baba reads Amir’s stories and regards him. Thus, both Baba and Amir make a concerted effort to adapt according to new situation, work through the hard time to deal with the realities of life and reconnect to life. Both the characters, amid all the hauntings of the past, try to work through this situation in a bid not to be overwhelmed by the severity of the circumstances in their country. It can be said that aside from their incapacity of having an infant, his existence with Soraya is cheerful.

However, Amir infrequently recollects Hassan and thinks about how, if whatsoever, he lives in Afghanistan and soon, he is going to find him. One day, Rahim Khan calls from Pakistan and asks Amir to come and be good once again. This is an appeal Amir is not ready to deny. Nonetheless, in the wake of landing in Pakistan and finding out about Rahim Khan’s and Hassan’s life in Kabul, about Hassan’s child Sohrab, about Hassan and his wife being dead and in particular about Hassan being his illegitimate sibling, Rahim Khan uncovers the genuine motivation behind why he has asked Amir to come. The reason is to discover Sohrab in a Kabul shelter and bring him back. This is the time when Amir has once again a decision to make for himself. He can either venture back from a shadowed rear way as he did it on that winter night, or he can emerge for himself and reimburse the obligation he has made. He picks the second alternative.

By coming to Pakistan, Amir has been hauled out from his wellbeing and solace, yet he takes the tenet over his life and holds it with a determination and fearlessness so ordinary for his father. There is no other choice for him than to return with Sohrab. Despite the
fact that towards the end of the novel, he demonstrates the absence of understanding for the youngster’s spirit tormented by the passing of his guardians, life in the orphanage and ill-use by Assef, who made a profession as a Talib officer, and adds to Sohrab’s suicide endeavor, he completes his trip effectively. He finishes a bizarre circle of occasions. Hayes sees his voyage as one illustration of the way of round time in The Kite Runner. In many ways, life continues rehashing itself: the parallel existences of Ali and Baba, Hassan and Amir and even Aseff and Amir. Life holds returning on itself in loads of ways (Hayes, 2007, p. 9). At the point when Amir is back home with little Sohrab and runs a kite only for an indication of grin all over, this round of time closes. Furthermore after all it appears to end cheerfully.

At the point when Amir comes back to Pakistan to visit the feeble Rahim Khan, he learns of Hassan’s child, Sohrab. Indeed, even in a blurry picture, Amir sees the similarity to the partner of his youth. Following Rahim Khan’s suggestion to Amir to rescue Sohrab, Amir, at first, rejects the thought, for the undeniable dangers it involves. In a matter of seconds, however, his sense of guilt rouses him to endeavor the salvage, with the supposition that another person will tend to the kid once they come back to Pakistan.

In order to give a background to how Amir dealt with Hassan in his childhood, it is apt to say that Amir, right from the start, has been pitiless to Hassan, the same degree as he values his fellowship and adores him in his own way (Bond, 2003). In any case why is it so? Hassan is adored by Baba and their companionship is backed by him too, so where is the issue? The principal weak link in their relationship can be seen in the way that Amir
is a Pashtun and Hassan a Hazara. These two ethnic gatherings are very opposing and Hazara viewed as a lower race have experienced, compared to the Pashtuns. Ali and Baba were likewise near to one another and spent their adolescence together. On the other hand, as Amir notices, Baba never alludes to Ali as his companion (Hosseini, 2007, p. 22). What’s more, Amir does not think himself as Hassan’s companion.

Don’t bother that we taught one another to ride a bike with no hands, or to manufacture a completely utilitarian custom made of a cardboard box. Don’t worry about it that we spent whole winters flying kites, running kites. (…) Never mind any of those things. Since history isn’t anything but difficult to succeed. Nor is religion. At last, I was a Pashtun and he was a Hazara, I was Sunni and he was Shi’a, and nothing was steadily going to change that. Nothing (Hosseini, 2007, p. 22).

