



**WOUNDED CHILDREN: UNCOVERING
CHILDHOOD TRAUMA IN KHALED HOSSEINI'S
AND THE MOUNTAINS ECHOED, GLENN
MEADE'S *THE LAST WITNESS*, AND TONI
MORRISON'S *GOD HELP THE CHILD***

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THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that in my opinion the thesis submitted by Nihal TOPCU titled “WOUNDED CHILDREN: UNCOVERING CHILDHOOD TRAUMA IN KHALED HOSSEINI’S *AND THE MOUNTAINS ECHOED*, GLENN MEADE’S *THE LAST WITNESS*, AND TONI MORRISON’S *GOD HELP THE CHILD*” is fully adequate in scope and in quality as a thesis for the degree of PhD.

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Thesis Advisor, Department of English Language and Literature

This thesis is accepted by the examining committee with a unanimous vote in the Department of English Language and Literature as a PhD thesis. July 25, 2023

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The degree of PhD by the thesis submitted is approved by the Administrative Board of the Institute of Graduate Programs, Karabuk University.

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Director of the Institute of Graduate Programs

DECLARATION

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

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

Name Surname: Nihal TOPCU

Signature :

FOREWORD

The world breaks every one and afterward many are strong
at the broken places.

—Ernest Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms*

At this age of trauma, it is inescapable not to go through tragic experiences particularly for women and children all over the world. In actuality, the analysis of traumatised females has always been my greatest interest considering my own past experiences under the shadow of gender oppression. Yet, my supervisor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Harith Ismael Turki's invaluable recommendation enabled me to delve deeply into childhood trauma and work through my own repressed traumatic memories.

Nearly one year earlier, I began to suffer from panic attacks which turned my life upside down and made me perfectly become aware of being one of countless wounded children whose sufferings are overly neglected since they are thought to bounce back easily when they experience and/or witness traumatic events. However, all our traumas are no doubt imprinted on our mind and body, eventually appearing through psychic, emotional, and somatic symptoms. Despite all my indescribable pain and suffering in this process, I have enormously benefitted from my therapy sessions and revolutionised almost everything I do. Accordingly, I am proud of myself to confront all my childhood traumas and write this dissertation in the hope that it will shed light on the importance of working through such traumas to meet your true self in the stronger version.

I would like to express my special thanks of gratitude to my dear supervisor, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Harith Ismael Turki not only for his precious guidance, motivation, and inspiration, alongside his research and proofreading assistance, but also for his endless patience, kindness, and support during all the entire process. I also would like to thank my committee members, Prof. Dr. Abdul Serdar Öztürk, Prof. Dr. Sinan Yılmaz, Assist. Prof. Dr. Elvan Karaman Mez and Assist. Prof. Dr. Selçuk Şentürk for their proofreading assistance as well as their invaluable guidance. I am also deeply grateful to my therapist Abdulkadir Ilgaz for his everlasting support that helps me find my true self. I owe the greatest thanks to my beloved parents and my siblings, who always supported me in every phase of my life, together with their unlimited and unconditional love. I also would

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DEDICATION

*To all the wounded souls who unfailingly strive to echo and heal
their deepest childhood pain and suffering*



ABSTRACT

This dissertation fundamentally aims to explore the nature of childhood trauma, alongside its enduring impacts on the entire lives of the profoundly wounded children who are of different ages and cultures. Hence through the lens of trauma theory and psychoanalysis, three novels are selected for the analysis: Khaled Hosseini's *And the Mountains Echoed* (2013), Glenn Meade's *The Last Witness* (2014), and Toni Morrison's *God Help the Child* (2015). Children, unlike adults, possess unconditional affection, attachment, and obedience to their caregivers even if they are the ones who inflict the greatest traumas on their innocent and vulnerable childhood. In this regard, this study focuses on the sufferings of the severely traumatised children in the selected novels who are much more overwhelmed by the absence or damage of the protectors at the moment of experiencing and/or witnessing the traumatic scenes. The protagonists of the selected novels as the primary and secondary victims of childhood trauma are, furthermore, haunted by the ghosts of their traumatic memories which are involuntarily and nonlinearly triggered during their adulthood. Accordingly, their tormenting traumas in the unconscious leave these children frozen and speechless, causing them to suffer repetitively through flashbacks, nightmares, disturbance in the memory and painful symptoms registered not only by the mind but also by the body.

Keywords: Childhood Trauma; Traumatic Memory; Trauma Theory; Khaled Hosseini; Glenn Meade; Toni Morrison.

ÖZ

Bu tez temel olarak, çocukluk travmasının doğasını keşfetmeyi; aynı zamanda farklı yaş ve kültürlere sahip olan derinden yaralı çocukların yaşamları üzerindeki kalıcı etkilerini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Dolayısıyla, travma teorisi ve psikanalizin merceğinden, analiz için üç roman seçilmiştir: Khaled Hosseini'nin *Ve Dağlar Yankılandı* (2013), Glenn Meade'in *Son Tanık* (2014) ve Toni Morrison'ın *Tanrı Çocuğu Korusun* (2015). Yetişkinlerin aksine, masum ve savunmasız çocukluklarına en büyük travmaları yaşatsalar bile, çocuklar onlara bakım verenler kişilere karşı koşulsuz sevgi, bağlılık ve itaate sahiptirler. Bu bağlamda bu çalışma, seçilen romanlardaki ağır travma geçirmiş çocukların acılarına odaklanmaktadır ve aynı zamanda bu çocuklar travmatik sahneleri deneyimledikleri ve/veya tanık oldukları anlarda koruyucularının yokluğundan veya zarar görmesinden çok daha fazla etkilenmektedir. Ayrıca seçilen romanların kahramanları, çocukluk travmasının birincil ve ikincil kurbanları olarak, yetişkinliklerinde istemsiz ve doğrusal olmayan şekilde tetiklenen travmatik anılarının hayaletleri tarafından rahatsız edilmektedir. Bu doğrultuda, bilinçaltındaki işkence dolu travmalar; bu çocukların tekrarlayan şekilde geriye dönüşler, kabuslar, hafıza bozukluğu ve sadece zihin değil beden tarafından da kaydedilen acı verici semptomlar aracılığıyla ıstırap çekmelerine neden olarak onları donmuş ve sessiz bırakmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çocukluk Travması; Travmatik Bellek; Travma Teorisi; Khaled Hosseini; Glenn Meade; Toni Morrison.

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ARŞİV KAYIT BİLGİLERİ

Tezin Adı	Örselenmiş Çocuklar: Khaled Hosseini'nin <i>Ve Dağlar Yankılandı</i> , Glenn Meade'in <i>Son Tanık</i> ve Toni Morrison'un <i>Tanrı Çocuğu Korusun</i> Adlı Romanlarında Çocukluk Travmasını Açığa Çıkarmak
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ABBREVIATIONS

ACEs	: Adverse Childhood Experiences
APA	: American Psychiatric Association
CDC	: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CNN	: Cable News Network
Contrib.	: contributor
DSM	: Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders
Ed(s).	: editor(s)
NCTSN	: National Child Traumatic Stress Network
NCBI	: National Centre for Biotechnology Information
n.d.	: no date
NIH	: National Institutes of Health
NLM	: National Library of Medicine
NPR	: National Public Radio
para(s).	: paragraph(s)
PGD	: Prolonged Grief Disorder
PTSD	: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
Trans.	: translator(s)
UN	: United Nations
UNHCR	: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	: United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WHO	: World Health Organization
WWII	: World War II

SUBJECT OF THE RESEARCH

This study principally examines the childhood trauma as the individual suffering in the selected novels of Khaled Hosseini, Glenn Meade, and Toni Morrison from the viewpoint of trauma theory and psychoanalysis. Accordingly, Khaled Hosseini's *And the Mountains Echoed* (2013), Glenn Meade's *The Last Witness* (2014), and Toni Morrison's *God Help the Child* (2015) as the examples of bildungsroman and realistic fiction are selected to explore how children require their families' unconditional care and protection but often suffer mental or physical harm not just from external sources but also from their own caretakers. In this regard, this study aims to explore the various ways in which these wounded children experience trauma and how they respond to the overwhelming suffering stemmed from abuse, neglect, violence, oppression, separation, otherness, and/or alienation. These children are not only primary victims of childhood trauma but also secondary victims due to the lasting impacts that these experiences have on their adulthood, haunting them with the ghosts of their traumatic memories.

PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH

The primary purpose of this dissertation is to uncover the traumatic childhood experiences and memories that the protagonists of the selected novels suffer from during their childhood and their devastating psychological, emotional and/ or physical impacts on their adulthood in the light of trauma theory and psychoanalytic approach. This study also aims to examine the unique experiences of wounded children from diverse age groups and cultures as depicted in Khaled Hosseini's *And the Mountains Echoed*, Glenn Meade's *The Last Witness*, and Toni Morrison's *God Help the Child*. It also illustrates how these children's traumatic experiences, deeply embedded in their unconscious minds, leave them immobilized and unable to utter their suffering aloud. Consequently, they endure repetitive torment through flashbacks, nightmares, memory disturbances, and physical symptoms that manifest both in their minds and in their bodies. On the other hand, this dissertation benefits from the selected memoirs, Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl* (1947), Franz Kafka's *Letter to His Father* (1952), Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969), Virginia Woolf's *Moments of Being* (1972), Charles Bukowski's *Ham on Rye* (1982) and Frank McCourt's *Angela's Ashes* (1996) to exemplify the childhood trauma from the real-life experiences. By doing so, it proves

that the fictional characters' childhood traumas in the selected novels of this study exist in actuality and are not just products of imagination. Accordingly, this dissertation is assumed to appeal to those who study trauma in fiction, trauma theory, traumatic memory, and especially childhood trauma. While several studies exist on collective traumas such as the effects of war, racism, and slavery, they chiefly concentrate on the traumatic experiences of adults. However, there are respectively few studies specifically addressing childhood trauma as an individual suffering, encompassing the wounded minds, emotions, and bodies of the protagonists. This study, thus, aims to examine the impacts of childhood trauma on the protagonists' adulthood, highlighting the connection between their traumatic pasts and present experiences. This dissertation also seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the long-lasting effects of childhood trauma on the characters' lives, delving into the intricate dynamics of their psychological, emotional, and physical wounds. This study places particular emphasis on the harrowing traumas endured by the wounded children in the selected novels.

METHOD OF THE RESEARCH

Khaled Hosseini's *And the Mountains Echoed*, Glenn Meade's *The Last Witness*, and Toni Morrison's *God Help the Child* are deeply read and examined by also using many other related books, journals, databases as well as online studies within the context of the childhood trauma from the perspective of trauma theory and psychoanalysis, which enables this dissertation to be interdisciplinary research. Trauma as an upsetting, shocking or frightening experience has severe long-lasting impacts upon one's self and life tremendously by inflicting deep wounds on the mind and emotions, together with bodily symptoms. Accordingly, trauma theory enables researchers or scholars to explore the traumatic experiences from childhood to adulthood, together with the devastating long-lasting effects on the mind, and even the body by also causing the victim to suffer from the traumatic memory. This study as part of its interdisciplinary nature benefits from the insights from the various fields, such as neurology, neuroscience, psychology, and psychiatry, together with the prominent figures such as Jean-Martin Charcot, Pierre Janet, Bessel Van der Kolk, Peter Levine, Dori Laub, Judith Herman, and especially Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis. Additionally, this study incorporates the perspectives of literary trauma theorists, including Geoffrey Hartman, Dominick

LaCapra, Shoshana Felman, Ruth Leys, and particularly Cathy Caruth, who is pictured as a pioneer in the field of literary trauma theory. By integrating insights from both scientific and literary perspectives, this dissertation with its interdisciplinary nature aims to enable a comprehensive examination of the wounded children's experiences of trauma in the selected novels, by contributing to a much deeper understanding of the emotional, psychological, and physiological effects of childhood trauma.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE RESEARCH / RESEARCH PROBLEM

This study primarily reveals that the childhood trauma in the selected novels makes damaging long-lasting impacts on the mind, emotions, and even the body of the protagonists beginning from their childhood to adulthood. In this regard, this dissertation hypothesizes that each protagonist in the selected novels suffers a range of childhood traumas. These traumas occur at different ages and within distinct cultural contexts, leading them to be filled with the overwhelming emotions such as fear, guilt, shame, regret, anxiety, emptiness, disappointment, insecurity, helplessness, or hopelessness. It is also hypothesized that these characters are deeply affected by their traumatic and/or fragmented memories, which not only carry the weight of their past victimisation but also serve as re-traumatising reminders of their challenging childhood experiences.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS / DIFFICULTIES

This dissertation examines three different novels that are carefully selected to exemplify childhood trauma in the light of trauma theory and psychoanalysis. On the other hand, it might be difficult to explore and interpret the wounded minds of the protagonists from their childhood to adulthood due to the complex nature of traumatic memory and its reflections on the mind, alongside the bodily symptoms. Accordingly, the most challenging limitation is apparently the tricky link between fact and fiction, revealing the harsh realities of the wounded children in the real world through fiction. Moreover, this study is assumed to encounter difficulties regarding the trauma theory as an interdisciplinary approach that requires detailed research of trauma studies not only in psychoanalysis or neuroscience but also within the literary or cultural context, which will undoubtedly lead this study to present a limited theoretical framework.

1. CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Human suffering anywhere concerns men and women
everywhere.

—**Elie Wiesel, *Night***

Not to be able to tell your story, to be silenced and shut
out (...) In losing our voice something in us dies.

—**Elif Shafak, *How to Stay Sane***

So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back
ceaselessly into the past.

—**F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby***

The contemporary global issues are undeniably pushing the societies into an age of intense fear, constant anxiety and anguish, insecurity, uncertainty, helplessness, bewilderment, disillusionment, and mounting anger with the damaging effects of the widespread ongoing violence or abuse as well as natural disasters, pandemics, poverty, or unemployment, and in the end, becoming an age of trauma. Thus, as John Steinbeck voices his character's suffering in his *The Grapes of Wrath*, a significant number of people feel as though they are "jus' pain covered with skin" (1992: 298) owing to their severely traumatising pain and suffering from womb to tomb. In addition, with every passing year, there appear millions of victimised, silenced, and traumatised children by experiencing and/or witnessing all forms of violence and abuse as well as horrors of war, loss of the loved ones, racial discrimination, alienation, humiliation, exploitation, and neglect all over the world. In actuality, the situation is seemingly getting more desperate because numerous children are imprisoned in a vicious circle of the profound sense of rage, fear, shame, and/or guilt, alongside the trauma wounds which are widely neglected particularly in childhood. However, these traumatic scars left on first and foremost children undeniably infect their families and then the entire society.

On the other hand, a considerable number of the wounded children suffer from the split, fragmented and/or alienated self as haunted by the ghosts of the amnesiac, repressed, repetitive and/or dissociative traumatic memories primarily due to all forms of violence or abuse, maltreatment, and neglect. According to the World Health Organization [WHO], "child maltreatment is the abuse and neglect that occurs to children under 18 years of age" (2022). Moreover, as WHO utters, "an estimated one billion children – or one out of two children worldwide – suffer some form of violence each year" (2020: v). The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund [UNICEF] also illustrates, "in 2012 alone, almost 95,000 children and adolescents under

age 20 were victims of homicide” (165) whereas almost “120 million girls worldwide (...) have experienced forced intercourse or other forced sexual acts at some point in their lives” under the age of 20 (2014: 167). Similarly, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC] reports that 1 in 6 adults experiences four or more kinds of the Adverse Childhood Experiences [ACEs], which are identified as “potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood”, including abuse, neglect, or violence (2019: 1). Hence a great many children all over the world are profoundly and enduringly wounded by the traumatic occurrences as violent, hazardous, or frightful experiences that threaten children or their loved ones’ lives, bodily integrity, or physical security.

In this regard, this study focuses on the tormenting traumas of the wounded children and the everlasting effects on their childhood in addition to their adulthood in Khaled Hosseini’s *And the Mountains Echoed* (2013), Glenn Meade’s *The Last Witness* (2014), and Toni Morrison’s *God Help the Child* (2015) from the perspective of trauma theory and psychoanalysis as interdisciplinary research. The profoundly traumatised protagonists in the selected novels of this study suffer from extreme distress due to the absence of or harm to their protectors when they experience or witness traumatic events. Unlike adults, children exhibit unconditional affection, attachment, and obedience towards their families or family substitutes, even in situations where their caregivers are the primary source of their childhood trauma. Children as innocent and vulnerable beings undeniably sense the world through the eyes of their caregivers. These children’s profound, pure, and selfless affection given to their caregivers without any limitations or expectations leads children to feel more traumatised when they have dysfunctional families, or their caregivers are dead or abandon them, and notably when families themselves cause their children severe pain and suffering.

Regarding the timeless prevalence of childhood trauma, there undeniably exist a significant number of world renowned authors such as Virginia Woolf, Maya Angelou, Charles Bukowski, Anne Frank, Franz Kafka, and Frank McCourt. These literary figures suffer from traumatic childhood experiences throughout their lives as illustrated in their own memoirs. Their trauma stories indeed prove the testimonial power of literature and that the fictional characters’ childhood traumas in the selected novels of this study exist in actuality and are not just products of imagination. Thus, Frank’s *The Diary of a Young Girl* (1947), Kafka’s *Letter to His Father* (1952), Angelou’s *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969), Woolf’s *Moments of Being* (1972), Bukowski’s *Ham on Rye* (1982) and

McCourt's *Angela's Ashes* (1996) are utilised in this study to exemplify childhood trauma from the real-life experiences. Accordingly, Anne Frank as a thirteen-year-old Jewish girl hides from Nazis with her family in Amsterdam for two years but tragically dies in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp at the age of 15. Frank honestly and sincerely portrays her fears as well as hopes in her *The Diary of a Young Girl* as a powerful testimony to the Holocaust and the resilience of the human spirit during the World War II. In this respect, Frank illustrates a harrowing world where "[f]amilies are torn apart, men, women and children are separated" (55), and children are forced to watch the persecution and humiliation inflicted upon their parents.

Similarly, as Frank McCourt displays in his *Angela's Ashes*, millions of children are so victimised by the disastrous impacts of the Great Depression and World War II. Therefore, McCourt (1999) wonders how he survives in his "miserable Irish Catholic childhood", together with all his pain and suffering owing to "the poverty; the shiftless loquacious alcoholic father; the pious defeated mother moaning by the fire; pompous priests; bullying schoolmasters" (11). McCourt's three little siblings, in fact, die of "disease and starvation" (113), and McCourt also suffers from the serious diseases even though he fortunately manages to escape death. The anguish of struggling against the harsh life circumstances during his childhood inevitably affects McCourt's perspectives and attitudes towards the institutions negatively, including family, politics, and religion. Nonetheless, McCourt strives to keep his family together and shoulder responsibility for earning money at his early age after his alcoholic father abandons them. Moreover, as Angelou remarks, "because of a need for stability, children easily become creatures of habit" (72). This viewpoint explains the reason why McCourt as an innocent and vulnerable child is inclined to adapt to new circumstances and enduringly pursues a glimmer of hope for salvation as well as affection and attachment to their families or family substitutes despite their all pain and suffering.

1.1. A Fleeting Glimpse into the Roots of Trauma Theory

As Cathy Caruth asserts in her *Unclaimed Experience*, 'trauma' as a Greek word bearing the meaning of 'wound' originally refers to "an injury inflicted on a body" and yet is interpreted "as a wound inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind" (1996: 3-4) in especially Freudian texts from the nineteenth century. In actuality, traumatic scars

are not simply locatable or healable unlike the wound on the body. In this regard, Leigh Gilmore (2001) portrays trauma in her *The Limits of Autobiography* as “the self-altering, even self-shattering experience” upon an act of violence (6). Accordingly, Caruth (1995) broadly describes the term “trauma” as a reaction, delayed at times, to the unanticipated and overwhelming occurrences through intrusive and repetitive dreams, hallucinations, thoughts, or actions (4). Caruth also suggests the primary symptoms of trauma as numbing, hyperarousal, and avoidance, resulting from the scary incidents comprehended “fully at the time, but only belatedly, in its repeated *possession* of the one who experiences it” (1995: 4). Furthermore, the American Psychiatric Association [APA] officially recognizes the term ‘trauma’ as ‘Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder’ [PTSD], categorised under ‘Anxiety Disorders’ in the third edition of *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* [DSM-III] in 1980. In addition, the APA introduces PTSD as “the development of characteristic symptoms following a psychologically traumatic event that is generally outside the range of usual human experience” (236), signifying the extreme cases such as wars, natural disasters, and serious accidents.

In DSM-5 as published in 2013, alongside its more comprehensive descriptions of PTSD, the APA addresses the diagnostic criteria of PTSD as “exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence” (271) personally experiencing and/or witnessing the traumatic events or as they occur to a much-loved one. Similarly, the APA presents the symptoms in DSM-5 as previously included within shell shock or traumatic neurosis such as prolonged or profound psychological distress, intrusive, involuntary, and recurrent distressing memories, dissociative amnesia, avoidance of the reminders, angry outbursts, hypervigilance, depersonalisation, derealisation, as well as nightmares and/or flashbacks that comprise the traumatic events (2013: 271-272). Judith Herman as a professor of psychiatry also highlights in her *Trauma and Recovery* that “psychological trauma is an affliction of the powerless” as children or women, which causes the victim to feel helpless by the traumatic events and damaging “the ordinary systems of care” as the source of the sense of meaning, connection, and control (1997: 33). In this respect, this study as interdisciplinary research attempts to encompass childhood trauma as the individual suffering, benefitting from the studies of neurologists, psychologists, and psychiatrists including Bessel van der Kolk, Peter Levine, Dori Laub, Judith Herman, and Sigmund Freud as the founder of psychoanalysis

as well as trauma theorists including Geoffrey Hartman, Dominick LaCapra, Ruth Leys, and Cathy Caruth as the pioneer of literary trauma theory.

Even though trauma theory in literature began to attract the greatest attention in the early nineties, it is indisputably deeply rooted in the nineteenth-century hysteria studies of Jean-Martin Charcot, Pierre Janet, Josef Breuer, and Sigmund Freud as the forerunners of modern trauma theory. In actuality, the diagnosis of the term “railway spine” as maintained by John Eric Erichsen as a British surgeon in his *On Concussion of the Spine* (1875), which evolves from his *On Railway and Other Injuries of the Nervous System* (1866), comprises first and foremost exemplary cases that undeniably pave way for the modern trauma studies. In this regard, Erichsen (1875) points out that the victim of the railway accident is generally “quite unconscious that any serious accident has happened to him” (157) at the moment of the incident. Yet, the sufferer never totally recovers from the impacts of the accident, alongside serious symptoms such as sleep disturbances, memory defects, loss of mental capacity and bodily energy, being easily fatigued and irritable in spite of “even no evidence whatever of external injury” (Erichsen, 1875: 157). This viewpoint indicates that victims can be traumatised even if they are not physically harmed upon the overwhelming events, and the adverse psychic effects of such traumatic events may belatedly appear and last very long.

Considering the studies of hysteria subsequent to the diagnosis of railway spine, Herman (1997) pictures the French neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot as the patriarch of hysteria studies which emerge as “the archetypal psychological disorder of women” (9). These women are previously thought to be malingerers but actually tortured by exploitation, violence or rape, together with the symptoms such as “motor paralyses, sensory losses, convulsions, and amnesias” (Herman, 1997: 11) resembling neurological damage. Charcot also concentrates on the symptoms of hysteria, “whether occurring in man or woman” (1991: 221) exhibiting the neurotic symptoms and bodily symptoms, in the aftermath of the injuries and particularly the railway accidents as the traumatic events in his *Clinical Lectures on Diseases of the Nervous System*. According to Charcot, male hysteria is commonly “unrecognized, even by very distinguished physicians” despite the fact that the victims “attacked with an outburst of nervous symptoms” are observed to be negatively impacted months or years (1991: 222). Likewise, Ruth Harris exemplifies ‘traumatic retrograde amnesia’ that Charcot includes in his clinical lectures as a significant manifestation of hysteria or neurosis, resulting in the victim “having no

memory of what had happened to him and with paralysis in his legs” after being involved in an accident in which terror erases his memory (1991: xxxi). In this respect, Charcot’s hysteria studies seemingly inspire Pierre Janet and Sigmund Freud, which indeed enables trauma studies to progress and gain acceptance worldwide.

Pierre Janet as a leading figure in the studies of hysteria studies with Charcot at the Salpêtrière as a research and teaching hospital for mental disorders at that time in Paris. Janet is stated to pioneer expressing “the clinical principles of the dissociative disorders” as well as systematically scrutinising and treating “the traumatic memories underlying dissociated behaviour” as indicated by Frank Putnam in his *Pierre Janet and Modern Views of Dissociation* (1989: 413). Janet also identifies the long-lasting negative impacts of hysteria on mental and bodily diseases or disturbances, associating “dissociative psychopathology” with the traumatic events (Putnam, 1989: 414). Accordingly, Bessel van der Kolk as a psychiatrist specialising on PTSD and Onno van der Hart as a psychotherapist highlight Janet’s viewpoint of how several psychiatric patients react to the alarming events by dissociating, responding improperly, and acting ‘automatically’. Thus, these patients possess the unrelated stereotypic thoughts, images, feelings, and movements that appear “to represent fragmented reexperiences of frightening past events” (van der Kolk & van der Hart, 1989: 1532). Likewise, Ruth Leys clarifies in her *Trauma: A Genealogy* that the symptoms of PTSD such as repetitive nightmares and flashbacks, depression, emotional numbing, and explosive violence result from the mental dissociation. Leys, furthermore, identifies that “the experience of the trauma, fixed or frozen in time, refuses to be represented as past, but is perpetually reexperienced in a painful, dissociated, traumatic present” (2000: 2). From the preceding perspective, trauma sufferers continuously relive trauma through different psychic, emotional and somatic symptoms mainly including dissociation.

Janet (1901) reveals in his *The Mental State of Hystericals* that hysteria as a psychic disease comprises neurologic, psychiatric, or somatic symptoms such as the state of being unable to feel pain, bodily and mental disturbances, paralysis, fixed ideas, emotional attacks, amnesias, and deliriums (ix-xi). Similarly, Janet suggests that the hystericals’ traumatic troubles stem from the fixed ideas and persistent emotions as “complex states of the whole organism” blending both the psychological and the physiological phenomena (1901: 513). On the other hand, Janet (1920) identifies hysteria in his *The Major Symptoms of Hysteria* as “the disease of persuasion”,

consisting of the “disturbances which the patients persuade themselves that they have” (18), which actually causes hystericals’ mental disturbances to be badly interpreted and confused with the somatic diseases (xv). In essence, Janet’s studies on hysteria as a mental malady apparently shed light on the foundation of psychoanalysis as well as the future studies of trauma-related illnesses and modern trauma theory.