Also without a doubt, it is not simple to beat all these angles. However, the more vital thing deciding their relationship may be Amir’s envy. It is Hassan who dependable stands before him and battles for him if needed. Amir acknowledges the amount of his father wishes to be able to emerge for himself and the amount Hassan is in his valor like his father. This may be the purpose behind Amir’s repulsive jokes or looking down at Hassan for his lack of education. All things considered, books appear to be the main territory where Amir is superior to Hassan. Yet even here, Hassan demonstrates his ethical predominance. At the point when Amir plays a trap on him and rather than standard perusing from the book, he makes up his own particular story, Hassan is awed and admires it as: “The best story, you’ve read me in a long time” (Hosseini, 2007, p. 26).

Now and then, it is significantly harder to excuse an ideal than a bad habit. Also it unquestionably is here for Amir. What’s more, it deteriorates, when Amir sells out
Hassan. In spite of the fact that Hassan is the person who has been harmed, he stays steadfast and makes the life for Amir deplorable. At last, this steadfastness determines in Amir’s fruitful endeavor to pursue Hassan away.

All things considered, measuring all the terrible attributes of Amir and his heaping one oversight on another, it can be expressed that: “Amir is a profoundly defective young man, failing to possess the mettle which his father has so inexhaustibly, yet I likewise felt him to be exceptionally amiable and sympathetic” (Bond, 2003). The readers can’t simply judge him, they are compelled to feel with him: “Amir’s double-crossing of Hassan is trustworthy and reasonable in human terms, aside from society, and his long haul regret is not astounding” (Whipple, 2003). Also, the readers are not just compelled to feel Amir’s feelings, they are likewise dragged into the minute, the same as him, they are impacted by same perspectives as Amir and they must be humane as they are liable to the same as he may be.

Amir feels like he is a bad person. “I wanted to tell them all that I was the snake in the grass, the monster in the lake. I wasn’t worthy of this sacrifice; I was a liar, a cheat, and a thief” (Hosseini, 2003, p. 105).

Even in adulthood, Amir cannot get away from these feelings. “There was so much goodness in my life. So much happiness. Wondered whether I deserved any of it” (Hosseini, 2003, p. 183)...perhaps something, someone, somewhere, had decided to
deny me fatherhood for the things I had done. Maybe this was my punishment, and perhaps justly so.” (Hosseini, 2003, p. 188).

Hosseini has an amazing capacity to detain the reader in horrific, shatteringly prompt scenes, at least, in the episode in which Hassan is disregarded. The outcome is a sickening impression of complicity. Like Amir, the reader watches the anguish and does nothing. (…) True insidiousness, he recommends, comes when great individuals permit such horrific incidents to take place. Readers feel the pinch of the incident which has been foregrounded by Hosseini in a skillful manner after showing the fun-filled activities of kite running in Kabul.

In spite of the fact that Hassan’s life is taken care of just in the first part of the book and afterward it is simply left to Rahim Khan to retell whatever remains of Hassan’s story are. It can be said that he is the most vital character in the novel. He is the pivotal point in the entire novel rotates around. Accordingly, his character ought to be in any event quickly covered here.

Before the real analyzing the trauma of Hassan’s son, names Sohrab, it ought to be comprehended what it meant to be a Hazara in the seventies in Afghanistan. Johnson (2012) clarifies that in America, the status of Hassan and his father would be practically identical to being dark and Native American in the profound South in the 1920’s. In addition, Hassan is a motherless youngster. His mother left him not long after he was
conceived. Once more, this is far more atrocious when a wife leaves spouse with an alternate man, she hurts her family’s honor more than anything else in the Afghan society. In any case, Hassan is not a terrible youngster, influenced contrarily by all these certainties. He doesn’t appear to be a miserable individual. What’s more it can be asked, for what good reason it is so.