Sigmund Freud, inspired by the hysteria studies of Breuer, Janet and especially Charcot with whom Freud studies at the Salpêtrière, is internationally renowned as the founder of psychoanalysis undeniably evolved from the studies of traumatic hysteria or psychical trauma and his discovery of the repression of traumatic memories to the unconscious. In this respect, van der Kolk and van der Hart address Freud’s notion that the basis of pathology is “the internal impression of a traumatic experience” due to its insufferable nature (1989: 1531). As co-authors Freud and Josef Breuer (1955) elaborate in their *Studies on Hysteria*, the reason for the illness in traumatic neuroses is the strong emotion of fright but “not the trifling physical injury” (5-6). Freud and Breuer also maintain that hysterics who mainly suffer from voluntary or involuntary reminiscences tend to intentionally repress their traumatic experiences from the conscious thought. Moreover, “giving utterance to [their] tormenting secret” through ‘abreaction’ helps the patients prevent their repressed emotions from remaining “attached to the memory” and transforming into mental and somatic disorders (Freud & Breuer, 1955: 7-9). In addition, as Janet illustrates in his hysteria studies, Freud and Breuer (1955) display “*the splitting of consciousness (...) under the form of ‘double conscience’*” as a chief symptom of hysteria-related mental disorders, together with a tendency to dissociation and “*the emergence of abnormal states of consciousness (...) under the term ‘hypnoid’*” (12). The preceding viewpoints can be traced to the symptoms of the traumatic hysteria of Anna O., who suffers from the split of her mind with the gaps or lost time in her memory as well as the somatic symptoms such as being temporarily blind, deaf, and dumb (Freud & Breuer, 1955: 24-25). Accordingly, Anna O. is actually considered as the first patient with the diagnosis of hysteria to be treated with psychoanalysis.

Concerning notably the appearance of the symptoms of hysteria after puberty, Freud (1962b) initially asserts in his *The Aetiology of Hysteria* that seduction of the children by their caregivers like nursemaids, tutors, family members besides strangers, lies at the root of the hysterical trauma (208-209) as the lasting effects of the traumatic feelings “experienced in the past” (191), including sexual abuse in the form of rape,

sexual assault or harassment (200). In fact, such adverse experiences lead the patient to voluntarily repress their traumatic emotions and memories that are, nevertheless, involuntarily, and repeatedly triggered. Thus, as Freud (1962a) utters in his *The Neuro-Psychoses of Defence (II)*, “it is not the experiences (...) which act traumatically but their revival as a *memory*”, also adding that several pathological symptoms, neurotic manifestations, and phobias can be only explained upon tracing back to the experiences of sexual trauma in childhood (164-165). Yet, Freud publicly announces in his *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* that he deserts the notion that seduction of a child as an external contingency is the chief cause for neurotic illnesses. Freud (1953a) instead suggests the internal causes, “the factors of sexual constitution and development” of the child, for trauma-related disorders but by not denying the damaging impacts “of seduction, which treats a child as a sexual object prematurely” (190). Considering Freud’s withdrawal of the seduction theory, Herman (1997) maintains that Freud creates psychoanalysis “[o]ut of the ruins of the traumatic theory of hysteria” making sexuality “the central focus of inquiry”, exemplifying Freud’s famous case of Dora, whose sexual abuse is assessed by Freud as “a fulfillment of her desire” (14). Freud also remarks that seduction by adults or other children as a traumatic experience causes the child to “become fixated as a permanent disorder” only depending on the psychical factors and “stimulations of infantile sexuality” (1953a: 242), including the repressed instincts, feelings, and wishes from the birth considered as the basis of the psychoanalysis.

On the other hand, Freud (1964) illustrates the origin of trauma in his *Moses and Monotheism* exemplifying Jews’ murder of Moses as the unconscious repetition of the murder of Christ and “the awakening of the forgotten memory-trace” (101). Freud also clarifying the terms ‘incubation period’ and ‘latency’ as the belated nature of trauma in addition to the ‘compulsion to repeat and ‘return of the repressed’ as the essential characteristics of trauma that is in actuality transferred from the earliest generations. In this regard, Freud provides an exemplary incident of a railway collision as a frightful accident to present how a man develops a ‘traumatic neurosis’, together with several “severe physical and motor symptoms which can only be traced to his shock” weeks after the accident despite leaving “the scene of the event apparently uninjured” (1964: 67). Freud (1964) defines ‘incubation’ or ‘latency’ as the period that passes between the traumatising experience and the emergence of its mental and somatic symptoms (67). Freud (1964) also compares the belated traumatic symptoms of the railway collision to

Jews' guiltiness of the murder of Moses, which leads Jewish monotheism to appear after many years although there seems no trace of the religion of Moses but just Jews' traumatic memory-trace (67-68) as the representation of the 'compulsion to repeat' or the 'return of the repressed'. Additionally, Freud (1955b) argues in his *The Uncanny* that the compulsion to repeat is inherent in the instincts and dominant enough in the unconscious "to overrule the pleasure principle", and very evidently conveyed "in the impulses of small children" as well as in the analyses of neurotic patients (238). This viewpoint displays the strength of instinctual impulses inherently existing in the unconscious and resulting in the return of the repressed.

Accordingly, Freud (1955a) elaborates the term 'compulsion to repeat' as "the manifestation of the power of the repressed" (20) in his *Beyond Pleasure Principle*, adding that the unconscious, namely the repressed, should be transferred into the conscious through the compulsion to repeat emerging in the course of the psychoanalytic treatment of the patients with neurotic symptoms (18-19). Thus, Freud (1958) attaches great importance to transforming the repressed into the conscious for the patient in his *Remembering, Repeating, and Working Through*, maintaining its purpose as follows: "[d]escriptively speaking, it is to fill in gaps in memory; dynamically speaking, it is to overcome resistances due to repression" (147-148). In actuality, according to Freud (1958), "the patient does not *remember* anything of what he has forgotten and repressed, but *acts* it out", reproducing it as an action but not as a memory – in other words, repeating it without "knowing that he is repeating it" (150). That is to say, the sufferer is supposed to overcome resistance to the appearance of the repressed so that s/he could *work through* the awakening of the traumatic memory thanks to psychoanalytic treatment (Freud, 1958: 155). Similarly, in his *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud regards psychoanalytic treatment as the "first and foremost an art of interpreting" the way of acting out or repetition of the repressed material the whole of which the patient is unable to remember, but "what he cannot remember may be precisely the essential part of it" (1955a: 18). The preceding perspective emphasises the significance of psychoanalysis in the treatment of hystericals and neurotics' psychic disorders.

Regarding the belated and repetitive nature of trauma notably through dreams, flashbacks, hallucinations, and/or dissociation, Freud (1955a) speaks of the similar motor symptoms and mental disturbances, which ultimately causes 'war neurosis' or 'traumatic neurosis' in the aftermath of severe traumatic disasters "involving a risk to

life”, together with the strong and unexpected emotion of fright and the wound in the mind fixated to trauma (12). Moreover, extensive research into the term ‘war neurosis’ is undertaken upon the outbreak of World War I owing to the atrocities and destructive somatic and psychic effects on the basis of traumatic disorders despite being neglected at first and considered as the weakness of the soldiers accused of malingering. However, they indeed “suffered memory gaps” and “repeatedly re-experienced extreme events” through hallucinations, nightmares, and flashbacks for a long time as Roger Luckhurst asserts in his *Mixing Memory and Desire* (2006: 500). In this respect, Charles Samuel Myers as a British psychologist confirms the genuineness of soldiers’ disorders rooted in the patients’ psychology. Myers coins the term ‘shell shock’ upon observing and treating patients who are physically unharmed but suffer from mental and somatic disturbances such as amnesia, severe headache, depression, dissociation, flashbacks, nightmares, and even loss of the ability to think, speak, hear or write due to the fright and shock as if they are repetitively exposed to the explosion of the shells (1916: 67-68). Upon the increasing interest in trauma studies subsequent to World War II as well as the Vietnam War, the APA officially introduces the term PTSD as the diagnosis of trauma in DSM-III in 1980 to describe traumatic neurosis, war neurosis, combat neurosis or shell shock concerning their similar psychic and bodily symptoms.

In terms of how the mind is traumatised and wounded, Freud (1955a) identifies the notion of protective shield functioning as a barrier to the stimuli from the “external world charged with the most powerful energies”, putting the pleasure principle out of action for a moment and bringing trauma about if “any excitations from outside (...) are powerful enough to break through the protective shield” (27-29). Such traumatic experience is elucidated by Cathy Caruth as “a shock that appears to work very much like a bodily threat but is in fact a break in the mind’s experience of time” (1996: 61). The patient with a broken protective shield, as Freud states, suffers from the forgotten childhood traumas in recurrent dreams as the re-enactment of the traumatic experience and/or witnessing, “repeatedly bringing the patient back into the situation (...) from which he wakes up in another fright” in contrast to the dreams of wish-fulfilment that works in harmony with the pleasure principle (1955a: 13). In essence, Freud regards trauma as “experienced early and later forgotten”, which assumes great significance “in the aetiology of the neuroses”, invariably going “back to very early impressions in childhood” (1964: 72-73). It indicates the value of digging into the repressed adverse

childhood experiences that have great tendency to be unconsciously and involuntarily triggered from the memory undeniably processing from pre-birth to death.

1.2. The Rise of Trauma Theory in Literary Criticism

Trauma narratives, as Anne Whitehead utters in her *Trauma Fiction*, deal with “the recovery of memory and the acknowledgment of the denied, the repressed and the forgotten” (2004: 82). Michelle Balaev (2008) maintains, therefore, in *Trends in Literary Trauma Theory* that such narratives ultimately encompass political, historical, social and cultural functions through the traumatised protagonist as a representative of the victims tortured by similar traumas of war, violence, abuse, or rape, and also providing “a picture of the individual that suffers, but paints it in such a way as to suggest that this protagonist is an ‘everyperson’ figure” (155). In actuality, Whitehead (2004) questions how trauma fiction narrates the frightful and overwhelming events or experiences that are supposed to resist representation or language, thereafter, clarifying that the destructive effects of trauma can be only sufficiently expressed “by mimicking its forms and symptoms, so that temporality and chronology collapse, and narratives are characterised by repetition and indirection” (3). Regarding the importance of bearing witness to the harsh realities of traumatic experiences through literary works, Elie Wiesel (1977) illustrates in his lecture entitled *The Holocaust as a Literary Inspiration* that “[i]f the Greeks invented tragedy, the Romans the epistle, and the Renaissance the sonnet, our generation invented a new literature, that of testimony” (9), also stressing the prevalence of trauma narratives as the literature of testimony.

In their *Art and Trauma*, Dori Laub and Daniel Podell (1995) suggest designating ‘the art of trauma’ as a special sort of art with the purpose of managing to represent what refuses to be represented in victim’s internal and external experiences (992). Moreover, Laub and Podell assert that art and literature possess the ability to “represent and communicate” traumatic experiences faithfully and effectively through the indirect as well as dialogic characteristic of the art of trauma, which provides the sufferer with the possibility of restoration, repossession, and connection to the inner and outer world rather than the sense of absence and emptiness that characterises trauma (992-993). This dissertation, consequently, attempts to reveal the testimonial power of literature by giving voice to the torturous individual suffering of the wounded children in the selected

novels despite their nonlinear storytelling, together with the missing and even distorted parts in the remembrance of experiencing and/or witnessing the traumatic events in accordance with the nature of traumatic memory that imprisons the victim in the cage of intense fear and anger, repetitive anxiety, sense of shame and/ or guilt.

Undeniably, literature of testimony and trauma narratives caught a great deal of attention in the early nineties especially with the interdisciplinary articles on trauma published under the title *Psychoanalysis, Culture, and Trauma* (1991) in two issues of the academic journal *American Imago*, ranging from psychoanalytic to literary, social or cultural perspectives of trauma studies. However, such narratives draw the greatest attention to trauma theory within literary criticism upon being compiled by Cathy Caruth as a distinguished literary theorist in her *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995), which enables scholars and researchers to delve into the belated, repetitive, repressive, and dissociative nature of trauma within the literary work. In addition, trauma theory guides to explore the profound impacts of the traumatic occurrences on the characters' psyche with a broken protective shield after experiencing and/or witnessing the traumatic events that are repressed in the "unconscious—inaccessible to consciousness (...) [as] isolated, like foreign bodies out of connection with the rest" of the mind, but whose imprints are still "present in all their freshness" in the memory, perpetually awaiting to be released out of the unconscious (Freud, 1964: 94). According to Herman (1997), the unspeakable tormenting secrets of the traumatic testimonies emerge "not a verbal narrative but as a symptom", apparently alternating "between feeling numb and reliving the event" (1). Literary trauma theory also paves the way for identifying how the traumatised characters testify their wounds, together with psychic and bodily symptoms, and the significant effects of these scars on the minds of the characters as well as the readers' imagination and feelings evoking their sense of empathy with the wounded characters.

On the other hand, whilst Shoshana Felman portrays bearing testimony to the terrors of trauma in her *Education and Crisis* as a "larger, more profound, less definable crisis of truth" (1992: 6), Dori Laub pictures "the listener to the narrative of extreme human pain" in his *Bearing Witness* as "a participant and a co-owner of the traumatic event", partly experiencing trauma oneself (1992a: 57). Nonetheless, as Dominick LaCapra (2014) argues in his *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, there appears a difficulty when the empathy with the victim transforms into "vicarious experience, and surrogate victimage" for the listener (40), alongside the "full identification with, and appropriation

of, the experience of the other” (79). By contrast, “empathic unsettlement”, as LaCapra (2014) terms in the meaning of “[b]eing responsive to the traumatic experience of others” (41), has a desirable effect on the research, analysis, and interpretation of the victims and traumatic events by putting “oneself in the other’s position while recognizing the difference of that position and hence not taking in the other’s place” (78). Laub, moreover, speaks of the necessity of the listener’s empathy for the victim, stating that “[t]he listener has to feel the victim’s victories, defeats and silences, know them from within, so that they can assume the form of testimony” (1992a: 58). It enables them to communicate both in speech and silence, but being well aware of the struggles and dangers of identifying oneself with the trauma sufferer.

With regard to the incomprehensibility of transforming trauma into narrative memory and wording the wound, Sonia Schreiber Weitz (1990) as a survivor of the Holocaust utters, “to speak is impossible, and not to speak is impossible” (as cited in Caruth, 1995: 154). Accordingly, as Geoffrey Hartman (2003) states in his *Trauma Within the Limits of Literature*, words are seemingly deficient to narrate the scars of trauma despite highlighting that literary verbalisation makes “the wound perceivable and the silence audible” (259). Hartman (1995) also clarifies in his *On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies* that literary trauma theory focuses on the connection of trauma and words, permitting one “to ‘read the wound’ with the aid of literature” in spite of the truths of uncertainty, incomprehensibility, and distortion in traumatic memory and knowledge (537). In addition, Hartman maintains that the literary representation of traumatic experience or event enables “the negative moment in experience” to be verbalised through figurative, poetic, or symbolic language (1995: 540), which actually signifies the narration of trauma stories through symptoms.

Likewise, Caruth reveals that trauma appears to invoke the burdensome truth of history comprised by the incomprehensibility of its repeated manifestation, also stating that a history transmitted through traumatic re-enactments, amnesia, or flashbacks “literally *has no place*, neither in the past, in which it was not fully experienced, nor in the present, in which its precise images and enactments are not fully understood” (1995: 153). Trauma is, however, required to be integrated and transformed into the “narrative memory that allows the story to be verbalized and communicated” for the sake of not only testimony but also cure regardless of the emergence of distorted truths during

traumatic recalls (Caruth, 1995: 153). Hence Daub (1995) addresses the imperativeness of wording the scars in his *Trauma and Testimony* as follows:

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. There is, in each survivor, an imperative need to *tell* and thus to come to *know* one's story, unimpeded by ghosts from the past against which one has to protect oneself. (63)

Nevertheless, as Daub (1995) asserts, the traumatised victims suffer from “the collapse of witnessing” (65) because of their prevalent preference for silence rather than narration of their intense pain and suffering, which causes them to be “victims of a distorted memory” and “self-inflicted emotional imprisonment” since the untold stories of traumatic experiences lead to the survivor’s distorted and doubtful conception of the truth of the actual incidents (64). Therefore, no matter how incomprehensible, impossible, frightful, and painful it seems to the victims of trauma, the conscious effort is seemingly required to narrate the repressed emotions and thoughts of trauma through silence or words, and symptoms such as flashbacks, nightmares, amnesia, distortion, or self-doubt of the truth of history, and repetitive mental and bodily disturbances, which can be also achieved thanks to the testimonial power of literary works.

In her *Unclaimed Experience*, Caruth (1996) presents Freud’s conception of repetition compulsion and belatedness as the prevailing symptoms of the psychic trauma and maintains that the shock and fright which wound the mind recognising the traumatic occurrences as the threat of death are not perceived by the mind as these events occur but “*one moment too late*” through the repetition of nightmares or flashbacks because of “the lack of preparedness to the stimulus that comes too quickly” (62). Similarly, as Caruth highlights, the narration of trauma as “a belated experience, far from telling of an escape from reality—the escape from a death, or from its referential force—rather attests to its endless impact on a life” (1996: 7). In the light of Freud’s notion of deferred or belated nature of trauma as the period of latency, Leys (2000) also states that the delayed reawakening of the traumatic occurrence as a memory actually traumatises rather than the experience itself (20). Accordingly, Whitehead (2004) asserts that the impacts “of the inherent latency of trauma can be discerned in the broken or fragmented quality of testimonial narratives” (7). To put it another way, Luckhurst (2008) stresses in his *The Trauma Question* that “[n]o narrative of trauma can be told in a linear way” breaking the traditional causality (9) and displaying the traumatic memories of the

overwhelming events of the past in dissociative, fragmentary, and/ or distorted form with the chronological gaps not forgotten but repressed.

Richard Mollica, having studies in psychiatry, remarks in his *The Trauma Story* that the trauma sufferers are completely trapped in the harsh realities of their trauma stories, but “plagued by traumatic symptoms—nightmares, insomnia, and waking memories”, causing them to repetitively suffer from traumatic images and memories (1988: 307). According to Mollica (1988), the untold stories of trauma keep the victim “stuck in the past in a world” that disregards the entire cultural meaning and interpretation, whereas the storytelling enables the sufferer to be released from “the past which was fixed in the present”, and the narrative commences giving shape to a great many new experiences and possibilities (311). In this respect, trauma narratives are supposed to serve as the repressed, silenced, haunted, and wounded minds’ salvation particularly thanks to the strength of literature in terms of bearing witness to and testifying all the prevalent pain and suffering. Traumatic memories are indeed testified by means of narration and symptoms in a repressive, repetitive, intrusive, dissociative, fragmentary, belated and/or distorted form in literary works, together with the collapse of comprehensibility, chronology, and witnessing.

1.3. Haunted by the Ghosts of Traumatic Memory

Traumatic experiences during childhood undeniably leads children possessed by the ghosts of their traumatic memory throughout their lifetime. In this regard, Peter Levine as a prominent figure in the field of trauma therapy portrays the term ‘memory’ in his *Trauma and Memory* as the bedrock of one’s identity, helping to identify “what it means to be human” and as the magnetic compact, guiding to the new circumstances to find one’s way within the world (2015: 4). Moreover, Viktor Frankl as an Austrian psychiatrist, neurologist, and Holocaust survivor reveals in his *Man’s Search for Meaning* that “in the past, nothing is irretrievably lost but everything irrevocably stored” (143) within the memory. Richard Terdiman as a professor of literature, on the other hand, describes ‘memory’ in his *Modernity and the Memory Crisis* as “the present past”, which complicates “the rationalist segmentation of chronology into ‘then’ and ‘now’”, ultimately speaking of the notion “memory crisis” as the “crisis of representation”, together with the complex nature of the content of the experiences and practices

registered in the memory (1993: 8). Terdiman (1993) also indicates “how the past persists into the present” (vii) and the perception of two fundamental diseases as “*too little memory*, and *too much*”, alongside the disturbing and troubling consequences of recalling and forgetting in the individual and collective terms (14), which creates memory crisis in a world of upheavals and insecurity (3). This viewpoint illustrates that the past is forgotten or remembered but assuredly stored in the memory and intervenes in the present especially in the modern age of trauma.

Accordingly, trauma is primarily “a disorder of memory”, as defined by Leys, stating that the sufferer haunted by the “intrusive traumatic memories” is incapable of recollecting and integrating the painful experience in normal consciousness, under the influence of the dissociated mind that is “unable to register the wound to the psyche” since the regular mechanisms of cognition and awareness are devastated, together with the emotions of surprise and terror stemming from particular events (2000: 2). Likewise, as van der Kolk and van der Hart highlight in their *The Intrusive Past*, the hippocampus having the leading role in sensations, emotions, and memory as a part of the brain and enabling “memories to be placed in their proper context in time and place” becomes defenceless against disruption (1995: 172). Moreover, its vulnerable state causes amnesia in terms of the details of the traumatic event but not the emotions connected to it upon prolonged and severe stress which suppresses the functioning of the hippocampus and creates horrific associations that are difficult to place in time and space (van der Kolk & van der Hart, 1995: 172). The preceding perspectives seemingly signify the importance of the recollection and integration of memories into consciousness to prevent memory from being haunted by the traumatic events.

Traumatic memories adversely influence, thus, not only the memories of the traumatic past but also the adaptation and integration of the new experiences, actions, and decisions into the wounded mind unless the sufferer achieves the reconstruction of traumatic memory as narrative memory. The “*tyranny of the past*”, as Levine asserts, damages the ability to concentrate efficiently on familiar and new circumstances (2015: xx). Nonetheless, the victims possess a strong tendency to distort, omit or forget their pain and suffering, and Caruth (1995) associates the reluctance to verbalise the traumatic experiences with the concern about “the loss, precisely, of the event’s essential incomprehensibility”, also adding that the integration of the trauma story into the conscious mind through narration is thought as a fearful experience not because “it

cannot understand” but because “it understands too much” (154). On the other hand, the sufferers are often able to narrate their trauma story mixing present and past, yet their prevailing life is dominated by humiliation, doubt and emotions of shame and guilt, and their traumatic past, therefore, determines “the interpretation of the present” (van der Kolk and van der Hart, 1995: 178). Similarly, Hartman (2003) reveals the danger of the secondary traumatising as “captive observers” putting the internal other in jeopardy, hence the angst aroused heightens the “desire for not-knowing rather than knowledge” (258). According to Hartman (2003), the wound suffered becomes a wound to the memory – in other words, “to the very possibility of recollection” transmitting merely the wound to the children who grow up “in the compact void of the unspeakable” (262) due to the absence of working through the story of traumatising.

Considering the intrusive nature of traumatic memory, Herman (1997) pictures traumatic memory as “wordless and static”, which causes the victim’s initial narrative of the traumatic event to be emotionless, stereotyped, and repetitious in contrast to Janet’s description of “normal memory as the action of telling a story” (175). In this respect, van der Kolk and van der Hart (1995) elaborate Janet’s viewpoints that ordinary or narrative memory primarily “serves a social function” (163) as “uniquely human capacity”, and habit memory enables “the automatic integration of new information without much conscious attention to what is happening” as the capacity humans and animals commonly possess (160). Accordingly, van der Kolk and van der Hart (1989) also reveal Janet’s perspectives on the functioning of memory that most habits, values, experiences as well as “innate and acquired skills are automatically integrated into existing cognitive schemata” (1531). The preceding perspective addresses the automatic actions that are triggered by emotions, sensations, and thoughts existing within the subconscious as the part of the mind on the purpose of storing memories.

Novel and frightful experiences, nevertheless, encounter difficulties fitting into existent “cognitive schemes and either may be remembered with particular vividness or may totally resist integration” (van der Kolk & van der Hart, 1995: 160). In severe circumstances, the memory of such harrowing experiences is dissociated from voluntary control and consciousness awareness. Consequently, as van der Kolk and van der Hart (1995) suggest, such traumatic memories as the obstacles that keep victims “from going on their lives” (158) emerge as the upsetting and painful memories that repetitively torture the sufferer with the continuous return of such memories. According to van der

Kolk and van der Hart, approximately all the memories are malleable by working and categorising repeatedly, whilst “some memories are fixed in the mind and are not altered by the passage of time, or the intervention of subsequent experience” (1995: 172). Hence such fixed memories fail to represent the traumatic experience “on a linguistic level” but repeat traumatic scene through nightmares, somatic symptoms, or flashbacks as unspeakable terrors (van der Kolk & van der Hart 1995: 172). From the preceding viewpoints signify that no matter how deep traumatic memories are repressed, they are doomed to come to light chiefly by means of the symptoms such as dissociation, nightmares, amnesia, flashbacks, and the involuntarily triggered memories of traumatic moments. All these traumatic memories can be merely confronted with the determined effort for the narrativisation of the overwhelming emotions, thoughts, and memories.

The lives of the sufferers of traumatic memory can be categorised into two separate stages as “the traumatic past, and the bleached present”, making traumatic memory timeless – that is, “not transformed into story, placed in time, with a beginning, a middle and an end” as a distinguishing feature of narrative memory (van der Kolk & van der Hart, 1995: 177). Likewise, Lawrence Langer as a professor of Holocaust studies asserts in his *The Ruins of Memory* that traumatic experiences stop “the chronological clock” by fixing traumatic moments continuously in imagination and memory, “immune to the vicissitudes of time” (1991: 175). In this respect, Freud abandons ‘hypnosis’ in his psychoanalytic treatment that attempts to bring a certain traumatic moment into focus through abreacting and remembering. Freud (1958) instead favours ‘talking cure’ by scrutinising “whatever is present for the time being on the surface of patient’s mind” (147) and exploring from the free associations that the patient fails to remember. In actuality, several patients seem to succeed in softening “the intrusive power of the original, unmitigated horror” thanks to the imagination and re-enactment of the alternative scenarios of their shattering experience, enabling traumatic memory to lose “its power over current experience” (van der Kolk & van der Hart, 1995: 178-179). Thus, traumatic memories imprison victims in the vicious circle of the traumatic scenes in a timeless prison, and the only way out is the release of the fixated, repressed, or dissociated trauma story of the sufferer from the unconscious.

With regard to the devastating impacts of trauma on the body as well as the mind, Levine addresses Freud’s words in his *In an Unspoken Voice*, “[t]he mind has forgotten, but the body has not—thankfully” (2010: 158). To put it another way, Alice Miller as a

Polish-Swiss psychoanalyst renowned for her books on child abuse illustrates in her *The Body Never Lies* that the body as “the guardian of the truth, *our* truth” is highly improbable to be deceived by words unlike the mind (2006: 31). Additionally, van der Kolk (2015a) elaborates the issue of the bodily symptoms of trauma in his *The Body Keeps the Score* and reveals that “the memory of trauma is encoded in the viscera, in heartbreaking and gut-wrenching emotions, in auto-immune disorders and skeletal/muscular problems” (101). According to van der Kolk, when the body as well as the psyche are continuously aroused, as though they are under an immediate threat, people relive the trauma as “trapped in a life-or-death situation, a state of paralyzing fear or blind rage” (2015a: 112). In this respect, van der Kolk does not regard trauma as merely an experience which the victim had in his or her past, but instead portrays it as “the imprint left by that experience on mind, brain, and body” (2015a: 24). Charlotte Delbo (1990) as a Holocaust survivor of Auschwitz compares the process of the integration into her new life in her *Days and Memory* to the portrait of “a snake shedding its old skin” (1). Delbo, moreover, identifies how she is capable of removing the ‘visible traces’ of war trauma as follows: “[w]ith the new skin returned the gestures belonging to an earlier life: the using of a toothbrush, of toilet paper, of a handkerchief, of a knife and fork” (1990: 1) even though the buried memories of her traumatic experiences in Auschwitz are still waiting to be confronted with them.

In actuality, Delbo is haunted by the ghosts of her traumatic memory, together with her bodily and psychic pain in her dreams, “the suffering I feel is so unbearable, so identical to the pain endured there, that I feel it physically, I feel it throughout my whole body”, which signifies her “deep memory” as the memory of sensations, senses, and physical imprints, whereas Delbo also defines “intellectual memory” as the memory of verbalisation and thinking process (1990: 3). Compared to Delbo’s concept of ‘deep memory’, Marcel Proust speaks of “involuntary memory” in his *In Search of Lost Time*, triggered by sensations and sensory stimuli through sound, taste, sight, smell and/or touch, exemplified in his *Swann’s Way* as follows:

No sooner had the warm liquid mixed with the crumbs touched my palate than a shiver ran through me and I stopped, intent upon the extraordinary thing that was happening to me. An exquisite pleasure had invaded my senses, something isolated, detached, with no suggestion of its origin (...) And suddenly the memory revealed itself. (1992: 60, 63)

Proust’s seven-volume novel undeniably enables him to express his recollections of the best and worst moments from his voluntary and involuntary memory. Yet, Proust’s

asthma stems from his childhood trauma, breathing “too much air (love)” and not being permitted “to exhale the superfluous air (control)” (Miller, 2006: 69) by his demanding and dominant mother, proving the imprint of his childhood trauma on the body.

In the foreword of Levine’s *Trauma and Memory*, van der Kolk remarks that “traumatic memories are implicit, and are carried in body and brain”, accompanied by the traumatic feelings, actions, and sensations (2015b: xvi). Levine (2015) also clarifies that there appear two sorts of memory as explicit and implicit as “the former being conscious and the latter relatively unconscious” (15). In this respect, Levine highlights the significance of grasping “the *multidimensional structure of traumatic memory as it is stored in the brain and held in the body*” (2015: xxii). On the other hand, Whitehead (2008) argues the French anthropologist Marc Augé’s notion of the necessity of ‘oblivion’ as much as remembrance in her *Memory* that “[f]orgetting is an active agent in the formation of memories” owing to the interconnected nature of oblivion and memory (121). Accordingly, Alexander Pope (2003) displays how blissful forgetting is thought in his renowned poem *Eloisa to Abelard* as follows: “How happy is the blameless Vestal’s lot!/ The world forgetting, by the world forgot:/ Eternal sunshine of the spotless mind!” (92). However, Milan Kundera questions in his *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* whether the heaviness of remembering is truly dreadful and the lightness of forgetting is splendid (1984: 4). Kundera also reveals that the lightness of oblivion actually arouses the feeling of becoming “only half real” and “insignificant” (5), proving the fact that literary works enable the sufferers of traumatic experience and memory to become closer to their own reality, and the self.

The memories of the traumatic events, nonetheless, return as horrific images, physical sensations, behavioural enactments, nightmares, dissociation, or a combination of all these symptoms. Upon the haunting impact of the traumatic experiences on one’s memories not only during their sleep but also waking lives, Freud remarks as follows:

the traumatic experience is constantly forcing itself upon the patient even in his sleep is a proof of the strength of that experience: the patient is, as one might say, fixated to his trauma (...) I am not aware, however, that patients suffering from traumatic neurosis are much occupied in their waking lives with memories of their accident. Perhaps they are more concerned with *not* thinking of it. (1955a: 13)

From the preceding viewpoint, Hartman (1995) presents that traumatising occurrence is “registered rather than experienced”, bypassing consciousness and perception, whereas the memory of the occurrence appears “in the form of a perpetual troping of it by the

bypassed or severely split (dissociated) psyche” (537). Hartman also stresses the importance of the transmissibility of the traumatic knowledge as the knowledge of trauma, extending into “personal and cultural memory” (1995: 552) through literary works. According to Hartman (1995), there appears “more *listening*, more *hearing* of words within words, and a greater openness to *testimony*” within the literary texts, enabling readers as witnesses to the trauma story to “find a way of *receiving* the story, of listening to it, of drawing it into an interpretive conversation” (541). The trauma story, moreover, requires a “suspension of disbelief” and “kind of empathy” since it strives to lead readers to “believe the unbelievable; it demands the acknowledgement of being real, not only imagined” (Hartman, 1995: 541). This perspective proves the necessity of the story, texts, interpretation, and overall literature as a way of communication.

Trauma narratives actually draw public attention to the significant inquiry about whether the ghosts embodying or incarnating the traumas of the past and representing “a form of collective or cultural haunting” (Whitehead, 2004: 7) can be exorcised, whilst psychoanalysis maintains the possibility of working through the past and making the ghosts disappear. In view of producing trauma narratives as the testimony of the sufferers possessed by the ghosts of the past, Laurie Vickroy asserts in her *Trauma and Survival* that authors create several “narrative strategies to represent a conflicted or incomplete relation to memory”, such as repetition, textual and linear gaps, shifting viewpoints, focusing on affective states and visual images, the fixed and dissociated ideas (2002: 29-30). Accordingly, as Virginia Woolf (1985) utters in her *Moments of Being*, she is tortured not only by the deaths of her mother Julia and half-sister Stella but also the sexual abuse of her half-brothers George and Gerald. Particularly her mother’s death results in great pain and a sense of aimlessness, which leads Woolf’s father Leslie to turn into “the tyrant of inconceivable selfishness” (56). Woolf is so traumatised by George and Gerald’s sexual abuse in her childhood that she feels “ashamed or afraid of” her own body (68) throughout her life. Woolf also suffers the symptoms of depression and dissociation as well as mental breakdowns and suicide attempts under the shadow of her traumatic childhood memories. Thus, this dissertation attempts to emphasise the significance of reading and analysing how childhood trauma is fixated, perpetually relived, and revealed in the wounded minds and memories of the sufferers within the literary texts. By doing so, it undeniably enables the readers to bear testimony to the

unspeakable reality of victim's traumatic experiences and memories, making their scars visible through psychic and bodily symptoms in trauma narratives.

1.4. Exploring Childhood Trauma and Its Long-Term Impacts

A vast number of children as presumably the embodiment of the innocence, joy, and happiness are widely destined to be victimised, neglected, and subjected to all forms of abuse and violence by not only the criminals, rapists or kidnappers but also their own caregivers, and ultimately traumatised by experiencing and/or witnessing such disasters. However, the UNICEF announces in the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child that “[a]ll forms of violence against children, however light, are unacceptable” (2011: article 19, para. 1). In this regard, Freud (1962a) suggests that the imprints of childhood trauma are not apparent “in the conscious memory, only in the symptoms of the illness” (166). Freud also presents that “[t]he traumas of childhood operate in a deferred fashion as though they were fresh experiences; but they do so unconsciously” (1962a: 167). Therefore, as Miller (2006) reveals, even years after the traumatic event, any emotions and/or sensations related to the traumatic experience might trigger the “repressed memories of childhood, memories of abuse, exploitation, humiliation, and hurt suffered in the first few years of life” (30). It enables the victim to communicate “with the child within, the child who lives on inside us, the child who was once spurned, abused, and humiliated” (Miller, 2006: 30). These perspectives prove the existence of the traumatic memory of not only the wounded mind but also the body and the emotions. Furthermore, the emotional impulses of a child are much “intensely and inexhaustibly deep[er] (...) than those of an adult” (Freud, 1964: 134). This viewpoint signifies that childhood trauma becomes much more overwhelming and bewildering in the children's vulnerable world, most likely preventing them from confronting traumatic experiences in comparison to adults, especially if there is no protector at that moment.

On the other hand, as Freud (1962c) elucidates in his *Screen Memories*, “the experiences of the earliest years of our childhood leave ineradicable traces in the depths of our minds” (303). Yet, it is widely found out within the cases of the psychoanalytic treatment in which patients provide their fragmentary recollections – that is to say, quite possibly incomplete, distorted, omitted, falsified, displaced, dissociated or suppressed unconsciously – remaining in the memory from the very early ages of the childhood.

Thus, the person feels “as an observer from outside the scene” in the act of remembrance of the majority of childhood scenes in spite of the awareness of that s/he is this child who experiences all these circumstances (Freud, 1962c: 321). Freud (1962c) also asserts that childhood memories displace, omit or distort the actual event but no doubt bear some similarity to it, and argues that such memories indicate the “earliest years not as they were but as they appeared at the later periods when the memories were aroused” (322). In this regard, Freud (1960) stresses in his *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* that the early childhood memories do not follow “the genuine memory trace but a later revision of it, a revision which may have been subjected to the influences of a variety of later psychical forces” (47-48). Vincent Felitti (2010) as a clinical professor of medicine, however, utters in the foreword of *The Hidden Epidemic* that “[t]raumatic events of the earliest years of infancy and childhood are not lost but, like a child’s footprints in wet cement, are often preserved lifelong”. Felitti also claims that “[t]ime does not heal the wounds that occur in those earliest years; time conceals them” (xiii), which indicates how childhood trauma may adversely affect the sufferer’s entire lifetime.

Likewise, several literary figures suffer from childhood trauma in one way or another, as reflected in their memoirs, which this study benefits to exemplify childhood trauma from the real life experiences. Accordingly, Maya Angelou displays the pain and suffering of her lost childhood in her *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. She is severely tormented by almost all forms of abuse and oppression from the very early ages under the circumstances that black people were racially discriminated, trivialized, insulted, and deprived of even fundamental human rights in employment or education. In this respect, Angelou (1997) states that being Negro is so horrible that she does not possess any control over her life, and as black children, it is brutal to be “trained to sit quietly and listen to charges brought against” their colour without an opportunity of defence (180). Moreover, she regards herself as an unwanted and lonely child because she is sent to her grandmother’s house at the age of 3 in the aftermath of her parents’ divorce. Moving back to her mother’s house at the age of 7 additionally turns into a living nightmare for Angelou since she is molested and raped by her mother’s boyfriend who is arrested for his crime but murdered after he is released on the day of trial. With the burden of shame and guilt, she stops talking for a long time at the cost of physical violence by her relatives. In actuality, Angelou rationalizes her decision with a child’s mind that fears to cause anybody’s death just by talking, “[j]ust my breath, carrying my words out, might

poison people and they'd curl up and die like the black fat slugs" (8). Not only Woolf but also Angelou's reactions to their childhood traumas indicate that children are apt to accuse themselves of the destructive childhood experiences they go through.

As a worldwide well-known author, Charles Bukowski, who frequently suffers feeling inferior and inadequate within the society, is another victim of childhood trauma, and reveals his pain and suffering in his *Ham on Rye* as follows, "I had no interest in anything. I had no idea how I was going to escape (...) there was no place to go. Suicide?" (2007: 174-175). In the light of the preceding lines, Bukowski appears to be haunted by the sense of alienation, purposelessness, and hopelessness, which stems from his violent and severe childhood traumas, including his father's tyranny and brutality as well as his schoolmates' bullying and his mother's indifference to all his anguish and misery. In his *Ham on Rye*, Bukowski pictures his traumatic childhood experiences through the protagonist Henry Chinaski, exposed to his father's gratuitous physical violence with a razor strop on a regular basis from his early ages, which causes the sense of hatred and anger but replaces the sense of numbness not long afterwards. Bukowski's reaction to his childhood traumas seemingly support Levine's statement as follows, "highly traumatized and chronically neglected or abused individuals are dominated by the immobilization/shutdown system" (2010: 102), not allowing victims to escape traumatic scenes but indeed imprisons them in their dissociated and wounded minds.

Franz Kafka similarly portrays in his *Letter to My Father* how he suffers from the sense of alienation, guilt, shame, fear, and hopelessness. Kafka apparently has a problematic and damaging relationship with his dominant and abusive father throughout his childhood, and their broken bond negatively influences all his choices for the future. In this regard, Bruce Perry as a well-known child psychiatrist reveals that "[h]uman beings become a reflection of the world in which they develop (...) if the developing child's world is chaotic, threatening, and devoid of kind words and supportive relationships, a child may become impulsive, aggressive, inattentive, and have difficulties with relationships" (2005: 1). Furthermore, Kafka (2016) identifies that his "sense of being nothing that often dominates" him comes mainly from his father's influence (13), and he is raised "under the heavy pressure of" his father's personality (15), which causes Kafka to lose his self-confidence and develop "a boundless sense of guilt" (42). On the other hand, Kafka describes his childhood viewpoint of his father, "for me as a child everything you called out to me was positively a heavenly

commandment, I never forgot it, it remained for me the most important means of forming a judgment of the world” (17). This perspective proves that children are in desperate need of unconditional love and attachment to their caregivers who are supposed to protect and lead them in the rightest path of life in the eyes of children.

Considering the childhood traumas of McCourt, Woolf, Angelou, Bukowski, Frank, and Kafka as the world-renowned writers who masterfully exemplify the undeniable reality and the disastrous impacts of childhood trauma, Herman (1997) highlights that the sufferers are the prisoners of their childhood, “attempting to create a new life”, but re-experiencing the trauma (110). Herman also maintains that “repeated trauma in childhood forms and deforms the personality”, which causes the victimised children to be “trapped in an abusive environment” and to “compensate for the failures of adult care and protection” by finding a way to protect “a sense of trust in people who are untrustworthy, safety in a situation that is unsafe, control in a situation that is terrifyingly unpredictable” (1997: 96). On the other hand, Freud (1964) classifies the impacts of childhood trauma as remembering the forgotten experiences “under the name of ‘fixations’ to the trauma and (...) a ‘compulsion to repeat’” (75) and as not recalling or repeating the forgotten traumatic events “called as ‘avoidances’, which may be intensified into ‘inhibitions’ and ‘phobias’” (76). Freud also exemplifies how childhood trauma emerges as fixation and repetition compulsion as follows:

a man who has spent his childhood in an excessive and to-day forgotten attachment to his mother, may spend his whole life looking for a wife on whom he can make himself dependent and by whom he can arrange to be nourished and supported. (75)

From the preceding aspect, Shoshana Ringel (2012) presents in her *Attachment Theory, Infant Research, and Neurobiology* that “[c]hildren’s disorganized attachment is also linked to caregivers’ own unresolved loss and trauma, communicated to child via verbal or nonverbal signals and thereby transmitted from one generation to the next” (77). Thus, children’s perspectives for life regarding their decisions, attitudes, hopes or fears are indisputably constituted by and closely connected to their caregivers’ own points of view consciously or unconsciously transferred to the children.

With respect to the child analysis within the psychoanalytic viewpoint, Melanie Klein (1960) as a prominent figure in the studies of child psychology remarks in her *The Psychoanalysis of Children* that Freud’s psychoanalytic treatment of “Little Hans” as the first and foremost analysis of a child indicates “psycho-analytic methods could be

applied to small children” (17). Klein also suggests that the child conveys “its phantasies, its wishes and its actual experiences in a symbolic way through play and games” as Freud utilises “the language of dreams” as a symbolic manifestation of the repressed (1960: 29). Moreover, Klein speaks of how children suffer from intense fear and anxiety, night terrors, great disillusionment, hatred, aggression, and notably “strong feelings of guilt” even in the earliest years of childhood, together with the fondness for and jealousy of the parents as the strong impulses of the children’s Oedipus conflict (1960: 23-26). In this regard, there appear “the primitive and infantile processes of identification” of the children with their parents – that is to say, harming oneself or any objects around may be children’s reflection of their parents who inflict punishments on them (Klein, 1960: 26). According to Klein (1960), “[c]hildren and young people suffer from a more acute degree of anxiety than do adults”, usually together with the anxiety attacks in small children. Klein also clarifies that these anxiety attacks often take “the form of distrust” in the latency period (1960: 37), signifying the high vulnerability of children and the urgent requirement of familial protection and attachment.

Donald Winnicott (2018) as an English psychoanalyst and paediatrician states in his *Psycho-Analytic Explorations* that “[t]he mother is always ‘traumatising’” (146). Winnicott also presents the child’s continuous adaptation as ‘traumatising’, which evolves from “extreme dependence” in the earliest ages to deprivation and “depressive anxieties” (2018: 66), and ultimately independence from the parents. From this perspective, Winnicott (2018) asserts that in their journey from dependence to independence, children have “impulses, ideas and dreams in which there is intolerable conflict: conflict between love and hate, between the wish to preserve and the wish to destroy” no matter how satisfactory their environment is (68). Yet, when the child’s anxieties become unbearable, “the repressed unconscious” emerges as being prone to repeatedly return through intrusive memories, mental and bodily symptoms, nightmares, and/or flashbacks (Winnicott, 2018: 68). Levine and Maggie Kline also maintain in their *Trauma Through a Child’s Eyes* that “[t]he younger the child, the more likely she is to be overwhelmed by common occurrences that might not affect an older child or adult” (2007: 4). Likewise, as Charles Dickens (2002) addresses in his *Great Expectations*,

In the little world in which children have their existence whosoever brings them up, there is nothing so finely perceived and so finely felt, as injustice. It may be only small injustice that the child can be exposed to; but the child is small, and its world is small, and its rocking-horse stands as many hands high (...) as a big-boned Irish hunter. (61)

Levine exemplifies in his *Healing Trauma* that “[e]ven falling off a bicycle can be overwhelming to a child under certain circumstances”, impacting the child “in ways that don’t show up for years” (2008: 8). This viewpoint highlights that a child might be traumatised even if the event is not apparently catastrophic.

John Bowlby as a British psychiatrist, psychologist, and psychoanalyst is best known for his pioneering works on the attachment theory. Bowlby stresses in his *The Making and Breaking of Affectional Bonds* “the requirement of an attachment figure, a secure personal base” as one or more trusted companions and “its urgency during the early years” of childhood (2005: 125). Bowlby and his co-author Mary Ainsworth (1991) additionally emphasise the vital role of “the early interaction between children and parents” in the personality development (333) in their *An Ethological Approach to Personality Development*. Bowlby and Ainsworth also reveal that children undergo three similar processes of distress upon their separation from their mothers – in other words, protest, despair, and detachment respectively (1991: 335), which is thought as a natural process in the child’s personality development. Yet, as Bowlby et al. (1956) suggest in their *The Effects of Mother-Child Separation*, especially children at early ages suffer from the long-lasting impacts of deprivation rather than “only temporarily disturbed” when they are dispossessed of the constant attention and care of “a mother or mother-substitute” (211). In this respect, Bowlby (1988) asserts in his *A Secure Base* that a child suffers from the intense anxiety and anger over any separation and threats to abandon. Nevertheless, when the child’s distress is not comforted but increased by “repeated and impatient rejections” (86), there may appear several psychological troubles such as the incessant distrust of the child’s own sensations and the arousal of suspicions about other people as well as “a tendency to find everything unreal” (103), which cause children to be adversely impacted in their not only childhood but also adulthood.

Perry and his co-author Maia Szalavitz, nonetheless, indicate in their *The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog* that great importance was not attached “to how trauma might harm children” (2017: xxiii). These children were actually thought “to be naturally ‘resilient’, with an innate ability to ‘bounce back’”, despite the fact that a great many children suffer trauma as the victims of abuse, violence and/or neglect, and it is crystal clear that these children are not “bouncing back” (Perry & Szalavitz, 2017: xxiii). Accordingly, as Perry and Ishnella Azad (1999) clarify in their *Posttraumatic Stress Disorders in Children and Adolescents*, millions of children experience and/or witness

various forms of traumatic events every year, and “[o]ver 30% of these children develop a clinical syndrome with emotional, behavioral, cognitive, social, and physical symptoms called posttraumatic stress disorder” (310). It results in psychic and somatic troubles in their childhood and adulthood connected to childhood trauma. Felitti, thus, draws public attention to be well aware of the reality of childhood trauma as follows:

Why are only some of us suicides, or addicts, or obese, or criminals? Why do some of us die early while others live long? What is the nature of the scream on the other side of silence? What does it mean that some memories are unspeakable, forgotten or lost in amnesia – and does it matter? Is there a hidden price being paid for this comfort of remaining unaware? (2010: xiii)

In the light of the preceding lines, a vast number of children undeniably suffer several significant mental and bodily problems due to their childhood trauma, which wounds their minds, bodies, and emotions. Perry and Szalavitz, moreover, elucidate that children most probably manage to survive trauma emotionally, psychologically, or physically thanks to the support, love, and encouragement of “the people around them—particularly the adults they should be able to trust and rely upon” (2017: xxvii-xxviii). The crucial role of the family and/or family substitute is, therefore, illustrated in whether the victimised children are capable of working through childhood trauma or are haunted by the ghosts of their traumatic memory throughout their lives.

Accordingly, this study illustrates that each protagonist in the selected novels suffers various childhood traumas at different ages in different cultures causing them to be filled with the sense of unworthiness, hopelessness, insecurity, disillusionment, guilt, anxiety, rage, and fear through their traumatic memories. From this perspective, this dissertation comprises four chapters including introduction that provides the theoretical background, three chapters as the analytical parts, and conclusion that attempts to shed light on the main points of the concept of childhood trauma and its everlasting adverse impacts which are discussed in the theoretical and analytical chapters. Introduction of this dissertation as Chapter One encompasses the theoretical background of childhood trauma, traumatic memory, trauma theory, and psychoanalytic approach. It also refers to the studies of psychologists, psychiatrists, psychoanalysts, neurologists, and trauma theorists such as Freud, Caruth, LaCapra, Levine, Herman, Laub, van der Kolk, and Hartman, alongside the exemplary real-life experiences of childhood trauma from the memoirs of McCourt, Woolf, Angelou, Bukowski, Frank, and Kafka. Chapter Two mainly examines Pari and Abdullah as Afghan siblings who live in severe poverty in

Khaled Hosseini's *And the Mountains Echoed*. These siblings suffer from the childhood traumas of the separation of the siblings and the death of the mother, alongside Abdullah's being in the role of the caregiver as well as Pari's repressed and forgotten traumatic early childhood with her traumatic memory upon her adoption by a rich family at the age of 3. Chapter Three covers that Carla as the last witness to the horrors of war at an early age in Bosnia fundamentally suffers from the childhood traumas of ethnic cleansing, rape camps, psychological and physical violence in Glenn Meade's *The Last Witness*, together with Carla's suppressed and dissociated identity with her amnesiac memory after witnessing a brutal massacre at the age of 10. Chapter Four presents that Bride, who is subjected to racial discrimination even by her own parents beginning from birth, primarily suffers from the childhood traumas of blackness, otherness, and alienation in Toni Morrison's *God Help the Child* being deeply traumatised by her own parents as well as the white community because of her 'midnight black' skin colour.

To conclude, this dissertation attempts to reveal that children as the vulnerable innocents in dire need of first and foremost adult care and protection are psychologically, emotionally and/or physically wounded not only by the outside world but also by their own caregivers to whom children, unlike adults, possess unconditional affection, submissiveness, and attachment. Owing to the children's preceding viewpoint of the caregivers, the victimised protagonists in the selected novels of this study are much more traumatised by the absence of or damage to their own protectors during the traumatic events of their childhood. In this respect, this study compares the ways the wounded children in the selected novels are traumatised and how they react to the unbearable suffering of neglect, separation, oppression, alienation as well as all forms of violence and abuse, as the primary and secondary victims of childhood trauma, alongside the lasting impacts upon their adulthood that is possessed by the ghosts of their traumatic memories. This dissertation also identifies the individual suffering of the wounded children who are of from various age groups and cultural backgrounds in the selected novels, illustrating how their deep traumas make these victimised children perpetually suffer painful symptoms such as dissociation, memory disturbances, flashbacks, and nightmares. These distressing effects are not limited to their mental and emotional well-being but also manifest in their physical bodies. This study, moreover, maintains that childhood trauma as the individual suffering leaves the protagonists in the selected novels highly vulnerable and literally speechless freezing at or avoiding the traumatic

moments they experience and/or witness in their childhood without any protectors or attachment figures. However, their unspeakable untold stories find a way out of the unconscious through flashbacks, nightmares, repetitive psychic, and somatic symptoms, and/or nonlinear narrative of the traumatic remembrances involuntarily triggered by notably sensational reminders no matter how deeply they are buried in the traumatic memories of these children who indeed feel trapped in their unbearable experiences.



2. CHAPTER TWO: Trauma of Separation and Loss in Khaled Hosseini's *And the Mountains Echoed*

There are a lot of children in Afghanistan, but little
childhood.

—Khalid Hosseini, *The Kite Runner*

Not so bad? People dying? Women, children, old people?
Homes destroyed again? Not so bad?

—Khalid Hosseini, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*

Afghans and Somalis and Iraqis and Eritreans and
Syrians (...) All of us in search of home.

—Khalid Hosseini, *Sea Prayer*

Khaled Hosseini as an Afghan-born American physician and author masterfully portrays the severe pain and suffering of the terrorised, oppressed, marginalised, and traumatised minorities, particularly Afghan women and children, in his *The Kite Runner* (2003), *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007), *And the Mountains Echoed* (2013), and *Sea Prayer* (2018). To put it another way, Hosseini presents how wars and terrors under the shadow of power struggles ruin the Afghan people socially, culturally, economically, and politically, inflicting them all forms of violence as well as creating the tribulations of conflicts, poverty, famine, discrimination, and displacement. In this regard, according to Rebecca Stuhr, Hosseini addresses “a wide range of important current events and contemporary issues” in his writings (2009: 65). The common ground in his novels appears that women and children are tortured and abused, lacking security and even fundamental physiological requirements such as food, water, shelter, and clothing. Moreover, as Hosseini maintains in an interview with Tamara Jones, he mainly writes about wounded “characters who suffer terrible things to survive” thanks to his own knowledge and experience in Afghanistan (*The Washington Post*, 2007) despite being pushed into living in exile like many other Afghans throughout the history.

On the other hand, Hosseini's works globally display “a side of Afghanistan that goes beyond war and terror” as asserted by Harmeet Kaur in an interview with Hosseini, who is also in the pursuit of altering the chief association of Afghanistan “with the Taliban and the war, terrorism and drug trade” (*CNN World*, 2021). In actuality, as Hosseini identifies in an interview with Farhad Azad, his novels provide “Western readers with a fresh perspective” echoing the Afghan society, culture, and traditions as well as their struggle for life in Afghanistan and abroad as exiles, unlike the stories

whose central focus is “the various wars, the opium trade, the war on terrorism” in Afghanistan (*Afghan Magazine*, 2004). Therefore, Hosseini’s novels seemingly picture his own childhood memories of the final peaceful days in 1970s’ Afghanistan as much as the traumatic scars that are left on the Afghans’ minds and bodies subsequent to the ongoing coups, invasions, and battles. In this respect, Hosseini also elucidates in an interview with Razeshta Sethna that Kabul was world-renowned with its dynamic cultural, intellectual, and artistic life as well as women’s indispensable contributions to the Afghan economy, by working as physicians, lawyers, artists, or professors in the 1960s and 1970s (*Newsline*, 2003), who have been, nevertheless, first and foremost victimised exactly the same as the Afghan children.

Accordingly, this chapter primarily aims to analyse and interpret the childhood trauma of separation and loss as the individual suffering by delving deeply into Abdullah and Pari’s trauma wounds as two close but broken siblings in Khaled Hosseini’s *And the Mountains Echoed*, which narrates the siblings’ trauma story through the story-within-a-story technique. The novel additionally encompasses many different traumatised and traumatising characters closely connected with the siblings within the nine chapters. Hosseini’s *And the Mountains Echoed*, furthermore, describes the traumatic occurrences and experiences in Afghanistan not only on the dark side but also on the bright side, not different from his other writings. Hence Hosseini provides his readers with the opportunity to witness strong bonds between friends and families as much as hostility and violence or compassion and hope as much as injustice and cruelty. Hosseini entitles *And the Mountains Echoed* under the inspiration of William Blake’s last lines, “the little ones leaped & shouted & laugh’d / and all the hills ecchoed” (1971: 39) in his poem *Nurse’s Song*, published within his *Songs of Innocence* in 1789. The poem explicitly reveals that the hills where children happily play echo their innocence, peace, and joy, together with the sound of their voices. In Hosseini’s *And the Mountains Echoed*, however, the mountains of Afghanistan where Abdullah aged 10 and Pari aged 3 embark on a journey ending up their forced separation indisputably echo the everlasting pain and suffering they go through throughout their lifetime.