Hassan’s most huge peculiarity is his capacity to discover a falling kite without really taking a gander at the sky. He doesn’t have to look at the kite coming down from the sky because he knows the art of kite running more than any of his competitors. Also he carries on with his life in the same way. He knows how to carry on with a genuine living, “as he has basically acknowledged the part he’s been given in life (Whipple, 2003) and he does all the better he can do with all the methods he has got. He puts his absolute entirety in all that he does and is unimaginably steadfast and truthful. He generally comes clean and he thinks others do too.” (Hosseini, 2007, p. 48)

The faithfulness is most evident in his relationship towards Amir and it even now and then makes Hassan lie. Hassan dependably takes the fault for what Amir did when some devilishness was discovered out (Johnson, 2012). Furthermore, he does this even when he will be unreasonably faulted of taking. He claims to be liable and ensures Amir’s safety:

This was Hassan’s last relinquish for me. On the off chance that he’d said no, Baba would trust him on the grounds that we all knew Hassan never lied. Furthermore if Baba trusted him, then I’d be charged; I would need to clarify and
Also that prompts an alternate comprehension: “Hassan knew. He knew I’d seen him in that back road, that I’d remained there and done nothing (Hosseini, 2007, p. 91). This dependability and acknowledgement of his part in life has its launching presumably in Hassan’s and Ali’s religion and their solid faith in God and his will. The way that Hassan acknowledges his part does not imply that he doesn’t long anything. It ought to be said that he wishes not to be uneducated and when he turns into a father, pretty much as all the folks, he wishes the best for his kid.

As he says in his letter to Amir: “I dream that my child will grow up to be a decent individual, a free individual and a vital person” (Hosseini, 2007, p. 191). A decent, free and imperative individual, nonetheless as Hassan seemed to be, as the opportunity and capacity does not originate from the outside world however from within every person. Furthermore, as Lencz (2003) focuses out, there is substantially more sense and significance in carrying on with a genuine soul and heart than in being an apparently essential government official choosing about the lives of millions of individuals without truly understanding the life.

While in Kabul, Amir is stunned to discover that Assef purchased the young man from an overfull shelter. At the point when Amir requests the young man’s discharge, Assef demands the battle until the very end. With minimal decision for another alternative, Amir experiences a ruthless beating on account of Assef. At last, Sohrab shoots Assef
with his slingshot, thus rescuing Amir. Sohrab and Amir escape the house in the midst of Assef’s horrifying yells.

When they come back to Pakistan and Amir leaves the clinic, they discover that the guaranteed guardians never existed. Amir chooses to watch over Sohrab himself and offers to take the kid back to America. Sohrab shows reluctance and asks that he never needed to come back to a shelter. Then again, the legal counsel in Pakistan prompts for an impermanent spell in a Pakistani shelter that Amir could go back to the United States and organize the kid’s adoption. Sohrab, overpowered by such a prospect, endeavors to commit suicide. Notwithstanding Amir’s urgent requests and conciliatory sentiment, the kid stays stoic for a considerable length of time.

Bing unable to work through the trauma, as according to LaCapra (2001) working through the trauma enables a victim to take the incident as part of his various life events and makes the recovery from trauma a bit easier, Sohrab, on most occasions, seems lost in his thoughts or may be haunted by whatever he witnessed. While leaving, Fahrid stops at the doorway of the hotel room, says good bye to Sohrab and then expects him to respond. However, Sohrab remains indifferent to everything as he “Just rocked back and forth, his face lit by the silver glow of the images flickering across the screen” (Hosseini, 2003, p. 312). Following what Herman suggests as the third stage for the survivors of trauma in the form of reconnection to life, this description proves that Sohrab has not been recovering from the trauma as he is unable to reconnect to life.
Following Caruth’s (1992) remarks that the survivor of an incident of trauma experiences the flashbacks of the incident concerned, Sohrab is also haunted by events from his past life. As soon as he, while standing with Amir, sees a, “horse drawn cart clip-clopped by in the parking lot and little bells dangled from the horse’s neck and jingled with each step,” he starts thinking about the time when he was sexually abused. He feels the guilt. This reminds Sohrab of being sexually abused by the Taliban as he, “starts crying, softly, silently.” This also leads Sohrab to ask, “Will God put me in hell for what I did to that man” (Hosseini, 2003, p. 318)? Sohrab’s reaction shows that he blames himself for what the Taliban did to him. This is another symptom of PTSD.