Khaled Hosseini introduces the novel with an epigraph that includes Jelaluddin Rumi’s lines, “out beyond ideas / of wrongdoing and rightdoing, / there is a field. / I’ll meet you there”, published in his poem *A Great Wagon* in the 13th century. From Rumi’s perspective, the preceding lines stress the significance of transcending all the judgments

and prejudices to accomplish oneness with everyone and everything. Likewise, Hosseini presents his own viewpoint of the storytelling by means of Rumi's words, signifying his narration should be interpreted beyond all the judgments and prejudices. Hosseini also recommends "a degree of both humility and charity when judging the inner workings of another person's heart" (2013: 108). Thereupon, at the beginning of the novel, Hosseini gives his readers a few strong hints to get an idea about the fate of two little siblings Abdullah and Pari through their father Saboor's bedtime story of a farmer and a father of five, Baba Ayub, who works hard to feed his large family in a small village the same as Saboor. Baba Ayub is faced with a difficult choice by a div as a giant creature that forcefully takes his beloved son to a mountain peak, whether to allow him to live happily there with the other children whose memories are completely erased or to take him back to the suffering of the drought, famine, and poverty in their village. Baba Ayub, thus, decides to leave his son and is rewarded with a potion to erase his painful memories, which is regarded as "an act of mercy" (13) by Saboor, who also puts his little daughter up for adoption by a wealthy family for her own good, but resulting in Abdullah and Pari's lifelong suffering the trauma of separation and loss as reflected in the novel.

2.1. Khaled Hosseini and the Heartbreak of Afghanistan

Upon being announced as a Goodwill Ambassador of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], Khaled Hosseini establishes the Khaled Hosseini Foundation in order to assist the Afghan people to heal their wounds. Furthermore, under the influence of the prevailing refugee problems and the death of the three-year-old Alan Kurdi, Hosseini writes *Sea Prayer* in the form of a letter from a father to his son, Marwan, striving to flee the deadly war in the hope of reaching the safety of a new home in Europe but dying like a great many other refugees around the world, and donates his proceeds of this book to the UNHCR. Hosseini's worldview and his reflections in his writings and interviews indicate his aims to make the wounds of all the discriminated, oppressed, and tormented Afghan people visible to the world, by also providing not only the times of despair but also the times of hope in Afghanistan. In his writings, Hosseini mainly addresses the victimisation and traumatisation of notably the Afghan children, hence stating in his debut novel *The Kite Runner* that "[c]hildren are fragile (...) Kabul is already full of broken children" (2004: 193). Similarly, in his *And*

the Mountains Echoed, Abdullah and Pari as the broken Afghan children are forcibly separated from each other as the victims of the devastating impacts of all the tribulations caused by the power struggle throughout the modern history of Afghanistan.

Hosseini recalls the good times of his childhood in the 60s and 70s' Afghanistan, as Stuhr identifies, when women get educated and work freely, but are restricted from even their fundamental rights to move freely or have access to education and healthcare with the destructive effects of invasions and wars in the following years (2009: 4). With regard to his remembrances of the peaceful days of Afghanistan in his childhood, Hosseini pursues his aim to present the mosaic of the Afghan culture, customs, heritage, and familial relationships besides the hardships and tribulations they go through in his writings. Accordingly, Hosseini clarifies in an interview with Elizabeth Harris, "[i]f you look up stories about Afghanistan (...) [t]here is precious little about the Afghan people themselves" (*The New York Times*, 2021). Additionally, in an interview with Hermione Hoby, Hosseini highlights the prominent role of family in the Afghan society as follows, "in Afghanistan, you don't understand yourself solely as an individual (...) You understand yourself as a son, a brother, a cousin to somebody, an uncle to somebody. You are part of something bigger than yourself" (*Guardian*, 2013). In this respect, Hosseini provides a much deeper portrait of Afghanistan with a more optimistic view, but without denying the grim fact that millions of Afghans have been imprisoned in a state of anxiety and fear, alongside the ongoing crisis, conflicts, and displacements.

The recent Afghan history shows that the Afghan society strives to survive the nightmare world from the Soviet invasion in 1979 to the Civil War in 1992 and the subsequent rise of the Taliban in 1996 until the American invasion in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in 2001. According to the collaborative report named *The Cost of War* written by Ashley Jackson, millions of Afghans are killed, disabled, imprisoned, tortured, executed, displaced, and disappeared in this period of time, also adding that "[r]ape of women and children became an all too common occurrence" (2009: 6). All the ongoing conflicts and wars in addition to the Taliban's repressive policies lead the Afghan society to go through an economic crisis and badly suffer from poverty and unemployment by making Afghanistan become "one of the poorest, least developed countries in the world" (Jackson, 2009: 14). Hosseini reveals the damaging effects of the rise of the Taliban particularly on the Afghan children and women who are pictured as powerless to resist in his *And the Mountains Echoed* as follows:

[T]he fighting ended with the arrival of the Taliban, those sharp-faced young men with dark beards, kohl-rimmed eyes, and whips. Their cruelty and excesses have also been well documented (...) They saved the bulk of their contempt and zealotry for the young, especially the poor women. (2013: 124)

Even though the fall of the Taliban regime gives the Afghan people a glimmer of hope for a better future in 2001, the Taliban wage war to seize power for 20 years, which ends up with American soldiers' withdrawal and the Taliban's rise to power in 2021. Accordingly, Hosseini displays Afghans' horror, hopelessness, bewilderment, and disappointment in an interview with George Louis Martínez, clarifying that the Taliban have consistently terrorized and brutalized Afghans, blown up roads, hospitals, and schools, and slaughtered numerous Afghans, who are mostly "just ordinary villagers, women and children as well" (NPR, 2021). The preceding perspective displays the fact that the Afghan women and children have been exposed to the worst of these tribulations as the most silenced, marginalised, and traumatised beings.

As Hosseini voices one of his characters in his *And the Mountains Echoed*, there appear "[a] thousand tragedies per square mile" in Kabul (163). In this regard, Alexander Linklater presents Hosseini's primary concern in this novel as "the relationship of Afghanistan to the wider world; what its traumas have done to those who remain and what happens to those who leave and then come back to rediscover their country" (Guardian, 2013), which reveals the recurring theme in all his writings. Therefore, as reflected by Hosseini in his *And the Mountains Echoed*, it becomes inevitable for the Afghan people, women and children in particular, to suffer from the unspeakable traumas not only individually but also collectively upon being exposed to such traumatic occurrences for such a prolonged period of time. The trauma survivors, notably children, in Afghanistan or in exile inevitably go through despair, distrust, anxiety as well as fear, and they suffer from the remembrance or repression of their traumatic memories in the aftermath of experiencing and/or witnessing killings, torture, displacement, violence, abuse, and/or poverty. In this respect, Perry elucidates in his *Maltreatment and the Developing Child*, "[w]e are the product of our childhoods" (2005: 3), proving such children are adversely impacted by their traumatic childhood throughout their lives.

Hosseini indeed gives voice to his characters' suffering as expressed in words or silence taking account of the familial relationships between fathers and sons in *The Kite Runner*, between mothers and daughters in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, and between brothers and sisters in *And the Mountains Echoed*. In essence, this chapter encompasses

the analysis of childhood trauma as the individual suffering, fundamentally with regard to Abdullah and Pari's trauma of separation and loss in Hosseini's *And the Mountains Echoed* by scrutinising the underlying causes of their traumas and the adverse effects on their both childhood and adulthood from the viewpoint of psychoanalysis and trauma theory. Furthermore, this chapter attempts to touch upon the childhood traumas of the characters such as Nila, Parwana, Markos, Roshi, and Thalia whose stories are closely attached with the siblings within the novel that addresses the overwhelming events set mostly in Afghanistan, but also in France, Pakistan, America, and Greece to display the destiny of Afghans in exile and non-Afghans' connection to Afghanistan through Hosseini's nonlinear narrative. Accordingly, as Whitehead (2004) highlights Caruthian viewpoint of trauma fiction, "if trauma is at all susceptible to narrative formulation, then it requires a literary form which departs from conventional linear sequence" (6) since the traumatic occurrence is not comprehended as it occurs but belatedly traumatises after severe emotional crisis, which ultimately breaks the flow of linearity and causality in *And the Mountains Echoed* as a trauma narrative.

2.2. Traumatic Loss and Mourning in the Eyes of Children

The tragedy of the central characters, Abdullah and Pari, occurs upon the death of their mother while giving birth to Pari in 1949, which leads Abdullah to assume a mother's role strengthening their bonds in an inseparable way. Thus, the core tragedy of these siblings happens shortly after they set off on foot across the desert for Kabul where Pari is put up for adoption by Nila and Suleiman Wahdati as a wealthy childless couple in 1952. In actuality, Abdullah and Pari as the wounded children apparently struggle to survive under harsh circumstances in their needy village, Shadbagh, together with their father Saboor and stepmother Parwana, who regards the siblings as "another woman's leftovers" (22) to Abdullah's opinion. Nonetheless, their unconditional love for and close attachment to one another seem sufficient for them to experience a sense of joy and give meaning to their lives. In Abdullah's words, Pari is his universe as "the only true family" (24) who would never ever hurt Abdullah whose love for Pari is "vast and unclouded" (25). Indisputably, their forced separation during their childhood deeply traumatises their mind, emotions, and body by resulting in their unbearable pain and suffering throughout their lifetime. In this respect, as Levine and Kline utter, trauma

devastatingly affects “children’s emotional and physical well-being, cognitive development, and behavior” (2007: 3), which signifies the utmost importance of digging into the characters’ traumatic past to succeed in comprehending the role of childhood trauma not only in their childhood but also in their adulthood.

Concerning Abdullah and Pari’s childhood trauma, the novel occasionally raises the question about whether “memory is a blessing (...) or is memory a curse”, which enables them to remember all their beloved ones or to relive all the pains and sorrows they go through as Hosseini clarifies in an interview with Rachel Martin (*NPR*, 2013). In this regard, Miller, who chiefly strives to voice the victimised and silenced children as a psychoanalyst, emphasises in her *The Drama of the Gifted Child* the heavy burden but the necessity of facing and recalling the truth of the traumatic past and the self since a considerable number of people “pay dearly for its loss with grave illness” (1990: 3-4). The wounded siblings, therefore, are supposed to remember and work through their trauma of separation and loss to explore their true selves despite all their pain and suffering because its repression to the unconscious finds a way out of the unconscious, together with the mental or bodily symptoms. Accordingly, although Pari aged 3 is effectively manipulated to forget almost all the details of her childhood experiences with Abdullah after her adoption, she is always filled with the sense of “the absence of something, or someone, fundamental to her own existence” (189), beginning from the siblings’ traumatic separation in her early childhood to her remembrance of her beloved brother thanks to her step-uncle’s letter and their reunion in their old age.

Abdullah aged 10, however, is haunted by the ghosts of his traumatic memories even though his father makes great efforts to repress his endless suffering not allowing him to express his true painful emotions and to mourn the loss of his childhood in the aftermath of their forced separation with Pari. According to Joy Malik-Hasbrook (2018) as a clinical psychologist, “the child internalizes the external experience of the parental relationship” for the development of several areas such as managing stress and fear, perceiving the world, connecting with others, and regulating mechanisms of inner calming as well as internal feelings (Traumatic Separation, para. 1). Hence Abdullah is not permitted to even cry as forced by the perception of his father’s way of mourning, and nobody in the village does not ask about her or speak her name apart from Pari’s beloved dog named Shuja in which Abdullah finds “a reflection of his own grief” (47). Thus, as Freud identifies in his *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*, “the affective

reactions to a separation (...) are pain and mourning” (1959: 131). Likewise, as Lata Mishra reflects in her *Grief and Memory of Loss*, the siblings’ separation causes “childhood traumatic grief”, especially for Abdullah (2015: 190). Therefore, as Levine and Kline maintain, a vast number of children suffer anxiety, depression, hyperactivity, and learning difficulties “[w]hen children are asked to ‘turn the other cheek,’ ‘put on a happy face,’ or ‘strike back’ in situations where they are experiencing daily terror” (2007: 30), which indicates the necessity of mourning for the loss and revealing the traumatic and painful emotions but not repressing them.

Freud (1957) portrays ‘mourning’ in his *Mourning and Melancholia* as the reaction to traumatic occurrences such as “the loss of a loved person (...) one’s country, liberty, an ideal, and so on” (243). Freud also elucidates that ‘profound mourning’ as the response to the loss of a beloved one embodies “the same painful frame of mind, the same loss of interest in the outside world (...) the same loss of capacity to adopt any new object of love (...) and the same turning away from any activity that is not connected with thoughts of” the lost loved one (1957: 244). Abdullah seems to be in profound mourning, and his heart literally aches for Pari desperately wishing to forget all his traumatic experiences similar to Baba Ayub. Consequently, Abdullah appears to agree with Frederick Nietzsche in his words, “[b]lessed are the forgetful: for they ‘get the better’ even of their blunders” (1997: 88), but there is no way to erase his memories. Abdullah senses Pari as his little beloved sister everywhere and provides his painful feelings as follows: “[s]he was like the dust that clung to his shirt. She was in the silences that had become so frequent at the house, silences that welled up between their words, sometimes cold and hollow, sometimes pregnant with things that went unsaid” (49). In the light of the preceding lines, Abdullah seemingly feels fixated on his trauma of separation and loss being imprisoned in prolonged longing and agony throughout his life owing to the fact that he feels homeless and has “nothing left for him” (49) without the existence of Pari, who always stands in the centre of Abdullah’s whole life.

In actuality, the novel provides the heart-wrenching moment of Abdullah and Pari’s forced separation in Wahdatis’ house in Kabul and many other significant details to enlighten Pari’s early childhood through their step-uncle Nabi’s letter to Pari as a confession and atonement for his guilty conscience long years later since Nabi is the one who suggests Nila to adopt Pari and eventually tears the siblings apart. Although Abdullah cries soundlessly and begs Nila not to take her little sister, she separates the

siblings claiming, “this is for the best” (45). Considering his letter given to a Greek plastic surgeon Markos, who arrives in Kabul to help the victims of war in 2002, Nabi regrets his evil deeds because he aids Nila with the adoption of Pari due to his unrequited love for her even though he is perfectly aware of the damage he gives to the siblings. In Nabi’s words, there is such a deep affinity between the siblings that Abdullah is “as much father to Pari as sibling” (93) satisfying her every need from birth, and he has boundless patience with her. Nabi is, therefore, haunted by the painful memory of the harrowing moment of their separation when he is unable to comprehend how he harms “those two helpless children, in whom love of the simplest and purest kind” (102) finds expression. Nabi additionally portrays the traumatic scene of the siblings’ separation as follows: “Pari slung over my shoulder, panic-stricken, kicking her legs, shrieking (...) Abdullah, screaming his sister’s name, trying to fight past his father” (102), which indicates the origin of their profound traumatisedness that is relived with mental, emotional, and bodily symptoms over and over throughout their lives.

2.3. Separate Paths, Inseparable Bonds

Despite the grim fact that the siblings Abdullah and Pari are forcibly separated from each other during their childhood, their separate paths are reunited thanks to Pari’s re-traumatising remembrance of her childhood in her adulthood and their inseparably special bonds. Upon Markos’s contact with Pari so that he can enable her to receive Nabi’s posthumous letter in 2010, Pari aged 61 feels worried and even frightened to be lost in the darkness of the past, which may prove “the entire organism—body, mind, and spirit—becomes stuck and continues to behave as if there is a clear and present danger” (van der Kolk, 2015b: xiv). On the other hand, she regards herself as “Afghan only in name” (228) owing to her repressed childhood memories in Afghanistan until the age of six. Pari, nonetheless, feels a strong desire to learn about the truths of her roots and identity as she always has serious doubts about being Wahdatis’ daughter and never gets any satisfactory answers to her questions, particularly about her sense of absence since her childhood. In addition, Pari does not grasp why Nila states, “I don’t know who you are, what you’re capable of, in your blood. You’re a stranger to me” (206) as soon as she discovers the romantic relationship between Pari and Julien, who also dates with Nila years ago. However, Caruth (1995) portrays the Freudian viewpoint of the belated

nature of trauma as follows: “the impact of the traumatic event lies precisely in its belatedness, in its refusal to be simply located, in its insistent appearance outside the boundaries of any single place or time” (9). Similarly, Pari’s traumatic childhood of separation and loss belatedly come flooding back, deeply re-traumatising her.

In this regard, when Markos reads the whole letter to Pari on the phone, her early childhood memories with Abdullah come flooding back as follows, and hence, her life-long sense of absence and Nila’s explicable remarks that are intentionally uttered to hurt Pari’s feelings make sense upon her remembrance:

A startling thing is happening to her (...) The picture of it in her mind is of an ax striking soil and suddenly rich black oil bubbling up to the surface. This is what is happening to her, memories struck upon, rising up from the depths (...) Pari feels a hole opening up in her. There has been in her life, all her life, a great absence. Somehow, she has always known. “Brother,” she says, unaware she is speaking. Unaware she is weeping. A verse from a Farsi song suddenly tumbles to her tongue. (237-238)

Pari’s preceding reactions call to mind Freud and Breuer’s famous statement, “[h]ysterics suffer mainly from reminiscences” (1955: 7), which signifies Pari’s re-traumatisation subsequent to her remembrance of the loss of her beloved brother Abdullah. Freud and Breuer (1955) also regard the memory of trauma as acting “like an agent provocateur in releasing the symptom (...) like a foreign body” in the unconscious (6-7), signifying that the memory of trauma appears with the psychic, somatic, and/or emotional symptoms although those memories belong to the very early ages. According to Freud, “[t]he age to which the content of the earliest memories of childhood is usually referred back is the period between the ages of two and four” even though there appear people “whose memory reaches back further—even to the time before the completion of their first year” (1962c: 304). In addition, Herman (1997) addresses a psychiatric study in which any of the children are unable to verbally describe the traumatic events that occur during their infancy, whereas most of them show “evidence of traumatic memory” (38) in their play and behaviour, together with their certain fears encoded in these traumatised children’s memory. Pari’s childhood trauma seems to be waiting inside her wounded mind for a lifetime as repressed in the unconscious and forgotten or thought to be forgotten but proving its existence with its mental, emotional, and/or bodily symptoms.

Pari indeed suffers from the “tearful anxiety and homesickness” (103) as her first reactions to Wahdatis, who strive to reshape her world and accept them as her new family, Nila as ‘Maman’ and Suleiman as ‘Papa’. John Bowlby (2005) elucidates that

the “threat of loss arouses anxiety and actual loss gives rise to sorrow; whilst each of these situations is likely to arouse anger” (86). Likewise, Pari experiences anxiety, sorrow, and anger as her first and foremost reactions to their separation from Abdullah until Wahdatis manage to repress her childhood trauma. Until the age of six, Pari is taught French as the mother tongue of Nila’s own mother and masterfully brainwashed into forgetting everything and everyone associated with her life in Shadbagh, together with Abdullah. Thereafter, Mr Wahdati has a stroke making “[h]alf of his face (...) a frozen mask” (107) with the disability of walking, which eventually results in Nila’s abandonment of Kabul with Pari to Paris. Concerning Pari’s own narration of her life in Paris, Pari is seemingly deceived by Nila about the death of Suleiman in Kabul upon their departure and has a predominantly troubled relationship with Nila until she commits suicide in 1974. Pari, moreover, portrays Nila as an irresponsible mother who has alcohol problems and is often taken to hospital, which leads Pari to constantly feel anxious because of such alarming calls. In terms of Nila’s irresponsibility and pushing Pari into feeling like an abandoned child, Pari recalls an overwhelming childhood experience when Nila leaves her alone at home for days:

Pari’s mind flashes to when she was ten, when she’d come home one day from school and found twenty-five francs and a handwritten note on the kitchen table. *I’ve gone to Alsace with Marc. You remember him. Back in a couple of days (...)* Pari had stood shaking in the kitchen, eyes filling up, telling herself two days wasn’t so bad. (178)

Furthermore, Nila apparently feels regretful for adopting Pari from her remarks, “I’ve come to believe she’s my punishment” (216) in her interview with a magazine.

Nila’s interview as an Afghan poet in Paris, on the other hand, displays her own childhood traumas of the sense of abandonment and loneliness in the aftermath of her parents’ divorce at the age of 10 and subsequently her mother’s death in Paris. According to Mishra (2015), “being rejected by her mother, father, husband and finally daughter leads to negative feelings like anxiety, depression, grief, jealousy and loneliness in Nila” (194). As a protest against her father who is regarded by Nila as the reason for the loss of her mother, she turns into a rebellious child and does anything that he feels furious at and ashamed of, which may be also seen as a reflection of her childhood trauma. At a very young age, Nila additionally escapes death owing to her illness and gets a risky operation that results in the impossibility for her to become a mother. However, her father is unable to grasp her great pain and suffering as well as how vulnerable she feels since her childhood, “[h]e didn’t understand that I felt lost (...) That was how I felt,

disoriented, suspended in confusion, stripped of my compass. Unspeakably depressed as well” (214). Accordingly, her vulnerability drives her into the depths of despair and to marry Suleiman as well as adopt Pari possibly so that she could fill the void in her life. Nevertheless, their marriage does not suffice to bring her happiness due to the fact that her husband Suleiman does not show her much affection, and she also learns about his love for their cook and driver Nabi. Years after Nila abandons Suleiman and goes to Paris with Pari, he confesses his love for Nabi, “we weren’t the same, you and I, that it was an impossible thing what I wanted (...) I have loved you a long, long time, Nabi” (119), which is a complete shock for him in spite of his suspicions and actually very unfavourable for the Afghan society at that time.

Nila’s suicide, on the other hand, indicates that nothing becomes enough for her to cope with her traumatic experiences, and as a matter of fact, causing Pari to suffer “the guilt, the terrible remorse, catching her off guard, and that she would ache to the bones with it (...) [which] would be the dripping faucet at the back of her mind” (217). Nila’s suicide seemingly imprisons Pari in the sense of guiltiness and leaves unanswered questions behind with her statements in the interview just before her death. Thus, as Miller elucidates, “every childhood’s conflictual experiences remain hidden and locked in darkness” (1990: 5), highlighting the devastating impacts of the narcissistic mothers who are physically and/or emotionally abandoned by their parents like Nila on their children. Miller, furthermore, asserts that such narcissistic mothers feel themselves at the centre “of attention, for her child’s eyes follow her everywhere [and] [w]hen a woman ha[s] to suppress and repress all these needs in relation to her own mother, they rise from the depth of her unconscious and seek gratification through her own child” (1990: 11). Nila actually takes revenge for the pain and suffering of her own childhood traumas for her parental deprivation, hence making Pari her victim to satisfy her needs. According to Pari, Nila demands her to fill the holes inside of her, but as Pari realises, “*I wasn’t enough. I wasn’t nearly enough. I was no balm to your pain, only another dead end, another burden*” (221), resulting in Pari’s sense of lifelong guilt and inadequacy.

Abdullah and Pari are haunted by their traumatic memories even after long years, despite the differences in their symptoms, which can be explained by LaCapra’s words, “[s]omething of the past always remains, if only as a haunting presence or symptomatic revenant” (2014: 49). According to Luckhurst (2006), it is the traumatic memory “hidden away in the psyche” but not the traumatic event, leading to the emergence of

psychic and somatic symptoms since a psychological trauma is something entering the psyche in such an overwhelming or unprecedented manner “that it cannot be processed or assimilated by usual mental processes” and there appears “nowhere to put it”, moving away from the conscious memory, but still existing “in the mind like an intruder or ghost” (499). Hence Baba Ayub is unable to grasp “why a wave of something, something like the tail end of a sad dream, always swept through him whenever he heard the jingling, surprising him each time like an unexpected gust of wind” (15) as an incomprehensible remembrance of his dearest son’s bell around his neck even though his memory is totally erased by the div. Similarly, Abdullah feels compelled to live with the ghost of Pari and suffers from the separation anxiety from his loved ones throughout his life, whereas Pari suffers from a sense of emptiness that she is unable to grasp until she gets Nabi’s letter. Although Pari does not remember a great many details of their traumatic childhood experiences that Abdullah also forgets owing to his illness during his old age, their childhood trauma of separation and loss manages to display itself through mental, emotional, and somatic symptoms.

Considering the profound impacts of the siblings’ childhood traumas both on their childhood and adulthood, it can be highlighted that Pari regards Abdullah as an attachment figure who is of vital importance and requirement particularly at her early age because children desperately need and desire, as Bowlby points out, “for a secure base (...) and shape their behaviour accordingly” (2005: 161). In addition, Bowlby (2005) suggests that “whoever is principally mothering a child becomes his principal attachment figure” and the child’s attachment behaviour actively continues “until near the end of the third year” (155). On the other hand, Ursula Markham as a counsellor and hypnotherapist clarifies in her *Childhood Trauma* that young children aged under 12 like Abdullah and Pari are “very vulnerable to the words and deeds of other people and to the events (...) [and] have very little choice in what happens in their lives” (2016: 7). Therefore, the siblings seem to possess no option other than being dependent on the adults around them particularly after their mother’s death though Abdullah feels compelled to assume the parental role for Pari until her age of 3, and Abdullah manages to provide the unconditional love and attachment much more than anyone else. Markham (2016), moreover, suggests that very young children see their parents “as all-knowing and all-powerful people who are never wrong” (9), and such children blame themselves

when they are rejected by their parents, which actually causes the disappointment and sorrow in the several characters during their childhood.

Likewise, Ainsworth (2004) describes 'attachment' in her *Attachments and Other Affectional Bonds* as "an affectional bond, and hence an attachment figure is never wholly interchangeable with or replaceable by another" (38), adding that older siblings are most likely to "play a paternal, caregiving role with one or more of their younger siblings" (46) under certain circumstances. The preceding viewpoints indicate the fact that Pari and the older sibling Abdullah as her attachment figure since her birth apparently build an inseparable relationship as though Pari is Abdullah's daughter more than a sister, which makes their separation much more overwhelming and traumatising for both siblings. Ainsworth also identifies that "[i]nexplorable separation tends to cause distress, and permanent loss would cause grief" (2004: 38). In this regard, separation from and loss of a loved person "confirm the person's worst expectations" and drive one into intense anxiety, despair, anger, depression, and/or self-blame by most probably causing such people to encounter some "difficulties when they get married and have children" (Bowlby, 2005: 165). From this perspective, Abdullah's anguish becomes "like a birthmark on his face" (348) in the aftermath of his forced separation from his beloved sister Pari, who, as a matter of fact, feels imprisoned into the sense of nothingness and meaninglessness about her past.

Under the shadow of his unbearable pain and suffering since his childhood, Abdullah marries his wife in Pakistan in exile like many other Afghans who flee from war, and thereafter, they settle in California in 1982 when their daughter named after Abdullah's sister Pari was born. In California, Abdullah and his wife Sultana run a restaurant named 'Abe's Kabob House' where they try to keep Afghan traditions alive, together with the Afghan food and the "posters of Afghanistan on the walls" (160). Abdullah also tries to enable his daughter Pari to learn Farsi because he pictures the culture as a house, and the language as "the key to the front door, to all the rooms inside" (362), without which one ends up without a home or identity. Nonetheless, as Mishra (2014) maintains in her *Adapting to Childhood Abandonment*, Abdullah's "pleasure connected to life, love, joy and happiness is almost numbed and the psyche suppressed" (18) despite his devotion to his wife and beloved daughter Pari. Mishra, in addition, displays that Abdullah's traumatic childhood imprisons him "to live in emotional void and emptiness that causes deep psychic injury to him" (2014: 18). Accordingly,

Abdullah's childhood trauma of separation can be compared to the 'prolonged grief disorder (PGD)' elucidated by Alexander Jordon and Brett Litz (2014) as "alternatively called complicated grief, pathological grief, or traumatic grief" (180), and they primarily present the symptoms of PGD as "yearning, loss, or emptiness" as well as difficulty in acceptance of the loss and moving on (182). To put it another way, Abdullah's traumatic grief causes him to possess lifelong suffering because of the siblings' separation and the desperate longing for his beloved sister Pari.

Due to his childhood trauma of separation and loss, Abdullah always fears losing his daughter Pari and does not want to send her anywhere away from him, even when she deserves to enter "one of the best institutes of art in the country" (366), which makes her daughter sacrifice her dream career. In Abdullah's wife's words to her daughter Pari when she is at death's door, "[y]our father is like a child. Terrified of being abandoned. He would lose his way without you, Pari, and never find his way back" (376). In actuality, Abdullah's deep fear of loss is highlighted during their life-changing journey with his sister Pari and their father to Kabul during their childhood when he supposes to be abandoned by their father in the middle of the desert as follows: "Abdullah felt the true vastness of the desert, and the world, for the first time (...) Panic seized him, shriveled up his innards. He began to shiver, and mewl under his breath. He felt himself on the cusp of screaming" (32-33). Bowlby additionally reveals that fear is supposed to be manifested merely in circumstances which are truly hazardous, and the fear displayed in any other situations is considered neurotic because of the fact that "separation from an attachment figure cannot be regarded as a truly dangerous situation, anxiety over separation from that figure is neurotic" (2005: 158). In this respect, Abdullah's intense fear and anxiety seemingly stem from the death of the siblings' mother and the possibility of losing their father as their only attachment figure at that time.

According to NCTSN, "[c]hildren who develop posttraumatic responses to separation from a caregiver present clinically similar to children who have childhood traumatic grief" (2016: 1). NCTSN also points out that such children may show posttraumatic mental and somatic symptoms in the aftermath of traumatic separation such as avoidance, nightmares, concentration problems, intrusive and self-destructive thoughts, negative changes in beliefs, behaviour, and mood (2016: 2-3). In this respect, Pari portrays her father Abdullah as a wounded man who never forgets his suffering of the loss of his sister but constantly remembers and relives their childhood memories

through dreams and flashbacks, and always tells their childhood stories to his daughter until his memories are erased by his illness. Thanks to his father's stories, his sister Pari becomes the imaginary secret sister of Abdullah's daughter who feels her presence everywhere, "Baba's little sister, Pari, was my secret companion, invisible to everyone but me. She was my sister" (347). Abdullah's daughter as an only child, thus, feels like an "often lonely, child" (346), which results in the existence of her aunt Pari as an imaginary friend and sister whom she always dreams of having throughout her childhood period. Therefore, she gets very excited about her aunt Pari's arrival in California from Paris to meet them, but Abdullah has already forgotten the details of his past. On the other hand, when his sister Pari asks whether he recalls his little sister, Abdullah begins to weep uncontrollably, "seizing with sobs, so violently" (385), which in fact proves the bodily manifestation of his childhood trauma.

In terms of Abdullah and Pari's place of birth and the harsh circumstances they are raised under until their forced separation, the siblings strive to survive a hard life in their village, whereas their unconditional affection and strong bonds enable notably Abdullah to risk everything on the purpose of bringing Pari happiness. Accordingly, collecting feathers of different animals is of such importance for his little sister Pari that Abdullah once exchanges "his only pair of shoes for a peacock feather" (21) in another village and walks back home in bare and aching feet. Nonetheless, as Abdullah asserts, "it was all worth it—worth it for the way her face broke open with surprise first, then delight; for the way she stamped his cheeks with kisses" (23). In other words, Abdullah at a young age undeniably regards Pari as his daughter and makes every sort of sacrifice without hesitation. Hence Abdullah keeps the box of feathers that remind him of his beloved sister and writes a note on the box to let Pari know he never forgets her until his illness as follows, "[t]hey tell me I must wade into waters, where I will soon drown. Before I march in, I leave this on the shore for you. I pray you find it, sister, so you will know what was in my heart as I went under" (400). It indicates that Abdullah always recalls his sister Pari and their good childhood memories as well as the painful ones.

Pari additionally maintains that their separation seemingly hurts Abdullah far more than her, "I was the lucky one because I was protected by my youth (...) I still had the luxury of forgetting. He did not" (401). To put it another way, Abdullah is obliged to remember almost every traumatic occurrence since Pari was born, together with the death of her mother, assuming a parental role for Pari, and their forced separation at a

young age due to the severe life circumstances. Despite not recalling the details, Pari feels that “something has been missing always” (358) in her life, which signifies the memory of the emotions and the body. Furthermore, Pari highlights the importance of knowing one’s roots because if you do not know where you begin as a person in life, “your own life seems unreal to you. Like a puzzle” (356). In actuality, not only Abdullah but also Pari remember their repressed traumatic past “as something real and contemporary” (Freud, 1958: 152), which presents the compulsion to repeat their traumatic childhood experiences, together with psychic, emotional, and/or somatic symptoms. On the other hand, Abdullah “feels compelled to fill with bogus details and fabricated character traits, as though false memories are better than none at all” (370) owing to his illness in his old age. That is to say, thanks to Abdullah’s illness, exchanging his painful memories of the siblings’ forced separation with false memories appears to become a much better way for Abdullah’s peace.

Even though Abdullah at a very young age succeeds in parenting his little sister Pari, he aches with longing for his mother, “for her gentleness, her inborn happiness, her bewilderment at people’s cruelty” (23). In the aftermath of the death of the siblings’ mother, their father Saboor marries Parwana to look after his children owing to the grim fact that he is obliged to work under harsh conditions for little money. According to Abdullah, in his father’s world, “[n]othing good came free. Even love. You paid for all things. And if you were poor, suffering was your currency” (24). In this respect, Abdullah has flashbacks of his stepbrother, Omar, as a newborn baby, remembering his “labored cries, then his silence” (29) because of the severe winter and extreme poverty, but Saboor always blames himself for the death of Omar considering he should have “found more work, or better work” (28) to be able to provide better winter clothing, heavier blankets, and a warmer house with a more proper stove. Saboor and Parwana try hard to overcome their grief over Omar’s death with the birth of their son Iqbal. As a matter of fact, Abdullah wishes “he could love her as he had his own mother”, but Parwana is unable to show the siblings any affection and compassion.

Parwana similarly suffers from her own childhood traumas and indeed does not get an opportunity to feel her true self by dedicating her life to her physically disabled twin sister Masooma since they were adolescence upon her tragically falling from the tree. Parwana is actually filled with the sense of inferiority and self-hatred compared to the beauty of Masooma in the eyes of everyone since they were born as follows: “[a]ll

her life, Parwana had made sure to avoid standing in front of a mirror with her sister. It robbed her of hope to see her face beside Masooma's, to see so plainly what she had been denied" (64). Additionally, Parwana's heart sinks when she learns that childhood love Saboor proposes to Masooma, which possibly causes Parwana to make Masooma fall from the tree unintentionally. In order to exemplify the powerful somatic effects of her childhood traumas, Hosseini also addresses the flow of her fragmented thoughts and how she "feels a constriction, despair, like a hand tightening inside her chest" (54). Especially their parents' death puts such a burden of responsibility on Parwana that Masooma asks Parwana to leave her for dead in the middle of the desert and marry Saboor because in Masooma's words, "[m]y existence is a punishment to us both" (68). Consequently, Parwana allows for her twin sister's death as she does for Pari's adoption just claiming, "[t]he finger cut, to save the hand" (48) as compared to Baba Ayub's decision to let the div take his son so that he could save his other children.

Pari's adoption, on the other hand, leads her father Saboor "into long silences, his face closed off" and he gives up telling stories, which causes Abdullah to think that his father "sold the Wahdatis his muse as well" (48). Nonetheless, Nabi speaks of Saboor's pride that prevents him from accepting any sorts of aid from Nabi as follows, "Saboor, like many of my countrymen, had the affliction of pride, an affliction both misbegotten and unshakable. He would never take money from me" (102). Probably that is why Saboor prefers walking through the desert to take Pari to Kabul instead of asking for a car from Wahdatis, or the reason may be to spend more time with his little daughter. Concerning Saboor's sense of pride, it is difficult to state whether Saboor sells Pari and gets money from Wahdatis although it is implied through the word 'buy' in the novel. Nabi, in addition, maintains in his letter to Pari that Saboor dies before the age of "forty, collapsing one day while he was out harvesting a field of sugar beets (...) bleeding hands" (101), which emphasises not only Saboor's harsh working circumstances and his endless efforts to support his family, but also the adverse somatic impacts of his pain and suffering in the aftermath of his losses, beginning with Abdullah and Pari's mother, his baby boy Omar, and his beloved daughter Pari.

Nabi's letter, moreover, sheds light on the tribulations the Afghan society faces, together with the wars upon power struggles and the severe physical, mental as well as emotional suffering throughout the years as follows:

I can sum it up in one word: war. Or, rather, wars. Not one, not two, but many wars, both big and small, just and unjust, wars with shifting casts of supposed heroes and villains, each new hero making one increasingly nostalgic for the old villain. The names changed, as did the faces, and I spit on them equally for all the petty feuds, the snipers, the land mines, bombing raids, the rockets, the looting and raping and killing. (120-121)

From this viewpoint, the Afghan people, notably women and children, are physically, mentally, and/or economically victimised by the wars for the power struggle, which also creates violent conflicts even within the families. Hence Nila as an accomplished poet displays in an interview in Paris the grim fact that young people in Afghanistan “live or die by the stamp of parental approval” (195), emphasising its difference from France. Hosseini, furthermore, exemplifies the devastating impacts of such familial conflicts on children in particular by means of a ten-year-old Afghan girl Roshni, who escapes death but whose whole family is slaughtered by her own uncle before her very eyes.

Roshni’s insufferable tragedy is narrated by Amra as her adoptive mother and a Bosnian nurse who voluntarily comes to Kabul like Markos and many other people from all over the world in 2002 to heal the wounds of the Afghan society shortly after the Taliban regime is “driven out by the Northern Alliance” (128). Indeed, Amra does everything to protect deeply traumatised Roshni as though she is her mother, “I fight for her. I fight government, hospital bureaucracy (...) She has nobody” (136). In this regard, the tragedy occurs when furious arguments about the property break out between Roshni’s father and uncle, and as Amra clarifies, the uncle murders her parents and three siblings. In fact, he attacks Roshni with an ax causing an injury to her head that requires surgery. However, she manages to survive in spite of her pain and suffering due to her repetitive traumatic memories since she remembers “very clearly. Every detail. She can tell to you every detail. I wish she can forget because of the bad dreams” (151). Herman (1997) also reveals that the traumatised are likely to “experience intense emotion but without clear memory of the event, or may remember everything in detail but without emotion” (34), which explains the reason why Roshni remembers all the details of the tragedy in her traumatic memory without showing any emotion. In addition, Roshni’s only remaining relative regards her as a lifelong burden picturing himself as more victimised than Roshni, who apparently proves highly resilient by publishing a book of her trauma story subsequent to an operation for her injury.

In order to highlight the perception of Afghans in exile towards the harsh circumstances of the victimised Afghan society, Hosseini also provides the characters

Timur and Idris as the Afghan cousins who flee to Pakistan and thereupon America the same as Abdullah in the early eighties. Like many other Afghans in exile, Timur and Idris come to Kabul claiming “to ‘reconnect’, to ‘educate’ themselves, ‘bear witness’ to the aftermath of all these years of war and destruction” (136). Idris, nevertheless, confesses that they actually return to Afghanistan to get back their father’s property. Additionally, he elucidates that they do not deserve even to listen to their trauma stories, adding “[t]he lucky ones, the ones who weren’t here when the place was getting bombed to hell. We’re not like these people. We shouldn’t pretend we are” (147-148), which indeed proves his survivor’s guilt. Likewise, Amra sharply criticizes other Afghans from Europe or America for coming and taking pictures of Roshni by making promises to help her, “[t]hen they go home and show their families. Like she is zoo animal (...) But they forget. I never hear from them” (157). Although Idris makes great efforts to help Roshni and has close bonds with her in Kabul, he begins to display the symptoms of the avoidance of his survivor’s guilt, and Roshni becomes “something abstract to him, like a character in a play” (170) on his return to California, which causes Roshni to become disappointed and withdrawn upon Idris’s abandonment.

Hosseini alternatively provides his Greek characters, Markos, and Thalia’s childhood trauma to present the significant impacts of the collaborative effort to work through their trauma on their both childhood and adulthood. Marcos and Thalia meet in Tinos in the summertime of 1967 when they were children, and as a matter of fact, her existence brings him desperate unhappiness at first picturing her as a monster with her severely injured face, “[i]t was like waking up one morning and finding that a wild animal has wandered into your house. No place felt safe to me” (291). Hence Markos addresses Thalia’s frightful experience when she is only five as follows: “*A dog bit her, Mama had told me by way of a warning. She has a scar.* The dog hadn’t bitten Thalia’s face; it had *eaten* it” (286). Furthermore, she wears a mask so that she could protect particularly her mother from her shame and embarrassment, which presumably is the reason why she abandons Thalia by leaving her to Markos’s mother. Thalia is so deeply traumatised by the operations she undergoes to recover her injury that she does not even speak of receiving any more possible treatment neither in her childhood or adulthood because she almost dies due to “[t]he botched surgery, the catastrophic post-op wound infection that turned septic, shut down her kidneys, threw her into liver failure” (321). Accordingly, she does not accept education in England despite the great opportunity

given by her stepfather and decides to live in Tinos for the rest of her life. To put it another way, Thalia's profound childhood trauma prevents her from living a much healthier and more privileged life in her adulthood.

Markos, however, regrets his initial thoughts and behaviours about Thalia to such a great extent that he wants to become a plastic surgeon in order to put the injustice about the outlook of beauty right and help people like Thalia in a world, "in which a dog bite could rob a little girl of her future, make her an outcast, an object of scorn" (330). This perspective is the primary reason for him to immediately accept Amra's offer to aid the war-torn people in Kabul. After long years, Markos criticizes the absurdity and cruelty imposed on Thalia and the people like her as follows: "the world didn't see the inside of you, that it didn't care a whit about the hopes and dreams, and sorrows, that lay masked by skin and bone" (329). In spite of all the traumatic occurrences, Thalia achieves to confront her wounded childhood in her own way thanks to the everlasting familial support and love of Markos and his mother. On the other hand, as Hosseini displays through his nonlinear narrative, Markos's childhood traumas and the life-changing events flash through his mind, and he identifies his moment of epiphany as follows: "I sense something deep inside me drawing me (...) I want to give in to it, be seized by it. I want to give up my bearings, slip out of who I am, shed everything, the way a snake discards old skin" (317). Markos, moreover, asserts that he is unable to build a strong relationship with his mother, "[a]ll my life, I have had the feeling that the words I say to Mama vanish unheard in space" (287), which causes him as an emotionally neglected person to go far away from her with different excuses. At the age of 55, he manages to hear the long-awaited words from her mother, "[y]ou've made me proud, Markos" (342), eventually enabling him a glimmer of hope for the peace of his wounded mind.

In addition, Hosseini addresses the Taliban's threat and violence inflicted upon the Afghan and non-Afghan people like Markos, who come to Afghanistan to help the wounded Afghan society. When Thalia asks Markos about the news from Afghanistan which she portrays as an awful country, he does not reveal their true circumstances not to worry her as follows: "I neglect to tell her about the shooting at the guesthouse across the street or the recent surge in attacks on foreign-aid workers" (339). From the photos that Pari takes when she visits Afghanistan so that she could seek her roots upon her speech with Markos, a vast number of houses in Afghanistan including the one where Abdullah and Pari were born in Shadbagh are seriously damaged and/or seized by the

criminals of war. Long before her visit to Afghanistan, her early childhood memories are triggered on several occasions as follows: “[n]ot for the first time, a little puff breaks rank from the collective fog of Pari’s memories and slowly takes the shape of a dog (...) Pari is unsure whether this, in fact, is a memory or the ghost of one or neither” (221). As a matter of fact, subsequent to her marriage to Eric, Pari’s earnest desire to visit Afghanistan to find out the truths of her past in the aftermath of Nila’s suicide is interrupted by her pregnancy. Therefore, Pari as a mother of three – Isabelle, Alain, and Thierry – and a young professor in Paris does not pursue her objective to unravel the mysteries of her past despite the “gaps and blind spots, all the unanswered questions” (224), signifying the repression of her traumatic childhood memories.

Hosseini, furthermore, touches upon the childhood trauma of the pre-birth experiences thanks to Pari’s youngest son Thierry, whom Pari and Eric do not plan and want to have before he comes into the world. In this respect, Pari maintains that Thierry would inherently suffer from the sense of rejection as follows:

Thierry, who perhaps on some dark primordial level, senses that he was unexpected, unintended, uninvited. Thierry is prone to wounding silences and narrow looks, to fussing and fiddling whenever Pari asks something of him. He defies her for no other reason (...) Some days, a cloud gathers over him (...) It gathers and swells until at last it splits open, spilling a torrent of cheek-quivering, foot-stomping rage that frightens Pari and leaves Eric to blink and smile miserably. Pari knows instinctively that Thierry will be for her, like the ache in her joints, a lifelong worry. (229)

The preceding lines present that Thierry, who is possibly overwhelmed by his parents’ wounding perspectives to him in his pre-birth period, displays his traumatic emotions through silence, grief, and/or anger. In this regard, as PG Hepper stresses in his *Fetal Memory*, “memory begins prenatally” (1996: 16) through auditory stimuli, the mother’s smell, or the taste of the milk before birth. According to Hepper (1996), evidence shows that “the fetus is able to learn and remember familiar auditory stimuli in the womb” (17) and “learns about its mother’s smell prenatally” (18), highlighting the significance of fetal memory in acquiring language. Levine and Kline also point out that “prenatal infants, newborns, and very young children are the most at risk to stress and trauma due to their undeveloped nervous, motor, and perceptual systems” (2007: 8). Unsurprisingly, Thierry is unable to develop strong familial relationships and just stays in contact with his sister Isabelle. Likewise, Thierry, who has a broken marriage in his twenties, favours working at a refugee camp in Africa over living with his family in Paris.

In Hosseini's nonlinear narrative, the novel exemplifies another traumatised child Adel, who faces challenges and disappointments at an early age because of his own father's faults and lies. In this respect, his father Baba Jan as a criminal of war takes control of the area that once belongs to Abdullah and Pari's family. Baba Jan, however, masterfully pretends to become a devoted and generous father who seemingly earns everybody's respect in Shadbagh but in fact gets whatever he desires by striking terror in people's hearts. Adel is, therefore, deeply traumatised upon being aware of his father's true colours when he kills Iqbal as Abdullah and Pari's half-brother. Adel, thereafter, has nightmares and bouts of weeping waking "from these dreams with a howl locked in his chest" (275) as the somatic symptoms of his childhood trauma. He also realises how Baba Jan suppresses his mother by inflicting great fear on her who is silenced and obliged to accept everything as he wants. As a result, he feels that he cannot love his father as he does before, and that he loses his childhood as follows: "Adel could almost feel himself leapfrogging over childhood" (276), which makes him an adult much earlier than it is expected. In addition, Adel feels compelled to accept his fate, "[t]his was his life. This was his mother. This was his father. And this was him" (276). In this regard, as Herman (1997) utters, "[w]hen a person is completely powerless, and any form of resistance is futile, she may go into a state of surrender" (42), which elucidates the involuntary acceptance of Adel's disappointments connected to his father.

Similarly, Abdullah feels compelled to grow up faster at an early age in the aftermath of his mother's death at the birth of Pari as "[h]e was the one raising her (...) Even though he was still a child himself" (31). Hence Monica Johnson and Stefanie Mollborn (2009) assert in their *Growing up Faster, Feeling Older* that "hardship in childhood and adolescence fosters an older subjective age in early adulthood" (14), adversely affecting economic circumstances, alongside the lack of safety and the burden of responsibilities. Johnson and Mollborn also elaborate upon the impacts of the hardships that provide "a challenge to contemporary cultural expectations for childhood or adolescence that lead to the sense that one is older than one's age peers" (2009: 14). In other words, children like Abdullah and Adel face unexpected and sudden difficulties at their early ages and are forced to feel and behave as an adult person does. Considering the reality of growing older, Adel loses his childish innocence and faith in his beloved father, whereas Abdullah is obliged to assume his parents' role for his little sister Pari. Thus, she regards Abdullah as an attachment figure as follows: "she was smiling her

gap-toothed smile like no bad thing would ever befall her so long as he stood at her side” (18), which proves her unconditional love for and trust in his beloved brother.

Accordingly, the mountains within the title of the novel echo their inseparable bonds and attachment in spite of their forced separate paths which imprison the siblings into their traumatic childhood throughout their lifetime. Whereas Abdullah repetitively deals with the traumatic remembrance of their separation, Pari feels compelled to live with the sense of absence that she is unable to explain until Markos informs about her past through Nabi’s letter. All the psychic, somatic, and emotional symptoms including their memory disturbances, flashbacks, dreams, fixation, repression, avoidance, fear of loss and/or sense of absence prove their childhood trauma that also continues to impact their adulthood. On the other hand, their mother’s four-line-lullaby sung by Abdullah to Pari as a baby apparently represents their unforgettably and inseparably strong bonds in the last chapter since they can sing the lullaby in Farsi together in their old age although their memories are almost erased due to Abdullah’s illness and Pari’s very early age. Indeed, the siblings’ singing of the lullaby possibly reminds readers of Baba Ayub’s hearing of his son’s bell as a ‘wave of something’ around his neck despite all his lost memories. The novel, furthermore, provides a hopeful ending for particularly Abdullah’s daughter Pari, who finds her dearest father whenever she looks at her aunt Pari, “[s]he is my flesh and blood (...) I am not alone” (402), which actually enables her sense of belonging, together with her relatives in Paris.

Hosseini additionally exemplifies the statement provided by the div, “[w]hen you have lived as long as I have (...) you find that cruelty and benevolence are but shades of the same colour” (12) throughout the novel by means of the characters such as Idris, Timur, Markos, Nabi, Nila, and Baba jan. Similar to the div’s test of love for Baba Ayub as told in Abdullah and Pari’s father’s bedtime story, these characters are tested whether they will sacrifice themselves for someone else like Baba Ayub or they will choose cowardice and selfishness on behalf of their own happiness. In this regard, Baba Ayub sacrifices his inner peace to enable his dearest son a better life, whereas Nila prefers her own greediness and narcissism at the cost of Abdullah and Pari’s sorrowful separation. Likewise, Nabi leads Nila to adopt Pari claiming to save Pari’s future for a better life, but unconsciously aims to win Nila’s heart by giving her something that no one else can give. Furthermore, Idris as a good-hearted doctor who promises Roshni to make her operation possible in America eventually chooses to ignore his voice of conscience,

whereas Timur as a seemingly self-seeking man who likes to show off whatever he has or does enables Roshi's operation and saves her life without informing even his cousin Idris. To put it another way, Hosseini's characters whose lives are closely connected with Abdullah and Pari appear both loveable for their good deeds and tragedies in their past and hateable for their villainous actions, which makes these characters, not just products of imagination but parts of the real life.

In actuality, as Marcela Valdes elucidates, "[f]ingers are sliced off in almost every chapter of" Khaled Hosseini's *And the Mountains Echoed* (*The Washington Post*, 2013). In terms of the childhood trauma, Hosseini skilfully exemplifies a vast number of traumatic occurrences experienced and/or witnessed by primarily Abdullah and Pari as well as several different Afghan and non-Afghan characters during their childhood. Accordingly, life in Afghanistan is threatened, terrorised, and reshaped by the tribulations and wars stemming from the power struggle throughout history, which causes a considerable number of Afghans to live in exile and presumably to become alienated from their roots and Afghan identity. Consequently, all the pain and suffering inflicted on notably women and children are highlighted through the story-within-a-story technique as well as the diverse narrative techniques such as folktales, interviews, and letters by the various narrators whose lives are closely connected with the broken siblings Abdullah and Pari, who both suffer the trauma of separation and loss throughout their lives. Each child, as APA clarifies in its *Children and Trauma*, "reacts to traumatic events" in their own way (2008: 4), which also signifies the role of children's individual viewpoints, concerns, and backgrounds in the impacts of trauma on their childhood and adulthood. In this respect, every traumatised character, including the protagonists Abdullah and Pari, naturally experiences different and similar childhood traumas as well as mental, bodily, and/or emotional symptoms, especially due to the absence of any attachment figures when these children need them for their survival and safety.

To sum up, this chapter displays the traumatic scars of the Afghan siblings Abdullah and Pari through Khaled Hosseini's *And the Mountains Echoed*. Whereas Abdullah aged 10 suffers from the ghosts of the traumatic memories of his mother's death and the loss of his beloved sister as the centre of his universe upon her adoption, Pari aged 3 bears the burden of the sense of absence throughout her life because she is unable to recall the memories of her early childhood. Apparently, the broken siblings' lifelong suffering primarily stems from their inseparably special bonds particularly

developing when Abdullah assumes a mother's role in the aftermath of the death of their mother during Pari's birth since neither their father Saboor nor their stepmother Parwana provides the required love and attachment for the siblings. Despite Wahdatis' effective manipulation to make Pari forget about her past, she always feels that something is missing in her life. Moreover, the siblings' caregivers do not take active roles in easing the pain of their childhood trauma but just inflict more damage such as Saboor's prevention of Abdullah's mourning for the siblings' forced separation and Nila's irresponsible as well as narcissistic behaviours towards Pari, which causes them to experience psychic, somatic, and/or emotional symptoms of childhood trauma in their not only childhood but also adulthood like a great many characters in the novel. In other words, Hosseini reveals the disappointments, losses, fears, despair, loneliness, shame, guilt, anxiety, and anger as well as mental, emotional, and physical pain of the characters including Roshni, Thalia, Nila, Parwana, Markos, Adel, and Thierry as well as Abdullah and Pari as the products of their wounded childhoods.

3. CHAPTER THREE: War Trauma and Amnesiac Memory in Glenn Meade's *The Last Witness*

The ordinary response to atrocities is to banish them from consciousness. Certain violations of the social compact are too terrible to utter aloud: this is the meaning of the word unspeakable. Atrocities, however, refuse to be buried (...) Folk wisdom is filled with ghosts who refuse to rest in their graves until their stories are told. Murder will out.
—Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*

The horrors of wars with devastating consequences have been ruining the lives of the masses, notably including women and children, all over the world throughout history. David Hamburg as an American psychiatrist, therefore, stresses the significance of detecting the warning signs of the mass atrocities and states, “I remember very clearly at the end of World War II, the world said, ‘Never again, never again, never again.’ But it’s always again and again and again” (*Weill Cornell Medicine Newsroom*, 2010). In this regard, Glenn Meade as an Irish novelist and playwright masterfully pictures the grim realities of war and the shattering experiences of children in war-torn areas in his *The Last Witness* (2014) through a ten-year-old girl Carla as the last witness to the unspeakable suffering of the imprisoned children in particular and as the last survivor of a terrifying massacre at a concentration camp in the Bosnian war in the aftermath of the fall of Yugoslavia in the 1990s. According to Cathy Caruth (1995), the enormous interest in the intense suffering that results in trauma has significantly grown within several years, and with the occurrences in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the growing violence, many people have become well aware of “the urgency of learning more about the traumatic reaction to violent events” (vii) and the ways to deal with suffering. The victims in the death camps of Bosnia are executed in ethnic cleansing during the war as compared to the horrific occurrences in Auschwitz before the eyes of the world.