Sohrab shows more signs of self-blame when he asks, “Do you think Father is disappointed in me?” The thought of Sohrab’s parents and friends not seeing him right now makes him cry when he, “wipes his face with the sleeve of his shirt. It burst a bubble of spittle that had formed on his lips. He buries his face in his hands and wept a long time.” He goes on to blame himself by saying, “But sometimes I’m glad they’re not here anymore. Because I don’t want them to see me…I’m so dirty and full of sin (p. 319). As Erikson (1994) outlines that the survivors of trauma will hardly trust their fellow beings, Sohrab also has trouble trusting other people by saying, “What if you get tired of me? What if your wife doesn’t like me? I don’t want to go to another orphanage, he said. His tears were soaking the pillow (Hosseini, 2003, p. 327). In fact, Sohrab wants the people around him, especially Amir, to make him belief that he will not leave him for the trauma to hit him again. He wants safety, which according to Herman (1994), is the first stage in a person’s recovery from trauma.
Once Amir seemingly breaks his promise with Sohrab to go back to the orphanage, Sohrab goes into a state of panic. The memories seem like flashbacks for Sohrab’s mind because he starts pleading, “Please promise, you won’t! Oh God, Amir agha! Please promise you won’t! He wept into my shirt until his tears dried, until his shaking stopped and his frantic pleas dwindled to indecipherable mumbles” (Hosseini, 2003, p. 303). This is perfectly in accordance with what Erikson (1994) recommends, saying that the survivor keeps on worrying if the same moment of trauma may return and hit him again. The memories are so bad that Sohrab falls asleep crying. Amir then remembered that this is how children deal with terror. They fell asleep.

Sohrab’s fear of going back to the orphanage gave him the reason to commit suicide by cutting himself with Amir’s razor. This left him, “pale with a large purple bruise in the crease of his right arm” (Hosseini, 2003, p. 354). Here again, the trauma of the war that Sohrab has endured has been so immense that he keeps on worrying if his close ones will desert him and he will again be left for the traumatic incident. This is the reason why Erikson (1994) and Miller (2003) suggest that the reaction from the surroundings towards the victim of trauma is extremely important. As Herman (1994) says that the first stage of recovering from trauma is the sense of safety in the life of the victim, Sohrab badly needs that safety. His fears of being left behind send shivers down his spine because he does not want to re-experience whatever he has already witnessed.

When Sohrab is on 24-hour suicide watch in the hospital, Amir tries to cheer him up, and tells him that he is not going to the orphanage. However, remaining true to what Erikson
(1994) suggests that the victim fears that the trauma will hit him again, Sohrab is seen having problems trusting others, such as Amir, because Sohrab only, “holds [a] glance, and then looked away” when Amir is trying to cheer him up. Sohrab has a, “face that is set like stone. His eyes were still lightless, vacant, the way I had found them when I had pulled him out of the bathtub” (p. 354). He has been frozen in the moment as he is neither able to use the problem-focused mechanism nor the emotion-centred strategy, as outlined by Miller (2000). Sohrab’s witnessing of the ravages of war in his country and its impact on his own life have been so traumatic that he is simply unable to use any of the coping strategies; as a result, he opts for committing suicide but survives it.

Thus, Sohrab shows signs of PTSD by telling Amir that he is tired of everything, proving that he has been overwhelmed by the overall situation. Sohrab, then, brings his hand to his throat, “I want my old life back, I want Father and Mother Jan. I want Sasa. I want to play with Rahim Khan Sahib in the garden. I want to live in our house again” (Hosseini, 2003, p. 354). In this way, he mourns the loss of his previous life, which was full of peace around him. Herman (1994) asserts that the victim of trauma mourns the losses, and that this is the second stage of recovery from trauma. Here, Sohrab reconstructs the trauma because he is remembering whatever he witnessed in the past and, thus, mourns the losses. At this stage, according to Herman (1994), the victim of trauma continues his journey towards his recovery from the trauma. This happens to Sohrab when he has been assured that he will be taken away from the site of the war, and he is thus sure that his safety has been established. Only then, Sohrab, mourns the losses, which are in the form of his life in the past.
However, the third stage of Herman’s (1994) model, according to which the survivor of trauma should reconnect to everyday life, does not apply on Sohrab, who remains silent and ignores interaction with others. Leaving the people around him to guess how big a sorrow he has witnessed or suffered, as Amir wonders if Sohrab had, “…seen the Taliban drag his parents out into the street” (Hosseini, 2003, p. 317). This silence, which goes on to show the unspeakability of Sohrab’s trauma, shows the immense size of his trauma that then shapes his very identity. As a result, Sohrab stays aloof from the rest of the world and fails to recover from trauma.