Glenn Meade as internationally renowned for his thrillers has penned best-selling novels such as *Snow Wolf* (1996), *The Sands of Sakkara* (1999), *Resurrection Day* (2002), *The Second Messiah* (2011), *The Last Witness* (2014) and *Unquiet Ghosts* (2017), which have been translated into many and various languages worldwide. Meade apparently achieves worldwide fame as an author thanks to the use of his research skills as a former journalist within his novels, which enables him to combine historical facts with his power of imagination. Furthermore, Meade asserts in an interview with Oylum

Yılmaz that he thoroughly searches for the incidents in history and solves the puzzles through his imagination, but the impacts of such happenings on the people who experience them attract Meade's attention more than the incidents, which leads him to feel great empathy with these people to portray realistic characters in his writings (Radikal, 2002). Thus, as Meade elucidates in an interview with Gamze Akdemir that he speaks to the priests and historians of religion in the Vatican in Rome while writing *The Second Messiah*, whereas he interviews two guardians who know about the occurrences during World War II from the first-hand experience while writing *The Sands of Sakkara* (Cumhuriyet, 2021). Moreover, Meade's *Snow Wolf* reveals the assassination attempt of Stalin in Russia, whereas his *Resurrection Day* – published just before the 9/11 terrorist attacks – pictures the fatal attack of al Qaeda on Washington, which proves the strength of his vivid imagination and foresight.

Likewise, the tragic story in Meade's *The Last Witness* primarily stems from the painful childhood experiences of a young woman Marina, whom he meets in Dubrovnik where her parents fall in love and marry. Nonetheless, the entire family is imprisoned and forced to endure "the unspeakable horror of a rape camp for many months, in conditions as cruel as those in Auschwitz" (407), which signifies how the world allows "genocide to happen one again" (408) as Meade clarifies in the author's note. Similar to Carla as the protagonist of the novel, Marina is also found alone as the survivor of the massacre and unable to speak for a long time due to her profound trauma at an early age. Additionally, Meade utters in the acknowledgments that David Lillie as a trauma therapist helps him "understand the minds of those who suffer the brutal distress of abuse and war" (409), which enables *The Last Witness* to gain credibility with regard to the manifestation of the mental, emotional, and/or bodily symptoms of the traumatised characters in the novel. Accordingly, the ultimate goal of this chapter is to analyse and interpret the childhood trauma of war as the individual suffering, and the nature of amnesiac memory that may appear in the aftermath of traumatic occurrences. In this respect, this chapter fundamentally aims to scrutinise Carla's trauma story during the Bosnian war and its lifelong impacts, together with her beloved family Lana, David, and Luka Joran as well as some other characters in the role of the victims or victimisers such as Jan Lane, Mila Shavik, Baize Joran, Ronnie Kilgore, Boris Arkov, and Dr Raymond Leon, whose lives are closely connected to Marianna Carla Joran.

3.1. Glenn Meade and the Bosnian War

Dublin-born author Glenn Meade starts off as a pilot trainer and then works as a journalist for *The Irish Times* before he becomes a writer whose novels have been worldwide best-sellers. *The Publisher's Weekly* also asserts in its book review that Meade's *The Second Messiah* "has all the makings to be the next Da Vinci Code", together with "a plot that screams, a controversial edge, and characters with attitude" (2011). Meade as a highly skilled researcher maintains in an interview with Sercan Meriç that when he begins writing a novel, he spends at least one or two months in the city where the novel is set, which drives Meade to visit Istanbul since he writes a new novel on 1920s and 1930s' Istanbul as a multicultural and colourful city as well as a mosaic of west and east (Sözcü, 2019). In actuality, as Meade remarks in the interview with Gamze Akdemir that he chiefly aims to enable all the pain and suffering of the war and terror to be unforgettably visible to the world, and also his novels mainly deal with the wars that the dictators have perfectly manipulated for the sake of power and waged upon religious and cultural differences throughout history (Cumhuriyet, 2021). In this regard, Meade's *Unquiet Ghosts* skilfully displays the atrocities of the Iraq war, the deceptive intrigues, and the families damaged and deeply traumatised by the horrors of war. From this perspective, Meade seemingly touches upon the harsh realities of wars in history and its overwhelming effects on the people who experience and/or witness the traumatic occurrences through his wounded characters in his writings.

Similarly, Meade's *The Last Witness* illustrates the unspeakable horrors of the ethnic cleansing during the Bosnian war, which devastatingly impacts the lives of a vast number of people, women and children in particular. Carla, whose entire family is mercilessly slaughtered by the Serbian war criminals, suffers from the childhood trauma of war as the mere witness to all the forms of violence at a prison camp in the Bosnian war, which takes place between 1992 and 1995. According to Sam Bramlett (2018), "the cause of the Bosnian war has roots in World War II and its impact is still being felt in 2017" since Serbians are not contented with the fact that Yugoslavia's leader Josip Broz Tito rebuilds the country as six equal republics including the Balkan states of Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Slovenia, Croatia, and Montenegro in the aftermath of WWII, and his recognition of the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina as a distinct nationality (paras. 1-3). Nevertheless, the death of Tito in 1980 results in the collapse of

Yugoslavia, political and economic upheavals as well as conflicts in the Balkan states, whereas the new leader Slobodan Milosevic intentionally creates conflict between Croatians, Serbians, and Muslim Bosniaks as three primary ethnic groups in the region (Bramlett, 2018: paras. 3-4), which ignites the Bosnian war due to the ethnic tensions.

Bramlett, furthermore, asserts that Serbians regard themselves as the dominant group and dream “of a ‘Greater Serbia’, a country made up of only Serbians” with the support of Milosevic although Muslims represent “the largest single population group” in Bosnia (2018: paras. 5-6), which makes Bosniaks a potential threat to Serbians’ desire for a ‘Greater Serbia’. On the other hand, Radovan Karadzic, who leads Bosnia’s Serbs and is also supported by Milosevic, threatens bloodshed upon Bosnia’s proclamation of its independence in 1992, and after the United States and the European Union recognise Bosnia’s independence, the followers of the ‘Greater Serbia’ bombard Bosnia’s capital, Sarajevo (Bramlett, 2018: paras. 7-8). Bramlett additionally reveals that the Serbian forces attack Srebrenica in 1995 and separate the Bosniak civilians, “putting the women and girls on buses and sending them away while killing the men and boys on the spot or bussing them off to mass killing sites” (2018: para. 9), which exactly displays the traumatic experiences Carla and her family go through during the war. In this respect, as John Misachi (2018) addresses, the war causes the infamous ‘Bosnian Genocide’ in which almost 100,000 people are killed, and 80% of these people include Bosniaks, whereas nearly 15,000 are sexually molested, and a great many people are also damaged by the devastating conditions such as hunger and cold (paras. 7-8), which proves the inhumane treatment and circumstances the civilians suffer in the Bosnian war.

In the aftermath of the Bosnian war, Slobodan Milosevic is arrested in 2001 as a war criminal whose most serious charges he faces involve “responsibility for the massacre of more than 8,000 Bosnian Muslims in the enclave of Srebrenica in July 1995” (*The Guardian*, 2006). Moreover, Radovan Karadzic is placed under arrest in 2008 and “found guilty of genocide for his role in the Srebrenica massacre”, whereas Ratko Mladic as a Bosnian Serb general during the Bosnian war is also “found guilty of genocide and war crimes and (...) sentenced to life in prison” in 2017 years after being put under arrest in 2011 (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 2022). It is an undeniable fact that these war criminals and more lie behind the mass killings in Bosnia and drive a vast number of victims into desperation and traumatising. Accordingly, Frank Bodman as a consultant psychiatrist identifies in his *War Conditions and the Mental Health of the*

Child that children within the bombed areas show the psychological symptoms such as aggressive behaviour, nervousness, night terrors, crying and trembling as well as the psychosomatic symptoms such as anorexia, headaches, indigestion, nosebleeds, and enuresis (1941: 486). Bodman, in addition, utters that the youngest children are the most vulnerable particularly at the time of the absence of any caregivers or the existence of the overwhelmed caregivers (1941: 486), which leads them to suffer from the psychic and/or bodily symptoms of trauma as reactions to the reminders of the war.

The child and adolescent psychiatrist Lynne Jones, who visits the war-torn areas of Bosnia to aid the traumatised people in late 1996, likewise pictures in her *Children of the Bosnian War* that the harsh circumstances during the war adversely affect the Bosnian children who feel unsurprisingly unhappy, angry, bewildered, and grieving (2013: 20). However, Jones (2013) emphasises the significance of listening to children who portray “their experiences and their own understandings” of such traumatic experiences to comprehend “the true impact of war on childhood”, adding that the most important factors impacting their psychological health seem “to be rooted in the immediate environment” where they live, “rather than in any traumatic events” they witness and/or experience (20). Similarly, as Anna Freud and Dorothy Burlingham (1973) present in their *Infants without Families*, children are overwhelmed by the destruction of war on their houses, evacuation from their bombed cities, and witnessing the killings, but on the other hand, children are much more shocked by “being separated from their mothers” (72). To put it another way, Freud and Burlingham display the greater traumatising of losing their family than the war itself as follows:

The war acquires comparatively little significance for children so long as it only threatens their lives, disturbs their material comfort, or cuts their food rations. It becomes enormously significant the moment it breaks up family life and uproots the first emotional attachments of the child within the family group. (1973: 172-173)

Jones (2013) additionally maintains that “[a]s always, it is young people who will always pay the price” under the shadow of destruction and genocide (29). In this regard, she elucidates that “[w]ar touches every aspect of children’s social worlds, including their history and values, and they recreate those worlds” (2013: 197), which in truth proves the life-changing impacts of war upon the children in desperate need of the protection of their caregivers and profoundly traumatised by their absence.

In Glenn Meade's *The Last Witness*, war completely changes Carla's life, alongside her memory, perspectives, choices, beliefs, and attitudes. Carla is indeed unable to speak when she is found alone with her mother's diary at the age of 11 in the aftermath of the Bosnian war, which leads her to suppress these overwhelming and traumatic experiences and suffer from amnesiac memory until she reads the diary in the office of her childhood therapist, and her memories painfully flood back during her adulthood. According to Hope Gillette as the novelist and freelance writer who is passionate about writing on mental health, memory loss or amnesia identifies "a broad range of symptoms that may present with an inability to recall certain or all details of a lived experience" and may be a protective reaction of the mind to the painful, shocking, and traumatic incidents (*PsychCentral*, 2022). In this respect, the APA specifically addresses dissociative amnesia in DSM-5 as "an inability to recall autobiographical information that is inconsistent with normal forgetting", and most sufferers of dissociative amnesia are "initially unaware of their amnesias" (2013: 291). Likewise, Thomas-Antérion (2017) portrays dissociative amnesia as the "retrieval blockade of episodic autobiographical memories arising in the context of psychological trauma (whether known or not), with no evidence of brain damage on structural imaging" (516) as it can be also seen in Carla's amnesia that results in forgetting her personal identity and past life that belongs to her traumatic childhood.

In essence, the fundamental purpose of this chapter is to analyse and interpret the childhood trauma of war and the role of traumatic amnesia in Glenn Meade's *The Last Witness* exemplifying the protagonist Carla's childhood trauma story that takes place during the Bosnian war. This chapter, furthermore, attempts to provide some other victimised characters connected to Carla including her four-year-old brother Luka, their parents, and her husband Jan, to illustrate the undeniable traumatising impacts of war on humanity. Concerning the unspeakable war wounds, Meade introduces his novel with an epigraph, "blossoms are scattered by the wind and the wind cares / nothing, / but the blossoms of the heart no wind can touch" by the Japanese poet and Buddhist monk Yoshida Kenko, renowned for his *Essays on Idleness* from medieval Japanese literature. The preceding epigraph indicates that blossoms signify the sufferers of war in the novel, and the wind possibly represents the perpetrators who mercilessly torment the victims. Thus, as Meade stresses, the innocent hearts of the sufferers as the wounded children are untouchable and surely blossom out all over again. In addition, Meade highlights the

grim reality of the events in the novel providing the timeline at the very beginning that contains the true information about the Bosnian war, which contributes to the reliability of incidents in the novel despite its fictional characters and settings through its nonlinear narrative in six chapters and eighty-eight sections. In his prologue, Meade also indicates the horrors of the Bosnian war stating that soldiers, innocent civilians, and helpless victims are buried into graveyards bearing no names but just numbers regardless of their religion or nationality (3), which proves the significance of voicing the sufferers who are dead or alive not to repeat the same fatal past mistakes.

3.2. Shattered Childhood in the Shadow of the Bosnian War

The trauma story of Carla as the protagonist of the novel is broadly based on true events from the Bosnian war in which “[m]ore than 250,000 are killed or wounded in the war, and a million civilians displaced” (VIII). Whereas the novel frankly illustrates the brutality of the war and its tormenting lifelong effects on victims regardless of their gender, religion, or nationality, it enables Lana as Carla’s mother to utter all the unspeakably traumatic occurrences aloud in her diary as follows:

My name is Lana Joran, and this is my story. I and my husband and our two beloved children are going to die. I feel certain of our deaths, just as I am certain that the world will be indifferent to our suffering. And so I write these words not in the hope that they will save us, but that this record of our torment will survive. For if the world is made witness to the brutal slaughter of so many innocents, and if my story helps prevent the murder of even one human being, then my effort will be worthwhile. (70)

In actuality, Lana Joran as a heroic figure of the novel does not want to die in vain after living in severe pain at the Devil’s Hill as a prison camp where women and young children are exposed to “*brutal interrogation, or rape or a beating, or all three*” (101), and sometimes ending up the prisoners’ tragic and violent death. Accordingly, Lana also maintains that “[w]e hear the women’s screams as they are raped all through the night. The terror on the children’s faces is too terrible to witness” (101). In terms of the torture inflicted upon every prisoner at the Devil’s Hill, Carla and her little brother Luka like the other child prisoners undeniably go through hell on earth.

The psychiatrist Viktor Frankl, who himself suffers from all forms of violence and loses his entire family in the Nazi concentration camps, quotes Dostoyevsky to emphasise the significance of spiritual freedom despite all the inescapable pain and suffering as follows: “[t]here is only one thing that I dread: not to be worthy of my

sufferings” (1985: 87). Apparently, Lana shares Frankl’s view of the independence of the mind and spiritual freedom even under the worst possible circumstances caused by the horrors of war. According to Frankl (1985), “everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms – to choose one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one’s own way” (86). In this respect, Lana seemingly chooses her own way to voice all the pain and suffering during the Bosnian war, and to the bitter end, she tries to protect her children, Carla and Luka, at the Devil’s Hill and even her husband David at the Omarska camp, pictured as “*worse than Auschwitz was*” (103), where men die of execution or inhuman conditions such as starvation, filth, and disease. When Carla reads her mother’s diary, she fully grasps Lana’s ultimate objective in keeping a diary “[f]or to live in the hearts of those we leave behind is not to die” (72), which undoubtedly ensures the remembrance of all the brutalities of war, including ethnic cleansing, abuse, rape, and/or torture in Bosnia.

Marianna Carla Joran’s life story indeed begins with love, joy, and hope as David and Lana’s first-born child in Dubrovnik, and the Joran family blossoms out with Luka’s birth six years later. In the aftermath of a big argument with his father who wants David to become a soldier like himself, David leaves his parents, Baize and Dan, in America to achieve his dream to become a painter, which enables him to meet his true love Lana in Dubrovnik. Lana Tanovic studies English at a local college and dreams to become a writer who comes from a town beyond Sarajevo where Christian, Orthodox, and Muslim live side by side, and her parents are of different backgrounds, “her mother was a Christian Serb, her father a ‘Bosniak,’ of Muslim origin” (72). As stated in her diary, Lana possesses everything she wishes for: “*two beautiful children and a kind and understanding and loving husband*” (74) upon her marriage with David. Carla, moreover, feels absolutely delighted to have a playful and cheerful little brother who never stops begging Carla not to leave him. That’s why Carla clings to a glimmer of hope and does her utmost to find Luka alive upon her remembrance of the traumatic childhood memories which belong to the camp days at the Devil’s Hill thanks to her mother’s diary. As a matter of fact, despite its extremely tragic storyline, Lana seems to fulfil her dream to write “a book that would change the world” (72) by recording the atrocities of war in her diary under disastrous circumstances.

According to Jones (2013), the victimisers wage the Bosnian war pretending to defend themselves against the devastating outcomes of the ethnic conflicts even though

“[t]he war in Bosnia did not arise out of deep-rooted ethnic animosities” (26). In actuality, the communities of the Bosnians, Croatians, and Serbs live harmoniously together throughout years, but the children are brainwashed to perceive their nearest neighbours as their enemies. As Carla’s mother utters in her diary, wars have often made “the Orthodox Christian Serbs, Catholic Croats, and Bosnian Muslim ethnic groups” enemies (76) even when they share the same village or town on the purpose of taking revenge on their ancestors’ blood. The perpetrators, nevertheless, ignore that a great many children are similarly overwhelmed by bombing, killings, or rape “[r]egardless of whether they were Croat, Muslim, or Serb” (Jones, 2013: 19). Furthermore, as Jones (2013) asserts, most of such children normalise their symptoms of war trauma as their reasonable “reactions to horrifying events” (20) since “[c]hildren’s perceptions of what happened, their concerns, fears, and preoccupations, are often startlingly different from those of adults” (25). Likewise, Carla and Luka as the child victims of the war struggle to normalise the dreadful occurrences, thanks to the existence of their mother Lana. Even in the depth of despair and misery, they could feel overjoyed, excited, and “*the awe of being alive*” (107) by getting immense pleasure from swimming in the river where they are in truth brought by a guard to wash the clothes as prisoners.

On the other hand, Lana blames herself for the victimisation and traumatising of her children because of endangering her husband and children’s lives for the sake of trying to save her brutally murdered father. In fact, upon the rumours of war, David’s father Dan as an American soldier warns them to leave Bosnia. However, Lana and David decide too late for their departure from Dubrovnik, already attacked by the Serb forces, which causes them to “*live in constant fear of death*” (75) due to the terrifying stories of murder, ethnic cleansing, and pillage. The Joran family attempts to escape through Sarajevo as once “*called the Jerusalem of the Balkans*” (79) but is trapped in Lana’s cousin Raisa’s house in Sarajevo, now called as “*the Capital of Hell*” (80). To put it another way, Lana presents their desperate circumstances as follows: “*Sarajevo has become the world’s biggest concentration camp. There is no gas, no electricity. Water is cut off for days at a time. Food is becoming scarce. Trees are being cut down for firewood*” (80-81). Under the shadow of war and terror, Carla at the age of 10 tries her best to ease her little brother’s fears as the substitute mother of Luka. Therefore, Lana feels delighted by Carla’s love and protection for Luka but displays her concerns

in the midst of the horrors of war, “*I worry if anything were to happen to one of them, the other would be lost*” (80) owing to their close attachment to one another.

The suffering is so unbearable in Sarajevo that madness is everywhere, as Raise speaks “*of mass killings, Muslim and Serb. Of villages where women, young children, and babies are brutally massacred. Of adults forced to watch soldiers kill their children*” (82). Similarly, Raisa’s eight-year-old son Peter is randomly shot to death by the snipers on the street, which turns Raisa into “*a woman possessed; she screams and wails, and pleads with God*” (83) and results in her committing suicide by cutting her wrists beside her son’s dead body. This tragic scene becomes a total shock for Carla and Luka in particular, and the Joran family all feels heartbroken. From the preceding perspective, Jones (2013) reveals the devastating consequences of the Bosnian war considering the children of war like Carla and Luka as follows:

They bore no responsibility for the Balkan conflict, but they suffered its effects: deprivation and displacement, living with and witnessing violence, the wasteful loss of their childhoods, the deaths of friends and relatives, and complete disruption of their common community. Their stories confront our stereotypes about war, identity, justice, and the way people react to traumatic events. (2013: 28-9)

Lana observes how Carla and Luka are adversely affected by the traumatic events in Sarajevo just before being imprisoned at the Devil’s Hill. Accordingly, Carla, portrayed as strong-willed, independent, and courageous enough to protest against injustices, is getting more and more withdrawn by the frightful things she witnesses, and she shuts herself off from “*the hell around her, some days she sits in a corner and buries her head between her knees and cups her hands over her ears*” (85). In this regard, as Bessel van der Kolk (2015a) points out, “the reactions of children to painful events are largely determined by how calm or stressed their parents are” (141), indicating why Carla feels distressed or peaceful depending on the reactions of their parents. On the other hand, as Luka perceives Carla’s anxious acts as parts of a game, he imitates whatever she does and smiles as natural reactions of a little child even under destructive conditions.

The war victimises and traumatises everyone regardless of their age, gender, or nationality in Bosnia where a great many soulless people wander the streets “*like walking dead*” (87). According to Frankl (1985), three phases of feelings may appear in such imprisoned people overwhelmed by the war: “boundless longing for his home and his family (...) disgust with all the ugliness which surrounded him (...) relative apathy in which he achieved a kind of emotional death” (39). Due to the food shortage, some

people steal pets for their meat, whereas David also becomes obliged to eat dog food. Indeed, not only their mental but also their physical health rapidly deteriorates, also “*getting thinner, and breaking out in sores*” (85). David and Lana, thus, make up their mind about leaving Sarajevo to enable their children freedom by selling his car in return for receiving permission to get on the bus which is supposed to bring them out of the city to Belgrade. Carla and Luka are filled up with hope and excitement thanks to the sense of security evoked by their parents confirming Peter Levine and Maggie Kline’s words, “[c]hildren take more from the feelings of their parents than from their words” (2007: 429). Nonetheless, their vehicle is forcefully stopped at a checkpoint “*as truckloads of armed paramilitaries block*” (92) their way leading them to head west instead of east to Belgrade, which makes everyone worried, confused, and terrified on the bus. Lana also feels Carla trembling because of her intense fear, and they are all horrified upon being forced to walk somewhere they are possibly killed and witnessing an old man to be slaughtered, “[*t*]he guards are cutting the old man’s throat” (94), which is just the beginning of much worse happenings.

Whereas the women and children under fourteen are sent to the Devil’s Hill, the men and boys are imprisoned in the Omarska concentration camp. As stated in Lana’s diary, “[*t*]he separation of men and boys from their families causes so much anguish and wailing among us all” (95). The Devil’s Hill is controlled by Boris Arkov as the son of “a top gangster in the Serb mafia” (99) Ivan Arkov, and Mila Shavik, taken under Ivan’s wings subsequent to the suicide of his father who works as a lawyer for Ivan. Lana immediately recognizes Mila, who grows up with her in the same village, and they apparently fall in love with each other when they meet at a café during their youth. Nevertheless, Ivan manipulates Mila to detest Lana’s father as the so-called person who drives Mila’s father to commit suicide, and to break up with Lana. When the women and children first arrive at the Devil’s Hill, a prisoner Alma Dragovich is beaten and nearly killed by Boris just because she asks for food and water for the little children. Carla, however, prevents him from shooting Alma by requesting Mila not to harm her, and she bravely reveals, “[*p*]lease, sir, the woman was only telling the truth. We’ve come such a long way. Everyone is hungry and thirsty, especially the children” (98). Boris, defined as a ‘complete monster’, is about to shoot Carla in a blind rage but protected by Mila, who discovers at the camp that Lana gives birth to his own daughter Carla.

Carla and Luka strive to make sense of all the disastrous occurrences they go through by questioning the reason behind their hostile and violent treatments and trying to comprehend if it is something wrong to be born as Bosniaks, and they innocently illustrate that they are just people and not different from any of them. On the other hand, Lana is unable to picture the reason for this nightmare owing to the difference in the perception of a child's mind, "*how can you explain over five hundred years of history to a child, when a child sees only the present?*" (104). In the aftermath of witnessing the death of women and children because of the illnesses, malnutrition, "*internal bleeding after being raped*" (105), or the punishment of disobedience, Carla and Luka lose their childish happiness and enthusiasm, desperately missing their father. Hence Lana keeps her rape by Boris and a young guard as a secret not to ruin their lives more than enough, and she identifies her unspeakable suffering after this overwhelming incident as follows: "*I feel defiled. I feel beyond anger. Beyond any feeling of self-pity (...) I still feel dirty (...) I look at Carla and Luka, and I feel so ashamed*" (107-8). Lana's sole concern as a dedicated and self-sacrificing mother is to protect her children but especially Carla since the guards do not hesitate to rape "*girls as young as twelve*" (108) and their mothers right before their children's eyes to increase the effect of torture and degradation.

A rumour circulates that the men at Omarska camp suffer from the outbreak of pneumonia, which means David requires antibiotics to recover as soon as possible. Luka's health is also getting worse, and he has a fever. When he coughs up blood, Lana decides to take a chance and visit Mila Shavik to get antibiotics for both David and Luka. She is desperately ready to do whatever Mila wants in return for antibiotics and the permission to see David despite Carla's horrified and accusing look at "*the harsh adult ways of the world*" (112). As the pages in the diary that tell the happenings between her mother and Mila are missing, Carla does not know whether he harms or even rapes her, which evokes the feelings of deep hatred and anger towards him. Lana, however, manages to get antibiotics for Luka and David, whom she visits to give him antibiotics even without water. She compares the male prisoners at Omarska camp to the skeletons who are obviously terrified and spiritless. Subsequent to her visit at David's camp, she feels anguish that she pays a dreadful price for seeing Mila, who demands to see Carla at his office. When Carla comes back to their dormitory, Lana portrays the shattering moment as follows: "She looks completely dazed. Like a sleepwalker. I hug her close and try to talk to her. She barely looks at me and doesn't speak. She has tears in her

eyes” (117). Carla does not recall what exactly happens between her and Mila, who also never reveals it not to upset her again. Her therapist Raymond Leon considers the true possibility of assault, but Carla does not show any symptoms of child abuse as turning into a perpetrator or feeling disgust at sexuality. Dr Leon, thus, states that either her “memory has suppressed the abuse, or no abuse never occurred” (123), but something crucial happens to her to Dr Leon’s strong belief.

Long years afterwards, Carla has an opportunity to question Mila to find out the occurrences in his office on the day she cannot remember as she is traumatised “[I]ike every other woman and child who suffered the brutality” (372) they inflict in the camp. Carla, furthermore, asks whether he harms or rapes her, but Mila looks horrified by these questions, stating that he never personally damages any women and children, including Carla and her mother. Thereupon, Mila begins to tell the true story of Lana Tanovic and Mila Shavik. At the age of eighteen, they meet at a café and learn that Lana’s dream is to be a writer, whereas Mila wants to be a lawyer like his father. They ignore whether their fathers are rivals, but they are forced to have their relationships secretly for a long time. Mila displays the biggest issue as follows: “[w]e were young and innocent, from different sides of the ethnic divide. My father despised Bosniak Muslims. Your grandfather hated Christian Serbs” (374). Although they merely wish to laugh, talk, and fall in love, their parents do not permit them to see one another when they discover their secret relationship. They, nevertheless, continue their love until his father hangs himself the night before the trial of a corruption charge brought by Lana’s father. Thereafter, Ivan Arkov gives Mila shelter and food by blaming Lana’s father for his father’s death, which makes Mila end their relationship with Lana and earnest to take revenge on the Bosniaks. However, as soon as Mila sees Lana again in the camp, he suddenly recalls all his memories, alongside “[e]motions, feelings, regrets, for the life” (375) they lost, which leads him to promise Lana to do whatever she needs unconditionally.

Ignoring Mila’s clear statements about his love for Lana, Carla accuses him of murdering her mother even though he just tries to aid her family. Accordingly, Mila elucidates that Boris Arkov kills the women and children including Lana at the time of evacuation when Mila leaves there to look for Carla and Luka for a moment. Mila, in addition, clarifies that he finds Luka wounded and brings him to David at the Omarska camp. With the aim of enabling them to survive, he drives them to a hospital run by the nuns and provides them with medical supplies, but both her father and little brother pass

away eventually. Losing all her hopes to find particularly Luka alive, “Carla broke down. Her body convulsed with sobbing. She seemed to lose all control then, all reason, and with a terrible fury she hit Shavik” (377). Carla subsequently learns that they are “buried in a grave site near the town” (378) in Bosnia, and she wonders how Mila has so much hatred that he allows children and women to die and quotes her mother’s words as follows: “good and evil, like love and hate, are so close that they’re chained together in the soul. That we can unleash whichever one we choose” (378). In terms of the preceding viewpoint, Mila does not prevent the atrocities of war, whereas Carla endangers her unborn baby’s life by trying to kill Boris and Mila, which actually proves they both follow the path of intense hatred instead of forgiveness.

Mila, on the other hand, does not reveal the fact that he is Carla’s biological father not to destroy her life again due to the fact that Mila tells the secret of Carla’s life in his office at the Devil’s Hill when she is ten, which undeniably traumatises her deeply and activates her defence mechanism of denial and avoidance. According to van der Kolk, the traumatised “simultaneously remember too little and too much” (2015a: 215), which clarifies the reason behind Carla’s amnesia since her childhood. Carla not only unconsciously represses all the horrifying events in her wounded childhood but also acts out these overwhelming occurrences through her nightmares or the disturbance of her traumatised memory. Likewise, one of the children in Jones’s study takes up the option of forgetfulness and states that “[t]he best thing is to forget everything that happened” (258). Levine and Kline, additionally, suggest that young children often shut down, detach, withdraw, or go numb as an automatic reaction upon feeling overwhelmed and “their distress is no longer tolerable” (44). Therefore, Carla suffers traumatic amnesia and forgets not only her worst memories of war during her childhood but also the good days when she enjoys her life with her parents and little brother in Dubrovnik.

As Frankl (1985) identifies, “[t]he fear is mother of the event” (145), signifying that the more you are afraid of something, the higher possibility you encounter you fear most. In the novel, Carla and the entire Joran family in addition to some other characters such as Mila, Angel, Jan, and his brother Paul as the victims of war confirm their greatest fears in their lives. Although Mila Shavik seems to take the role of a victimiser, he in truth suffers from his mother’s death in his childhood and then his father’s suicide whose death is ordered by Ivan Arkov but put the blame on her love Lana’s father, which makes him a hateful victim. Despite being a perpetrator in the novel, Boris indeed receives the

legacy of hatred and greed from his father Ivan, described as “the one who tells them to steal (...) belongings and property” (100) of the Bosniaks and massacre them. Thus, as Jones (2013) elucidates, “[c]hildren are not the passive recipients of experience. They are actively engaged in making sense of their environment, and acting to change it, from an early age” (196), and their worldview is formed by first and foremost their parents as well as caretakers, and subsequently the outside world as well as their own experiences, which clarifies the reason behind the transformation of Boris into a heartless killer from an innocent child who merely seeks his father’s love and approval. However, Ivan is so greedy for money and power that he values Mila for his intelligence more than Boris, which makes them like Cain and Abel and “forever at each other’s throats” (99), alongside Boris’s intense anger and enmity by the sense of inferiority.

Angel as a victimised child of the Bosnian war like Carla is, on the other hand, thought to have an affair with Carla’s husband Jan in the novel, but it is understood that she just tries to help Jan and wants to take revenge on Mila and especially Boris who kills her mother and sister at the Merviak camp. Accordingly, trauma invades Carla and Angel as the victims of war during their childhood, and as Austrian-born American sociologist Kai Erikson (1991) addresses in his *Notes on Trauma and Community*, “[s]omething alien breaks in on you, smashing through whatever barriers your mind has set up as a line of defense” (458) by leaving them empty eventually. With the aim of getting her revenge, Angel manages to attract Mila and live in his house at times, which enables her to collect information for Jan and herself but causes them to be killed by Boris Arkov. As a matter of fact, Carla senses “that day would begin with life and end with death” (19). In other words, the day when they learn about Carla’s pregnancy ends up with Jan’s brutal murder in a bomb explosion organised by Boris’s hired killer Billy Davix. The explosion in the car park is portrayed in the novel as follows: “[e]verything seemed to turn deathly slow and silent, as if it were happening under water, in slow motion. The car lifted; Jan’s body was blown into the air. Carla felt a tremendous force punch her body” (30), which leads to the scars in Carla’s mind and body as well due to the unexpected and incomprehensible death of her husband.

Carla and Jan have a love and happy marriage until the death of Jan shortly afterwards they learn about Carla’s pregnancy. Carla works as a lawyer but is delighted with her job owing to the problems that she realises in the justice system. Jan, however, has a job of his dreams as a worldwide famous young pianist. The grim details of Jan’s

traumatic childhood experiences are never known by Carla until his brother Paul tells her the true story of the Bosnian war and its devastating impacts on their childhood in Croatia upon Jan's murder, which actually reveals the big secrets of Carla and Jan's past. Nevertheless, Carla stresses that she always feels that his music voices "his own childhood torment, that secret well of hurt deep inside himself he never talked about" (29). In the aftermath of the tragic assassination of her husband, Carla immediately visits Paul in Arizona to explore the reasons behind Jan's murder, which indicates that she is aware of the pain and suffering the Lane brothers witness in their homeland but not the disastrous details. Whereas Paul is reluctant to recall their traumatic past, whereas Jan always keeps "a photograph he cut from a magazine and stuck on his bedroom wall to remind him of that time. Of the pain he felt, and the injustice he witnessed" (47). Paul, moreover, displays how the brothers orphaned in the war witness the murder of their parents by the Serbs and ethnic cleansing as well, which causes them to lose their sense of safety and their trust in the outside world ultimately.

Concerning Carla's anguish and confusion in the aftermath of Jan's murder by the Serbian war criminals, Paul strives to clarify the reason behind the Serbs' brutal attack on the Croatians and Bosniaks. In this regard, Catholic Croatia, mostly Muslim Bosnia, and Christian Orthodox Serbia have fought one another for hundreds of years. When Yugoslavia begins to break apart, Slobodan Milosevic as the corrupt and brutal Serb president ruthlessly tries to suppress any rebellion that threatens Serbia's power, together with the Serbian crime gangs that massacre the largely Bosnian and Croatian inhabitants or remove them forcibly. Accordingly, Jones (2013) quotes the regretful confession of Biljana Plavsic as a former president of Republika Srpska, who commits crimes against humanity due to the role she takes part in the Bosnian war as follows:

I have now come to the belief and accept the fact that many thousands of innocent people were the victims of an organized, systematic effort to remove Muslims and Croats from the territory claimed by Serbs. At the time, I easily convinced myself that this was a matter of survival and self-defense. In fact, it was more (...) Why did I not see it earlier? And how could our leaders and those who followed have committed such acts? The answer to both questions is, I believe, fear, a blinding fear that led to an obsession, especially for those of us for whom the Second World War was a living memory, that Serbs would never again allow themselves to become victims. In this, we in the leadership violated the most basic duty of every human being, the duty to restrain oneself and to respect the human dignity of others (...) In this obsession of ours to never again become victims, we had allowed ourselves to become victimizers. (2013: 241-2)

Therefore, a considerable number of victimisers during the war lead to the massacre, torture, and/or displacement of the millions of people. In actuality, these victimisers

inflict all forms of violence to prove their so-called great power, particularly in the prison camps as the houses of horror and death, with the fear of being victims themselves.

Likewise, Jan is assassinated by such victimisers since he tries “to hunt down wanted killers and bring them to justice” (51), which is a real shock to discover for Carla. Furthermore, Jan seemingly dedicates himself to tracking down the barbaric criminals of the genocide in the Bosnian war by often keeping in touch with a group organised and called as ‘Families for Justice’ by the relatives of victims of the ethnic cleansing during the war. According to Paul, these war criminals are such violent and deadly gangsters with dreadful crimes such as drug smuggling, human trafficking, and murder that they are of no mercy for anyone, even a pregnant woman as his warning for Carla. They kill Jan most probably since they regard him “as a threat to their freedom” (52), and they additionally slaughter Paul’s dog to strike terror into his heart after Jan’s death. Considering the reason why Jan risks his life, Paul asserts that Jan wants “to speak for the dead (...) to see these killers and torturers face the courts” (53) as he is obsessed with detecting the guilty. In this respect, as Bruce Perry and his co-author Christine Ludy-Dobson present in their *Buffering the Impact of Childhood Trauma*, children who do not develop a positive relationship with their families “during or after trauma have a much more difficult time decreasing the trauma-induced activation of the stress response systems” (27), which causes such wounded children not to recover from these impacts especially if there is no significant progress in their relational interactions. Similarly, the traumatised children of the novel including Jan, Paul, Angel, and even Mila as well as the protagonist Carla and her little brother Luka suffer from the absence and/or loss of the familial attachment figures that unconditionally love and support them to heal their childhood trauma during the war, for they are murdered by the war criminals.

3.3. Buried Traumatic Memories in the Wounded Mind

Carla is found at the age of 11 as the last survivor of the massacre at the Devil’s Hill, together with her mother Lana’s diary, and so traumatised that she suffers a speechless terror and is unable to recall any horrifying occurrences during the Bosnian war until she reads her mother’s diary in her adulthood. Accordingly, Erikson (1976) identifies ‘individual trauma’ in his *Everything in its Path* as “a blow to the psyche that breaks through one’s defenses so suddenly and with such brutal force that one cannot

react to it effectively” (153), explaining why Carla’s severe childhood traumas cause her traumatic memories to be buried deeply. In terms of the devastating consequences of experiencing and/or witnessing such unspeakable horrors, Dori Laub (1995) states that “[t]here are never enough words or the right words, there is never enough time or the right time, and never enough listening or the right listening to articulate the story that cannot be fully captured in *thought, memory, and speech*” (63). Likewise, Carla’s childhood trauma becomes so unbearable that her wounded mind develops “a defense mechanism that helps it bury trauma” (372), in which she pictures herself as lucky since she is deeply re-traumatised upon her sudden remembrance of the harrowing scars in her childhood when she finishes reading her mother’s diary. In this regard, van der Kolk (2015a) utters that it is typical for the traumatised “to lose all memories of the event in question, only to regain access to them in bits and pieces at a much later date” (209), clarifying Carla’s access to her traumatic childhood memories that come flooding back in Carla’s therapist Dr Leon’s office and at certain moments on the following days.

The turning point in Carla’s adult life is the insistence of her grandmother Baize to visit Dr Leon, who indeed helps Carla during her first and foremost traumatising at the age of eleven and also re-traumatisation in her adulthood, in the aftermath of her husband Jan’s assassination. Subsequent to the discovery of Carla alone near the Devil’s Hills, she is sent to America to live with her grandparents, Dan and Baize, who immediately enable Carla to get long-term therapy and cope with her profoundly overwhelming childhood experiences thanks to Dr Leon. However, Carla forgets not only her traumatic childhood scars but also the psychic treatment provided by Dr Leon during her childhood although the therapies last several months. When Carla and Dr Leon meet again long years afterwards, Dr Leon speaks of the details of his job as the treatment of patients “who suffer severe psychological trauma” (61), including childhood abuse, parental suicides, post-war stress, shootings, emotional upheavals, phobias, and life-changing accidents. In addition, he maintains that Carla suffers intense emotional trauma during her childhood, which is a distressing reality for her since she is unable to recall any details. Dr Leon, therefore, elaborates on the reasons behind Carla’s forgetfulness of her painful childhood memories as follows:

The human mind has a natural defense mechanism that suppresses unpleasant memories, especially in young people below the age of twelve (...) People often think you can erase traumatic experiences in child patients with say, hypnotherapy treatment. But hypnotherapy might only make things worse and sometimes there really isn’t any need (...) One of the

brain's defenses against the problems caused by trauma in childhood is to either suppress the memory or to 'split' into separate personalities, where one part carries the memory and effects of the trauma (...) The other part of the mind is unaware of it and is able to grow up and function fairly normally without any apparent effect. That's the part that lets us eat, sleep, move and doesn't recall anything of what happened (...) That was the only way it could deal with it at the time—to obliterate the bad memories, so that you could live a normal life. (62)

The preceding viewpoints present that Carla's wounded mind seemingly represses her traumatic childhood scars in the Bosnian war as an inherent defence mechanism by the time her brain hopes to deal with it better during her adulthood.

In the aftermath of Jan's death as Carla's recent trauma which in fact triggers her childhood traumas, she is apparently possessed by the repetitive flashbacks and disturbing nightmares that belong to her traumatic past, but she can never make sense until her visit to Dr Leon's office. In this regard, the dreams, as Freud (1955a) suggests, bring "the psychical traumas of childhood" (32) to memory. In actuality, Carla has "vague recollections of some kind of family life, of days on a beach somewhere, vacations together" (63) without any bad memories, and she is pretty sure she is loved by her family. Thereupon, Dr Leon utters that Carla falls into the catatonic state at the age of eleven when he first treats her, and he clarifies Carla's traumatic reaction back then as follows: "[a] kind of selective amnesia had set in to repress the bad memories (...) Repressing memory is not unlike hitting the delete button on your computer to get rid of an unwanted file" (63) because the file she assumes to erase is most probably in her computer but she does not only recall it. Similarly, as Gillette remarks, "[a]mnesia is taking you away and protecting you from reliving that experience" (*PsychCentral*, 2022). The APA (2013), moreover, portrays amnesia in DSM-V as "an essential feature of dissociative amnesia" (291), in which traumatised victims may experience mostly selective or localised amnesia, and rarely generalised amnesia. The health journalist Zia Sherrell also displays that selective amnesia contains "losing only some of one's memory from a certain period" (*MedicalNewsToday*, 2021). The preceding perspectives clearly explains Carla's forgetfulness of the period of her childhood during the Bosnian war, whereas localised amnesia refers to a gap in one's memory by not remembering a particular event in the past, as Carla is unable to recall the happenings in Mila's office at Devil's Hill even after reading the diary.

Furthermore, Jennifer Freyd, having studies in psychology, illustrates in her *Betrayal Trauma* that dissociation during traumatic amnesia is fundamentally thought to be psychic defences against psychic suffering, "as if removing pain is a logical end

goal” (1994: 311), whereas a traumatised person may simultaneously experience bodily and mental pain. In this respect, the German author Erich Maria Remarque (2003) voices in his *All Quiet on the Western Front* the pain and suffering of his protagonist Paul Bäumer and his generation whose lives are ruined by the war as follows:

Now we would wander around like strangers in those landscapes of our youth. We have been consumed in the fires of reality, we perceive differences only in the way tradesmen do, and we see necessities like butchers. We are free of care no longer — we are terrifyingly indifferent. We might be present in that world, but would we be alive in? We are like children who have been abandoned and we are as experienced as old men, we are coarse, unhappy and superficial — I think that we are lost. (88)

Accordingly, the horrors of war undeniably inflict serious damage upon both victims and victimisers by turning their world upside down and leaving traumatic scars on their mind and body as well. Likewise, the atrocities of the Bosnian war cause Carla to suffer from traumatic memory in which the frightful repetitive events “are frozen in time, unchanging, and (...) always lonely, humiliating, and alienating” (van der Kolk, 2015a: 216), whereas ordinary memory allows the sufferers to utter their trauma stories aloud, which Carla succeeds when she works through her childhood wounds by integrating them into her ordinary memory and new experiences in life.

Carla’s traumatic memories come flooding back owing to the great distress and extreme sorrow of her husband’s death that triggers her repressed memories during her childhood and leads her to suffer from re-traumatisation under the unbearable weight of remembrance. To put it another way, Dr Leon compares her painful remembrance to opening Pandora’s box which forces Carla to face troublesome truths. Nevertheless, these truths are supposed to come to light, or else the problem probably gets worse, and he highlights that the disturbing nightmares may cause a great deal of mental and somatic stress if she cannot find out any reasonable explanations for them. In addition, Dr Leon presents the grim fact that Carla is not the person she thinks she is, and as he suggests, “you have no real recollection of your childhood, apart from limited generic memories your own imagination will furnish as it tries to fill in the missing gaps (...) Your entire life before the age of eleven has pretty much been suppressed” (64) due to her childhood trauma. Now that she is more rational and mature, she is expected to confront the unpleasant part of her life when she reads the diary. Dr Leon, however, warns Carla not to face these difficult truths all at once, “[t]o do otherwise would be like pulling a bandage off a burn victim” (65), in which Carla actually takes all the risks by reading the diary nonstop, together with adverse consequences.

Regarding the destructive impacts of trauma, Levine (2015) states that “[t]rauma shocks the brain, stuns the mind, and freezes the body” (xxi), leaving traumatic scars on the mind, body, and soul by imprisoning the victims in the depths of torment, despair, and helplessness. In actuality, the queries Dr Leon asks Carla about the prior knowledge of the death of her parents reveal that Lana and David die abroad when she is young in Europe in a car accident, and they have no graves as their remains are burned, as Baize and Dan falsely inform her. The preceding viewpoint proves that he has false memories concerning her parents even without knowing the existence of her little brother Luka. In fact, Carla vaguely feels that she lives abroad with a happy and warm family in a different country, rather than America during her childhood, and she also carries an image of her mother holding a baby in her arms inside her mind for a long time despite her assumption that she has no siblings but with an inexplicable feeling of having a little brother. From this perspective, as van der Kolk (2015a) asserts, “the imprints of traumatic experiences are organized not as coherent logical narratives but in fragmented sensory and emotional traces: images, sounds, and physical sensations” (211), which indicates the nonlinear nature of trauma stories and the incomprehensible state of fragmented sensations that belongs to wounded childhood. Similarly, Carla’s trauma story is nonlinearly narrated by Meade in harmony with her wounded mind’s psychic, bodily, and emotional reactions to her childhood traumas.

Dr Leon’s questions about Carla’s forgotten past to explore what she recalls of her childhood just before reading the diary uncover the truth that she always feels troubled by the belief of the untold missing parts of her past. Considering the memory impairment, van der Kolk and Rita Fisler (1995) suggest that wounded children, unlike adults, have “fewer mental capacities to construct a coherent narrative out of traumatic events” (510), which signifies the reason behind Carla’s incapability of remembering and narrating her childhood traumas coherently. According to Sigmund Freud and Josef Breuer (1955), the overwhelming circumstances make the reaction impossible for the traumatised patient who wishes to forget, and hence deliberately “repressed from his conscious thought and inhibited and suppressed” (10) because they originate from the prevalence of severely paralysing affects, such as fright” (11). Moreover, van der Kolk and Onno van der Hart (1989) portray Janet’s notion of traumatic memory that the victims suffer from the memory disturbances, constant and retrograde amnesia, with the effect of the frightful memories as the trauma story is regarded as too upsetting for the

sufferer to narrativize. Therefore, they point out that the traumatic memories cannot be integrated into the ordinary consciousness by being attached in the subconscious – that is, fixated in the unconscious as Freud asserts – causing them to begin losing “their ability to deal with both old and new stressors” and “assimilate new experiences” (1989: 1533), proving the haunting nature of traumatic memory.

Dr Leon, thus, illustrates the diary as the key to her past, the chief reason for her disturbing and inexplicable feelings and nightmares. In this respect, Freud presents the belated nature of trauma – in other words, latency, as follows: “[a] trauma in childhood may be followed immediately by a neurotic outbreak, (...) with an abundance of efforts at defence, and accompanied by the formation of symptoms” (1964: 77), which does not often continue into adulthood without interruption and belatedly manifested by somatic and/or physic symptoms in adulthood. Likewise, Caruth (1996) identifies that traumatic events are “experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known and (...) therefore not available to consciousness until it imposes itself again, repeatedly, in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor” (4), which emerges belatedly and may not be connected to what is known or unknown in victims’ language or actions. Concerning the preceding perspectives, Dr Leon stresses that reading the diary emotionally affects her as a great shock, so he does not let her read it alone in case she feels overwhelmed. Dr Leon informs Carla beforehand of the distressing fact that she is “rescued, half dead from hypothermia one cold, snowy evening” (67-8) holding her mother’s diary, clarifying the process of the return of her repressed memories as follows:

You may have to struggle to remember, or in some cases you may not. For some people their repressed memories may come over days and weeks. For others, it may happen more dramatically, as if a floodgate opens (...) Reading about what happened to you will certainly trigger your subconscious. So would visiting places where you suffered your worst traumas, or experienced your intense moments of happiness in your past (...) Even seeing photographs from back then, or people you encountered, could have the same effect. The mind will start to connect the dots, to unravel the trauma. (68)

Thereafter, Dr Leon counsels caution when Carla’s powerful memories come flooding back as she can feel overwhelmed and re-traumatized. Carla is, nonetheless, advised to perceive today when she reads her mother Lana’s diary as a sort of liberation day since Carla’s true self will be freed of the cage of her wounded mind.

As soon as Carla picks up Lana’s diary, she examines the cover and the back pages that includes Luka’s childish drawing of the Joran family: David, Lana, Carla, and Luka side-by-side who are all in tears, together with small red hearts beside each figure.

Carla subsequently makes sense of her vague feeling of having a little brother, and she fully grasps that she has a little brother named Luka in truth. When she begins to read the diary, she feels something horrifying happens to her family. Thereupon, Carla encounters Lana's tragic words as follows: "*I have witnessed its terrible brutality—sights that no mother or father or their children should ever see. And all the while the world stands by and does nothing*" (71), and Lana is afraid particularly for her children due to the high possibility of their murder by the inhumane tormentors during the Bosnian war. Even reading only half of the story in the diary, Carla forces herself to recollect her childhood memories and feels shocked, stunned, moved as well as terrified by the remembrance of much worse memories awaiting her. However, she decides to continue reading the whole diary alone despite Dr Leon's prior warnings about the danger of remembering too much at once, which may cause Carla to "go into deep shock" (90) and suffer mental breakdown. Although Dr Leon considers Carla's request as unwise of her and unethical of himself to permit that, he eventually feels compelled to respect her decision reminding her of all the risks once again.

Lana's diary ends abruptly without giving further information about what happens to Carla's family, which most probably indicates Lana's death and so her inability to write more about their circumstances to her diary. In the aftermath of knowing about all her family's unspeakable suffering during the Bosnian war through her mother's diary, Carla's insufferable war memories come flooding back instantly and painfully. Carla is, nonetheless, unable to remember that she meets Mila Shavik or whether he assaults Lana and herself, which makes her feel pain, anguish, and rage, alongside a severe headache. Then she feels "too much to take in" (121) and presses the buzzer to call Dr Leon urgently. Carla asks him for the details where Carla and the diary are found, and he asserts that she is detected alone by the special forces as "shell-shocked, badly traumatized, and suffering from hypothermia" (122) with Lana's diary wandering in an abandoned town four miles away from the Devil's Hill. As Dr Leon illustrates, the dead bodies of her parents and Luka are never found so far, and Baize keeps silent on his instruction not to risk triggering Carla's traumatic memory. To Dr Leon's surprise, Carla feels ashamed by the grim fact that she forgets her beloved family even though it is not actually her fault. From this viewpoint, Carla most probably suffers survivor's guilt because she survives life-threatening events when her family does not. In this regard, the psychotherapist Jayne Leonard pictures survivor's guilt as "a common

reaction to traumatic events and a symptom of post-traumatic stress disorder” (*MedicalNewsToday*, 2019). Accordingly, Carla suffers from the sense of guilt since she forgets her beloved little brother as well as her parents and leaves Luka behind due to his serious illness although he begs her to stay cryingly.

In terms of Carla’s first reactions when she is first brought to Dr Leon during her childhood in the aftermath of the Bosnian war, she apparently feels alienated from everyone, even Baize and Dan for a long time. According to Melanie Klein (1960), such traumatised children are unable to tolerate frustrations and reality well, so they try to find ways “to protect themselves from reality by denying it” (34). On the other hand, Levine (1997) presents in his *Waking the Tiger* that traumatic symptoms activate physiological mechanism involuntarily and unconsciously since trauma “resides in the primitive, instinctual parts of our brains and nervous systems” (17). Dr Leon also reveals that she hides away in her “room, curled up in a ball like an addict trying to detox” (124) without talking much and suffering constant nightmares. Carla once severely injures her hand by punching it through a window, which requires surgery. In this respect, Hungarian-born Canadian physician Gabor Maté (2007) maintains that traumatic childhood experiences “are stored in people’s brains and bodies and are daily ‘acted out’ in the form of violence towards others or ‘acted in’ as self-destructive beliefs and behaviours” (xiii), which leads to lifelong alterations in body physiology and brain chemistry as it happens to Carla. Upon Carla’s reading her mother’s diary during her adulthood, she feels deeply re-traumatised but now makes sense of her nightmares that would possibly cause her to go mad, but on the other hand, she does not know which one is worse: going insane or knowing all the truth of her traumatic childhood.

Just before Carla leaves Dr Leon’s office, he asks her not to blame Baize, who also suffers from her losses a lot, and to visit him again to make sure she mentally gets better until her baby arrives. However, Carla desperately wants to know what happens to Luka and her parents, whereas Dr Leon and Baize assume the worst as they already contact orphanages, displacement camps, and relief agencies to see whether her family survives, but it goes nowhere. In contrast to Dr Leon’s advice, Carla displays her anger at Baize, who already goes through intense rage and deep grief for years, together with unanswered questions. Likewise, her grandfather Dan never forgives himself until he dies because he feels partly responsible for all the tragic events that happen to David, who moves to Dubrovnik upon a fierce argument about David’s career choice. Baize

additionally informs Carla that she tells all the truth of Carla's traumatic childhood to Jan and Paul in fear of the return of her repressed memory, which enables Carla to grasp Jan's burning desire to hunt down Boris Arkov and Mila Shavik. Afterwards, Baize shows Carla the photographs as the sole keys she possesses to her childhood, which indeed triggers her forgotten memories suddenly by tormenting her unbearably. Carla's re-traumatisation in her adulthood causes her to lose the track of time and feel "[o]verwhelmed by bouts of fear and rage and crying" (136) as if she goes through a total shutdown, which prevents her from even from eating or sleeping mostly.