The unspeakbility of Sohrab’s trauma is so huge that he, after going to America, remains silent all the time. Amir sees this as an effect from all the abuse he had undergone due to the war in his country, as he says, “It was the silence of the one who has taken cover in a dark place, curled up all the edges and tucked them under” (Hosseini, 2003, p. 361). In order to fully recover from the trauma that he has experienced, he, according to Herman (1992), needs to reconnect to everyday life but he simply fails to do so. The burden of his witnessing that has resulted in his unpleasant memories does not allow him to reconnect to everyday life.

Amir sees Sohrab’s unwillingness to communicate with others, as former says, “Sohrab walked like he was afraid to leave behind footprints. He moved as if not to stir the air around him. Mostly, he slept” (p. 365). Thus, unlike the eagerness on part of some characters to tell others about the destruction they have seen, Sohrab decides to remain silent in a bid to tell the world how unrepresentable and unspeakable his sorrows and
those of his countrymen are. This unrepresentability on the part of Sohrab is due to the fact that he has formed an exclusive identity for himself which is hallmarked by the absence of structures, through which he could speak of his trauma. His silence shows that his trauma is of such exceptional nature that it, according to Caruth (1995), Laub et al (1998) and Trezise (2010), is being portrayed as unrepresentable, unspeakable, and that it is experienced as an absence.

The trauma of Sohrab and many other Afghans, who have gone through the tribulations of such overwhelming nature find it impossible to reconnect to life. Sohrab’s condition is also significant in one other aspect: the nature of trauma that he has experienced is too big for him to understand upon occurrence, as Caruth (1995) mentions the impossibility to understand trauma upon occurrence. Since the nature of the incident is of such magnitude that it poses questions of un-speakability and un-representability, it becomes equally difficult for historians to record the incident upon occurrence, mainly because the survivors, who happen to witness it, are unable to speak their mind or relate whatever they witnessed. Thus, it is then left to writers of fiction to represent the trauma later on, because one of the hallmarks of trauma is its emphasis on delayed reaction to whatever has taken place. So, the analysis of the novels is decisive in unearthing the history that could not be recorded by historians when the incidents took place.

This part of the study provides answer to the first research question: Keeping in view the concepts of Acting Out and/or Working Through in trauma theory, how do the traumatized characters in the selected Afghan fictional narratives in English articulate their witnessing of trauma, and what measures do the traumatized characters take to cope
with the overwhelming incident of war in order to recover from the trauma and reconnect to everyday life? The study discusses how different the reactions of different characters have been towards the impending nature of trauma that they witnessed in the form of the war in their country. This goes on to show how skillfully literature represents the unrepresentable nature of trauma and how vocally do fictional narratives speak of the phenomenon that is marked by its unspeakbility. The aforementioned analysis shows how varying the responses of different people have been when they are impacted by the overwhelming nature of trauma. Thus, this part of the study, in conjunction with the previous chapter, answers the first research question.
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

“All efforts to confront and remember the past must be preceded by a consideration of the perspective from which we, as belated witnesses, view the event.” (Whitehead, 2004, p. 48)

The concluding remarks of this study hover back to the issues, which were brought up in the space of its opening pages identifying with trauma's characteristic spatio-fleeting structure - an unforeseen and hence overwhelming knowledge that is not seen as it happens but rather is over and over reestablished later and somewhere else as opposed to memory, accordingly offering principal difficulties to assumptions of referentiality and reality, and additionally resisting customary ideas of time and space. The emergency that trauma perpetually involves raises issues of representation, memory and witnessing with particular ramifications for scholarly studies. Moreover, trauma fiction presents readers with fundamentally new issues of explication. As trauma is not completely experienced upon event and just accessible belatedly and somewhere else, it can then just be spoken to through our inability to have time and space, described through spatial (dis)locations and temporal (dis)ruptions.

An “unclaimed experience,” as Caruth (1996) calls it, trauma is a phenomenon that is not
experienced upon event and, along these lines, abandons witnessing from inside the experience itself. It is this powerlessness to witness the traumatic occasion from within that, as Felman and Laub (1992) have attested, lies at the very heart of trauma. Kilby (2007) puts the point exactly: “No one has or possesses the inside view, perhaps least of all the victims, since they cannot bear to witness the horror of what is happening to them” (p. 90).

However, nor can trauma be seen from outside. Suspended in the middle of time and space, it drifts additionally between the sociocultural and the individual, disturbing while maintaining private/public or inside/outside twofold refinements and fringes, which imply that it is not arranged inside or outside, but rather that it converges on the limit lines in the middle of inside and outside; it is all the while a private and a public entity with both individual and socio-social reasons and implications. Notwithstanding the disappointment of witnessing traumatic experience from inside, then, a few difficulties to be a witness to a trauma come from the outside. Traumatic flashbacks do not develop as standard memory, which is directly narrativized, and which brings up issues as to the truthfulness of the act of witnessing. As opposed to untellable or uncommunicated, the traumatic experience is not recognized from the outside as well.

As the mind of survivor of a traumatic incident records the details of the moment and s/he is usually unable to get rid of the flashbacks, the moment remains intact and is true to the core. On the one hand, the survivor suffers from the continuous remembering of the incident in the form of flashbacks of the traumatic scenes but, on the other hand, s/he
works as a witness to the incident. The fictional narratives, which deal with moments of trauma, bring forth and present for public viewing the minute details of the incident, which fall a prey to the erasures of official accounts of reference, called history. These fictional narratives of trauma do not let the extraordinary details of a traumatic incident to go unnoticed or be forgotten; rather they keep on repeating themselves in their raw form just like these incidents, along with all their naked brute force, which hit the trauma affected person upon occurrence. Thus, these trauma narratives serve not only the survivors of the traumatic incident concerned by keeping on telling the world about their world of hurt, but also remind the living of the sacrifices of the ones, who could not survive the overwhelming impact of the trauma that they witnessed.

In the same vein, the selected Afghan fiction in English portray the condition of the traumatized characters and bring forth whatever goes through their minds, thus not only bringing forth their sufferings due to the ongoing wars but, at the same time, also making sure that the statements of the traumatized characters are able to fill in any lacunae in historical accounts. Interestingly, the portrayal of characters such as Rahimi’s Dastaguir and Yassin as well as their development in the face of the post-Soviet-attack-caused-traumatic disorder has been so true to the psychoanalytic theories that one is compelled to think as if Rahimi, the novelist, has been masterfully adept in this psychoanalysis with special reference to the concepts of working through, acting out, and PTSD. The writer has been able to achieve his target by creating such realistic accounts of these traumatized characters and their coping with trauma mechanism that their actions in the face of the incident of war and reactions to the impending Soviet attacks have been perfectly in line
with the theories dealing with trauma. Since the overwhelming nature of a traumatic incident makes it difficult for historians to record the moment of trauma, and the survivors are prone to show a delayed reaction to whatever they witnessed (Young, 1995; Fassin & Rechtman, 2009; Luckhurst, 2008; Bistoen, Vanheule & Craps, 2014), such fictional narratives, which came under investigation in this study, better portray the impact of trauma long after it has taken place.

Thus, the accounts of the ravages of war as presented by these fictional characters and the coping with trauma mechanisms have been convincing and, consequently, qualify for augmenting the concerned historical accounts. Anyone, who wants to study the minutest of details of the ravages of war in any country, will be greatly benefitted if s/he consults such fictional narratives, which are written by the native writers. The study, thus, answers the first research question: Keeping in view LaCapra’s (2001) concepts of Acting Out and/or Working Through in trauma theory, how do the traumatized characters in the selected Afghan fictional narratives in English articulate their witnessing of trauma, and what measures do the traumatized characters take to cope with the overwhelming incident of war in order to recover from the trauma and reconnect to everyday life?

As Rahimi’s Earth and Ashes deals with the trauma of the war-hit characters and brings forth their reactions and working through strategies, Hosseini’s The Kite Runner serves the same purpose but with a tilt where the war-hit characters are forced to leave their country, in which they enjoyed the status of highly respectable citizens. It brings forth the
fact how these characters are continuously haunted by the memories of their country and how, while living in a foreign country amid the whole developed infrastructure, they are continuously haunted by the memories of their country and the troubles and tribulations they had to go through as a result of the war. The writer juxtaposes the initially-portrayed peaceful life of Baba and Amir in Kabul with their post-trauma life that is full of material facilities but completely devoid of mental peace due to the continuous flashbacks of trial and tribulations while leaving Afghanistan and after settling down in a foreign country. The writer, thus, fills in the gaps, if any, regarding the problems and traumas of the Afghan people during the times of war. Thus, it answers the second research question: In what ways can the trauma of the individual characters in the selected novels be ascribed to the collective trauma of Afghan society as a whole, and how does this narrativization of their accounts highlight the collective war-impacted ravages in the Afghan society?

So, the study of history, especially if that is related to an incident of trauma, can be best augmented by fictional narratives written by writers who, one way or the other, are impacted by, and are implicated in, that trauma.

Literature, as Caruth (1995) says, has the capacity to represent the details of the unrepresentable nature of trauma, adding that this is the specialty of literature to cater for this complicated concept, to comprehend it, and express its peculiarity of trauma. Where history becomes handicapped in taking liberty with the details of a trauma as the former has to remain true to the factual truth, literature amends for this inability of history by providing an imaginative tinge of the details of the trauma and presents what may not be factual due to the fact that the names and dates may not be truthful, but the mental
processes that the survivor of trauma experiences, the reactions that s/he comes up with, the aftermath of the ravages of the incident, and the coping mechanism adopted by the survivor are as true as felt, experienced, and dealt with by the real survivors of trauma. The only difference is that the novelist uses literary imagination to mold the whole experience of trauma in order to make it suitable for the representation of this unrepresentable incident. So, once the truth issue of these accounts is settled, any inquiry into the history of such incidents of trauma is recommended to be augmented by such fictional narratives. In this way, the study also provides a detailed answer to the third research question: Following Cathy Caruth’s footsteps, can the portrayal of trauma of the individual characters in the selected novels add something to the history which is recorded under the traditional documentary evidence?

Keeping in view the importance of fictional narratives dealing with trauma in the study of history, and in light of this study, it is recommended for other researchers to use trauma literary theory to investigate other works of literature, which deal with other incidents of trauma. It is pertinent to mention here that researchers can carry out studies of fictional narratives, which deal with natural disasters as well; for example, the havoc caused by floods, destruction resulting from earthquakes, and the overwhelming impact of other disasters as portrayed in literature. Trauma analyses of literature emanating from other war-hit countries such as Iraq, Syria, and other countries, which are not in that much limelight as the technologically-advanced countries are, will be of great help in supplementing the histories of incidents of trauma in these countries.
The study also recommends for prospective researchers to embark upon the trauma study of literature that deals with the impact of suicide attacks on the minds of the survivors of such attacks in Pakistan. This will provide a personalized history, which is full of the minutest of details of the ravages of these suicide attacks in Pakistan by bringing forth the torturous survival accounts of the survivors of these blasts and also the sorrows of the ones, who are left behind to mourn their losses in these attacks. These accounts will take the historical record of such deadly attacks much ahead of mere terming or naming the events as suicide attacks, a tag attached to these incidents, and will come up with the complete package of how sabotaging and traumatic these incidents are for the ones who witness them.

There is also a scope for future researchers to carry out trauma analyses of fictional narratives, dealing with the survivors of drone attacks in Pakistan and anywhere else in order to explore how they act out or work through their experiences. Moreover, instead of researching the already saturated areas like the Holocaust studies and the post 9/11 fiction, it is recommended for researchers to look for new avenues and study fictional narratives, which deal with the trauma that is caused not only by war but also by sexual violence and natural calamities, such as earthquakes and floods, which wipe out complete communities.

Keeping in view the aforementioned emphasis on looking out for new avenues for carrying out trauma analyses of fictional narratives, there is also a need to study non-Anglophonic literature. Prospective researchers in Pakistan can study and analyze
literature, concerning traumatic incidents, in Urdu and other local languages. This will not only help them looking into issues which are of indigenous nature but will also enrich the history of the region. Other researchers in other parts of the world can also carry out trauma analyses of such literature produced in their own local languages. Researchers, who are working on fiction that is produced in Pakistan, can analyze the trauma caused by the partition of the Indian subcontinent, or, for that matter, the trauma resulting from the Fall of Dhaka in 1971. One of the examples in such cases can be to carry out a trauma analysis of Saadat Hasan Manto’s Urdu narratives titled *Toba Tek Singh* and *Tandha Gosht* in order to study the trauma of people, who suffered during the partition in 1947.

This stress on indigenizing or localizing trauma scholarship is the need of the hour in order for researchers to avoid falling a prey to the politics of trauma, which revolves around the Holocaust studies, post 9/11 scholarship and trauma related to the technologically advanced countries. The overemphasis on Holocaust studies in the form of the establishment of holocaust studies centers and the resulting scholarship through excessive publications in this field has deprived trauma studies of its earlier universalizing concept which, in the words of Caruth (1995), was established on the slogan that says that we are implicated in each other’s trauma. Unfortunately, the politics of trauma has made this previously non-advocacy movement into a purely European or American enterprise, which can best be balanced through carrying out analyses and detailed studies of trauma narratives, dealing with the less developed nations.

In this case, it is pertinent to mention and emphasize here for future researchers to be
cautious while using models and theories of Western scholarship for analyzing trauma related incidents and issues in their local cultural settings. There is a need to be careful in this case as the coping with trauma mechanisms as well as the overall reaction to a traumatic incident from survivors may vary from culture to culture. As the oft-criticized Eurocentric dealing and projection of trauma studies show that all the theories and models dealing with the ways in which trauma survivors cope with the incident are developed in accordance with the values and cultures of Western societies, the application of these theories and models for the analyses of non-Western fictional narratives without any adjustment thereof may not be appropriate. The reason for this unsuitability of the existing trauma models by the Western scholarship is that the values, belief system, and the overall standards of life of people living in the West are different from those living in other parts of the world. Thus, the development of purely indigenous models is needed in order to cater for the local needs as this will show how differently people, living in different parts of the world, act out or work through their trauma.

Lastly, the very spirit of trauma studies, which according to Caurth (1995) is that we are implicated in each other’s trauma, requires of researchers in this field to investigate the individual traumas of people and collective traumas of societies irrespective of how powerful and/or technologically advanced they are, because one person’s trauma is a stimulus for the recalling of another person’s trauma. Once again, when Craps (2008) criticizes the Eurocentric blind spots of trauma theory, asserting that trauma theory has been produced in Europe and the United States in the 1990s, and since then, it has been discussing traumas like the Holocaust, and then later on, the 9/11, he calls for research on
the traumas of nations which are not as powerful as some of the other nations are. As Craps (2008) argues that “trauma with equal, if not greater regularity” has been seen and experienced elsewhere (p. 9), he draws the attention of researchers to divert it from the highly saturated field of studying the trauma of advanced nations to the trauma that has been taking place to so many other people in several other places. If that is done, and if the very inclusive nature of trauma studies is maintained with its true spirit, the resulting analyses of fictional narratives dealing with trauma will greatly dissect the very history of any society concerned, and will thus enrich the very record, called history, irrespective of whose trauma it is and where has it taken place. What is being enriched and made more realistic through these analyses of fictional narratives of traumas is not an individual or a nation, but history.
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PLAGIARISM REPORT
WAR TRAUMA, HISTORY AND NARRATIVE: ANALYSIS OF SELECTED AFGHAN FICTION IN ENGLISH

by Inayat Ullah Id: 120947

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