When Carla visits Dr Leon again, she tells him about her remembrance of their escape from the Devil's Hill with Alma, her mother, and Luka. On the way, Lana joins the evacuation to distract the soldiers' attention from Carla and Luka, who both hide in a room at the camp. Thereupon, Dr Leon gives Carla an article that includes Alma's "interview in the *New York Times* about the Bosnian rape camps" (138) written by the journalist Max Shine, whom Carla meets as soon as possible so that she could keep in touch with Alma Dragovich, who comes to live with his son in New Jersey. In spite of the possibility for her worst fears to be confirmed by her, Carla visits Alma at her home and learns about her poor memory due to her old age and the adverse impacts of the genocide in Bosnia. Alma, nevertheless, recalls Carla cryingly and what happens to Luka painfully as a profound trauma that she often feels compelled to forget. While Alma tries to speak of the details as far as she remembers, Carla unexpectedly recalls "Luka crying, his tiny hands reaching out for their mother" (165), whose memory cuts into Carla's heart sharply. Alma, moreover, remarks that Carla leaves where they hide without Luka, who is too ill to move further, so that she could bring help for them. Then Luka escapes from their hiding place as soon as Alma leaves the room to check whether there are any soldiers left. Two days afterwards, Alma wakes up in a hospital where nuns try to treat the war-torn patients, and to her strong belief, she sees Luka as heavily bandaged in the same hospital, which gives her a ray of hope that completely shatters when Mila informs her of Luka's untimely death despite his great efforts.

Filled with conflicting emotions such as rage, anguish, guilt, remorse, horror, and a glimmer of hope, Carla struggles to find a way to hunt down Mila Shavik and Boris Arkov. Thereafter, she runs across Ronnie Kilgore's letter sent to Baize upon her grandfather Dan's death to tell her that she can contact him for anything she needs. Accordingly, Carla visits Ronnie in Tennessee to ask for help to find Mila and Boris,

whom he portrays as deadly war criminals. Ronnie also emphasises the value of Dan, who is one of his comrades in the special forces, for himself and clarifies how Dan feels lost, broken, and haunted by the trauma of David and his family's loss during the Bosnian war by just knowing that they are all violently and mercilessly tormented by the war criminals but without knowing even their graves. Considering Ronnie's army experience, Carla wants him to help her bring Mila and Boris as brutal killers to justice and take revenge for the deaths of her family. Ronnie is not, however, willing to help Carla as they can easily murder her even as a pregnant woman, and he does not want to risk the lives of his sister Regan and disabled son Josh, who still suffers from the trauma of her mother's death, "still waiting for her footsteps to come up the cabin steps" (195). Jones (2013) states that "[s]eparation from the mother, even if she was not a very competent one" (183), is apparently far more destructive than anything else, which proves the reason behind Josh's frequent cries in pain for his mother.

As Bruce Perry and Christine Ludy-Dobson (2010) remark in their *Buffering the Impact of Childhood Trauma*, early life experiences "have the profound ability to shape the infant, child, adolescent, and ultimately the adult" (28). From the preceding viewpoint, Carla's childhood traumas literally shape not only her childhood but also her entire adulthood in which she is re-traumatised upon finishing the diary by causing her to take huge risks so that she could find Luka and eventually get the Joran family as well as the war victims' revenge. Since Carla is bound and determined to find out whether her family is alive or dead and track the war criminals, she informs Paul on the phone that she contacts "the International Commission on Missing Persons" (186) as the supreme agency in Sarajevo which deals with the missing casualties of the war. Carla, therefore, flies to Dubrovnik and meets the forensic pathologist Sean Kelly, who is also brutally murdered by Ivan Arkov due to his aid in discovering the remains of her mother murdered by Boris as well as uncovering the truth about the death of David and Luka owing to their serious illness despite their treatment by the nuns in a temporary hospital upon being rescued by Mila. In the aftermath of her grim discovery of her mother's death, she feels "a pang of grief cut her like a blade" (215), and she trembles with fear and distress when she sees her mother's remains as well as the "parts of skeletons, skulls and bones, bits of rotted clothing and footwear" (232) of ninety-seven victims only in this location, including women, children, and infants.

As John Bowlby (1963) suggests in his *Pathological Mourning and Childhood Mourning*, “[i]f the experience of loss is likened to the experience of being wounded or being burned, the processes of mourning that follow loss can be likened to the processes of healing that follow a wound or a burn” (501), signifying that Carla needs to give herself time for her wounds to heal although they are most probably leave the scars on her mind or even body as well. Nevertheless, Carla’s sense of intense anger and grief after seeing the remains of the corpses of notably children and even unborn babies. Carla subsequently wants to visit the Devil’s Hill to check the room where they hide despite Sean’s warning for Carla of the unbearable scenes she will encounter there. Carla’s traumatic memories are expectedly triggered as soon as she visits their prison camp where she recalls the cries of their despair, starvation, the parents’ shame, humiliation, and helplessness because they are unable to protect their children as well as the gratuitous violence, abuse, rape, and murder inflicted by the war criminals just due to their ethnic or religious differences. Among the ruins of the building, Carla suddenly discovers his little brother’s backpack with his blankie that he cannot sleep without, making her unable to speak or move. Carla then gives “[a] terrible scream that seemed to echo throughout the building, like a cry from all the souls of all the dead who had ever perished there” (244), as a manifestation of her immense pain and suffering.

For all the unspeakably tragic experiences the Joran family goes through, Carla places the blame on particularly Boris Arkov and Mila Shavik, from whom she desires to take revenge immediately. Carla also asks Ronnie to teach her how to use guns to kill these war criminals ignoring about how much she can harm herself and her unborn baby owing to her sense of emptiness and desperation, together with the painful deaths of her entire family. Ronnie, however, warns Carla that “[e]ven if the men you kill are the scum of the earth it’s still murder” (258), which may cause her to end up in prison, or much worse, to be slaughtered like her family. After a while, Carla escapes the danger of losing her baby during her training by Ronnie, who unwillingly accepts to teach her how to kill Boris and Mila. Therefore, she is taken to a hospital where the doctor strongly advises her as follows: “[m]edication and rest. Any kind of exertion is out. That and we’ll need to wrap you up in cotton wool” (308) under Ronnie’s care since she looks stressed-out, exhausted, and worried sick. Despite all the warnings, Carla decides to fulfil her aim to kill the war criminals and embark on a dangerous journey. Thereafter, she is imprisoned by Boris but freed by Mila, who chooses goodness and asks for her forgiveness

eventually. In this respect, Mila provides the police with all the evidence to uncover the secrets about the war criminals and commits suicide after he kills Boris and Ivan Arkov, who destroys Mila's life in truth by murdering his father disguised as suicide, causing him to grow up as a deadly criminal, commanding Boris to murder his love Lana, and asking himself to murder his own daughter Carla.

In addition, Baize meets Dr Leon to utter her worries about Carla's reactions to her traumatic experiences, and she feels amazed at how Carla does not have a psychotic breakdown in spite of all her overwhelming sufferings. Hence Dr Leon highlights that "what people fail to understand is that the trauma is not in the event, but in the body and mind of the victim because of the overwhelmingness" (335), which clarifies the reason behind Carla's bodily and mental traumatic response to her tragic past, but on the other hand, she ultimately manages to confront with the overwhelming occurrences. Likewise, van der Kolk emphasises the significance of dealing with the traumatic scars on the body, mind, and sensations rather than focusing on certain tragic events as follows:

Nobody can "treat" a war, or abuse, rape, molestation, or any other horrendous event, for that matter; what has happened cannot be undone. But what can be dealt with are the imprints of the trauma on body, mind, and soul: the crushing sensations in your chest that you may label as anxiety or depression; the fear of losing control; always being on alert for danger or rejection; the self-loathing; the nightmares and flashbacks; the fog that keeps you from staying on task and from engaging fully in what you are doing; being unable to fully open your heart to another human being. (2015a: 243)

The preceding perspectives elucidate the reason behind Dr Leon's struggles to enable Carla to face her forgotten traumatic childhood to overcome her psychic, somatic, and emotional imprints of childhood trauma. Baize, furthermore, confesses that she removes the missing pages in the diary which encompasses Lana's thoughts, reflections, and confessions about Mila as the man she once loves before she gets married to David. Baize also presents the fact that "[t]hat the man Carla hates, the man she despises above everyone else and blames for destroying her life—that man is her real father" (337), which is never known to Carla throughout the novel. Dr Leon, nevertheless, stresses that there should be no worries at all about this issue because David always regards Carla as his own child and raises her with unconditional love and attachment.

Nine months afterwards Carla's baby comes into the world, she feels at peace and portrays it as "[t]he kind of peace you could only dream of" (400) as if she wakes after a deep and restful sleep. As Frankl (1985) addresses, the victims' spiritual freedom which makes life purposeful and meaningful could not be taken away even in the death

camps during the wars despite all the devastating circumstances “such as lack of sleep, insufficient food and various mental stresses” (87). Similarly, Carla prefers not to hate Mila Shavik anymore and not to live in her traumatic past because her present moment, together with Ronnie and her angelic baby called as Lana, brings her spiritual freedom. Carla, moreover, pictures Ronnie and herself as “grief’s survivors, soul mates, friends” (401). As a present, Ronnie gives Carla the travel documents to Mostar so that she could visit her parents and Luka’s graves. She is fully aware that her “heart is still broken. It can never heal. It will never stop weeping” (404), but she perfectly knows the fact that anything loved is never truly lost. The novel ends with Carla beloved mother’s words also written on her gravestone as follows: “please listen to them—for we all know these words to be true: How can evil destroy the light of goodness that shines within us? How can it ever? When there is not enough darkness in the world to quench the light of one small candle” (405), which reveals the significance of choosing goodness and love as opposed to evil and hate to build a better future for children.

To conclude, this chapter primarily illustrates Carla’s deeply wounded childhood within Glenn Meade’s *The Last Witness*, which displays the unspeakably unbearable pain and suffering experienced and/or witnessed by victims of all ages in the Bosnian war. The power struggle between notably Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia ends up with the massacre, severe injuries, displacement, and lifelong traumatising of a huge number of people from diverse ethnicities and religions but mostly Bosniak Muslims. In this regard, Carla as a child prisoner at the age of 10 witnesses torture, abuse, rape, beatings, and killings inflicted upon men, women, and children, with her parents Lana and David as well as her four-year-old brother Luka. Like the other victims at the Devil’s Hill and Omarska, Carla lives in constant fear of being tormented, abused, killed, or losing her family without lacking basic needs such as food and water. Additionally, Mila Shavik’s mysterious talk with Carla in his office at the Devil’s Hill makes her feel paralysed with shock as one of her most overwhelming moments when she presumably learns Lana and Mila’s love and that Mila is her biological father, which she never recalls. Concerning all these tragic events, Carla suffers from the bodily, mental, and sentimental symptoms of trauma as a war child and the amnesiac traumatic memory throughout her life. With the assassination of her husband Jan, Carla visits her childhood therapist Raymond Leon and reads her mother Lana’s diary, which profoundly re-traumatises her by triggering all her memories to come flooding back, and much worse, discovering the death of her

entire family. All things considered, Meade portrays the atrocities of war and its deep traumatic scars in not only Carla but also closely connected characters, including Lana, David, Luka, Mila, Jan, Paul, Baize, Dan, and Ronnie. However, Carla finds her inner peace by working through her childhood traumas with the birth of her baby named Lana and Ronnie's endless support and unconditional love towards them.



4. CHAPTER FOUR: Dysfunctional Family and Trauma of Racism in Toni Morrison's *God Help the Child*

JIM (*suddenly*). You know what, Ella? Since I been
tuckin' yo' books to school and back, I been drinkin' lots
o' chalk 'n' water tree times a day. Dat Tom, de barber,
he tole me dat make me white, if I drink enough.
(*Pleadingly.*) Does I look whiter?
—Eugene O'Neill, *All God's Chillun Got Wings*

The issue of racism has devastatingly traumatised a vast number of children in diverse ways as being unloved, devalued, abused and/or rejected by not only white society but also their own dysfunctional families throughout history. Moreover, racism is still a socially and culturally constructed global matter although racial discrimination is declared to be illegal. Similarly, Lois Tyson highlights that “racism has not disappeared: it’s just gone ‘underground’ (...) racial injustice in the United States is still a major and pressing problem; it’s simply become less visible than it used to be” (2006: 367). According to Tyson (2006), people of colour still suffer from the internalised racism that signifies “the psychological programming” (362) in which black people are brainwashed into believing in white superiority by racist societies. In this respect, Toni Morrison as the first African American woman awarded the Nobel prize in literature throughout the world skilfully presents the shattering consequences of the myth of black inferiority and the racial stereotypes in her world-renowned novels. This chapter, thus, displays that Morrison chiefly addresses the lifelong adverse impacts of notably intra-racial discrimination on children in her *God Help the Child* (2015) through dark black skinned Lula Ann Bridewell, whose lighter-skinned parents feel ashamed of and even reject Bride as an immediate response during her birth. Accordingly, Bride strives to indicate that she deserves to be loved and seeks approval all through her life. In this regard, she frequently wears white clothes as an accomplished career woman during her adulthood to enable her dark skin colour to be more visible to the outside world.

Toni Morrison as a world-renowned author and Nobel laureate fundamentally touches upon the pain and suffering of children of colour including child maltreatment, neglect, abuse, and trauma ultimately in her internationally bestseller novels, such as *The Bluest Eye* (1970), *Song of Solomon* (1977), *Beloved* (1987), *A Mercy* (2008), *Home* (2012), and *God Help the Child* (2015). In her first published novel *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison truly illustrates the trauma story of an eleven-year-old black girl named Pecola

as “a bleak narrative of psychological murder” (2007: x) since she eventually gets mad as neglected by her mother and molested by her father, believing that she possesses the bluest eyes as her greatest wish, which enables the possibility of being loved as a beautiful young black lady, as Pecola assumes. Likewise, Morrison elucidates in her last novel *God Help the Child* that the oppressive beauty standards determined by the destructive impacts of slavery and racism lead a black mother Sweetness to tragically reject her own little black baby Bride owing to her darker skin colour, which signifies the existence of the intra-racial discrimination as the primary reason for Bride’s childhood trauma. In terms of the damaging intergenerational effects of racist discrimination on black children, Morrison masterfully exemplifies Cholly’s molestation of his young daughter Pecola in *The Bluest Eye*, Sethe’s murder of her baby girl in *Beloved* and the unnamed mother’s abandonment of her eight-year-old daughter Florens in *A Mercy* as compared to Sweetness’s cruel behaviour towards Bride as her only daughter in *God Help the Child*, all seemingly due to these dysfunctional parents’ own traumas of slavery and racism during their childhood.

Morrison’s eleventh novel *God Help the Child* hence delves into the protagonist Lula Ann Bridewell’s childhood trauma story that begins as soon as Bride comes into the world as a blue-black skinned girl, which causes her to be abandoned by her father and brought up as a disliked and oppressed child by her mother. In this respect, the main purpose of this chapter is to analyse and interpret the childhood trauma of racism and the deeply traumatising role of dysfunctional families on their children exemplifying Bride’s trauma story and its lifelong mental, emotional, and bodily impacts. This chapter also attempts to explore the childhood traumas of the closely connected characters to Bride as the protagonist such as Sweetness, Booker, and Rain. Indeed, *God Help the Child* emphasises that all the pain and suffering experienced by children can undeniably misshape almost all their perspectives, beliefs, and/or attitudes during their adulthood, as proven by Sweetness’s confession in the novel as follows: “[w]hat you do to children matters. And they might never forget” (2016: 43). On the other hand, the novel addresses not only the sufferings of a dark black skinned child but also how she heals herself at last. Morrison, in addition, introduces the novel with an epigraph that contains Jesus’s verses from Luke 18:16 in the Bible as a reflection of her own viewpoints on the value of children: “[s]uffer little children to come unto me, / and forbid them not”, which

indicates Jesus's great affection for little children for their purity and innocence, and that Jesus asks all humanity to be like little children to deserve the kingdom of God.

4.1. Toni Morrison and the Nature of Racial Trauma

Born as Chloe Anthony Wofford in Ohio, Toni Morrison starts off his career as an English teacher, and thereupon, begins writing fiction when her marriage ends in divorce in her thirties. Ron David (2016) portrays Morrison's divorce as "the beginning of an astonishing rebirth" (1) as a jobless black woman with two children. Furthermore, Morrison unquestionably plays a prominent role in the recognition of African American literature, and throughout her writing career, she receives several awards apart from the Nobel Prize such as the National Book Critics Circle Award for *Song of Solomon* and the Pulitzer Prize for *Beloved*. According to David, Morrison attaches great importance to her ancestors as the starting point of her own life, and genuinely reflects their legacy and black culture in her writings, together "with West African *griots* telling magical stories to people (...) with the millions of men, women, and children killed in Africa or during the Middle Passage" (2016: 2). Additionally, Toni Morrison as a prolific author and an inspiring teacher asserts in her *Song of Solomon* that "[a] human life is precious" (2019: 258), which presumably summarizes the significant message in her works. In this regard, Elizabeth Ann Beaulieu as an associate professor at Champlain College who fundamentally focuses on African American women's studies utters that Morrison's works provide "themes that universalize the African American condition, inspiration to continue believing that the human soul will triumph over adversity, a mother's touch, an elder's wisdom" (2016: ix). Accordingly, Morrison's works shed light on the struggles of the silenced black voices through her carefully selected characters.

Morrison's novels cover the harsh realities of notably black women and children mostly concerning internalised and intra-racial discrimination, oppression, and killings, which undeniably results in all forms of abuse and violence inflicted upon the victims, primarily women and children. Beginning from her first novel *The Bluest Eye* to her eleventh and last novel *God Help the Child*, children of colour are victimised by enmity for the things they cannot change such as their skin colour, poverty, and their ancestors' tragic experience of enslavement, alongside their vulnerable nature and dysfunctional parents. Therefore, both Pecola in *The Bluest Eye* and Bride in *God Help the Child* see

their own ugliness in their own parents' eyes and suffer self-humiliation, self-hatred, and self-inferiority starting from their birth. Morrison, moreover, maintains the devastating consequences of the victimisation of such wounded children as follows:

[S]ome victims of powerful self-loathing turn out to be dangerous, violent, reproducing the enemy who has humiliated them over and over. Others surrender their identity; melt into a structure that delivers the strong persona they lack (...) But there are some who collapse, silently, anonymously, with no voice to express or acknowledge it. They are invisible. The death of self-esteem can occur quickly, easily in children. (2007: ix-x)

The preceding perspectives clarifies that traumatised children in Morrison's novels drives them to first and foremost be suppressed and invisible even among their own black community. However, the core purpose of illustrating the grim realities of such black children is to prove her slogan "Black is Beautiful" (1994: 199), as Morrison states in an interview with Gloria Naylor, but also adding that it is not easy for Pecola and Bride to have faith in the beauty of blackness as the little black girls especially while seeing their own ugliness in the eyes of other people.

One is not born but becomes a racist or a sexist, as elucidated by Morrison elucidates in her *The Origin of Others*, "[s]ince no one is born a racist and there is no fetal predisposition to sexism, one learns Othering not by lecture or instruction but by example" (2017: 6). Tyson identifies racism as "the unequal power relations that grow from the socio-political domination of one race by another and that result in systematic discriminatory practices" (2006: 360), including domination, persecution, and segregation. Morrison also gives a possible reason behind racism via her character Booker Starbern as follows: "most of the real answers concerning slavery, lynching, forced labor, sharecropping, racism, (...) prison labor, migration, civil rights and black revolution movements were all about money" (110). Such racist practices throughout history lead people of colour to suffer from internalised racism and "feel inferior to whites, less attractive, less worthwhile, less capable, and often wish they were white" (Tyson, 2006: 362). Black people also go through intra-racial discrimination against darker-skinned black ones within black society, as Bride is compelled to endure such pain even due to her dysfunctional parents in Morrison's *God Help the Child*. Delgado and Stefancic, furthermore, display that people of colour get jobs or houses more difficult than whites, and prisoners are mostly from people of colour whereas surgeons or university presidents are almost white (2001: 10). Hence racial oppression seemingly remains a serious worldwide matter waiting to be tackled by humanity.

Racism is actually portrayed as a chief reason for “adverse health outcomes for racial/ethnic minorities and racial/ethnic inequities in health” (2019: 106) as David Williams, Jourdyn Lawrence, and Brigitte Davis suggest in their *Racism and Health*. Moreover, the APA (2019) reveals that a large number of racial and ethnic groups suffer “higher rates of posttraumatic stress disorder (...) as compared to [w]hite Americans”, and racial trauma may stem from various racist practices like hate crimes or workplace discrimination (para. 1-2). Likewise, Zawn Villines states that black people in America are far more possible “to report unfair or discriminatory experiences with police” than white people (*MedicalNewsToday*, 2020). Villines also utters that discrimination as a traumatising experience is most likely to “cause similar symptoms to PTSD, as well as depression and anxiety”, and direct or indirect exposure to racial discrimination may “trigger racial trauma” (*MedicalNewsToday*, 2020). In addition, the APA asserts that racial discrimination increases the risk of being exposed to traumatic occurrences such as abuse and violence for “racial and ethnic minority youth and families” (2008: 1-2), which evidently causes several emotional, psychic, and somatic traumatic symptoms including helplessness, separation anxiety, nightmares, or bodily complaints in notably vulnerable children without affectionate attachment figures.

Concerning the adverse impacts of racial trauma on black children deprived of even their basic needs such as love, belonging, and safety owing to their dysfunctional families, this chapter illustrates that Bride’s childhood trauma of racism is imprinted on her memory and body without any loving caregivers in Morrison’s *God Help the Child*. Accordingly, Bride hungers for acceptance and compassion throughout her life since her parents Sweetness and Louis despise her just because of her darker skin colour and their dread of being rejected by white American society. Similarly, Bride’s blackness is the root of her childhood suffering, like the other black children in Morrison’s novels. Blackness is commonly compared to ugliness as a racist stereotype, whereas whiteness to beauty, which causes a great number of black children and families to feel alienated from their own true selves due to the racial perception of inferiority. Therefore, Morrison’s great effort to make her black community work through their racial traumas and believe her slogan, ‘black is beautiful’, enabling the world to see all the harsh realities of especially black children and women through her novels. In this respect, Morrison focuses on how “the demonization of an entire race could take root inside the most delicate member of society: a child; the most vulnerable member: a female” (2007:

xi). In essence, this chapter aims to scrutinize Bride's childhood trauma story set in contemporary America where people of colour are still exposed to racial discrimination, as revealed in Toni Morrison's *God Help the Child* including four parts and thirteen sections named after the narrators Sweetness, Bride, Brooklyn, Sofia, and Rain, who are all closely connected characters to the protagonist, as well as four more sections of omniscient narrator that reflects Bride's quest for her true self and love.

4.2. Unheard Voices: Poisoning Parent-Child Relationships

Morrison's *God Help the Child* is originally entitled *The Wrath of Children*, signifying the wounded children's deep anger against their indifferent and destructive parents in the novel that presents the traumatic childhood experiences of the characters first and foremost Bride as well as Rain, Sofia, Brooklyn, Booker, and Sweetness. Bride and Rain in particular are negatively influenced by their mothers at whom they never forget their great anger throughout their lifetime. Likewise, as Angela Chen elucidates Morrison's perspective on her *God Help the Child*, the novel provides children's rage "about what adults have done to them and how they tried to get through it and over it and around it and how it affected them" (*The Guardian*, 2016). Hence Lula Ann Bridewell's rage stems from her parents' damaging behaviour towards her from birth, devastatingly impacting all her choices, relationships, and personality. In this respect, Sweetness thinks something is wrong and feels so frightened of Lula Ann's blackness immediately after her birth that she portrays her baby as midnight and Sudanese black. Furthermore, Sweetness points out that Louis blames her for infidelity and treats Lula Ann like "a stranger—more than that, an enemy" (5). Consequently, little Lula Ann's parents reject their only daughter just because of her darker skin colour, which actually leads her to be raised as an unloved and oppressed child.

In the aftermath of Louis's abandonment, Sweetness does not allow Lula Ann even to call her 'mother' or 'mama' since she believes it is safer outside. However, she indeed feels embarrassed by her daughter's skin colour that is terrible, as portrayed by Sweetness herself. Lula Ann's blue-black skin colour drives Sweetness so mad that she attempts to suffocate her own baby by holding "a blanket over her face" and thinks "of giving her away to an orphanage someplace" (5). In this regard, Sweetness undeniably ignores, as Shoshana Ringel reveals, babies' need for "not only food and shelter but also

love and nurturing to survive and thrive” (2012: 78). Lula Ann feels so traumatised by her mother’s hateful and disciplinary reactions since her birth that she painfully recalls her childhood sufferings as a successful career woman in her adulthood as follows:

Distaste was all over her face when I was little and she had to bathe me (...) I used to pray she would slap my face or spank me just to feel her touch. I made little mistakes deliberately, but she had ways to punish me without touching the skin she hated—bed without supper, lock me in my room—but her screaming at me was the worst. When fear rules, obedience is the only survival choice. (31-32)

Accordingly, as Alice Miller identifies, parents are “unconscious of how painfully, deeply, and lastingly (...) [they injure] a child’s tender, budding self” (1990: 69). Peter Levine and Maggie Kline, moreover, maintain that “[c]hildren need to know that they are protected and loved (...) Young children need to be communicated with through physical contact, holding, rocking, and touch” (2007: 429). Therefore, blue-black skinned Lula Ann is deprived of parental protection and affection since her birth, which results in her intentionally wrong actions just to attract her mother’s attention even if she is eventually victimised by Sweetness’s verbal and physical violence.

Even though Lula Ann Bridewell, who abandons Sweetness and renames herself Bride, accomplishes to become a regional manager at a cosmetics company in California and to start a new life as a wealthy woman who owns a Jaguar, her childhood traumatic scars imprison and continue to adversely impact her entire life. In fact, Bride suffers a troubled conscience for destroying someone’s life during her childhood to get her mother’s affection and acceptance. Bride regretfully tells an outright lie at the age of eight in the courtroom where Sofia Huxley as a kindergarten teacher is sentenced to twenty-five years in prison as a child molester owing to Bride’s testimony. On the other hand, her false testimony enables an eight-year-old invisible black girl to be seen by the outside world but most importantly by Sweetness, who feels proud of Bride and holds her hand voluntarily for the first time in her life. Little Lula Ann’s false testimony in the court proves, as Bessel van der Kolk utters, “[k]ids will go to almost any length to feel seen and connected” (2015a: 137). Donald Winnicott (2018) also clarifies Bride’s childhood behaviour as follows: “the imprisoned true self is unable to function” under certain circumstances mainly caused by the absence of love and attachment, which causes children to live the life through their “the compliant false self” and with “a sense of unreality” (43). Similarly, Sigmund Freud (1957) compares the self with the term ‘ego’ that thinks of deserving “to be cast out and punished” (246) and is tortured by the

feelings of emptiness and unworthiness under the shadow of melancholia. The preceding perspectives present that Bride's unloved and rejected childhood leads her to internalise the false self in the hope of being a worthy and visible individual.

The horror of the traumatic experience, as Dori Laub (1995) elucidates, is in fact "compelling not only in its reality but even more so, in its flagrant distortion and subversion of reality" (62), which signifies the elusiveness of Bride's testimony that escapes from reality. Due to her oppressive sense of guilt, Bride decides to make some preparations such as money and gifts for Sofia's release on parole after fifteen years sentence in Decagon Women's Correctional Centre in order to "[c]omfort her (...) help her forget and take the edge off bad luck, hopelessness and boredom" (12). Nevertheless, Bride's efforts to enable Sofia a good start in her new life turn out to be Sofia's violent acts which could have indeed killed her. In this respect, Bride reveals that she is unable to make even a sound when Sophia slaps her face or smashes her jaw and Bride hears the crack of her bones, indicating that Bride does nothing to defend herself and never fights back, as if Bride goes back to Lula Ann as the little black girl during her vulnerable childhood. According to van der Kolk (2015a), "[c]hildren whose parents are reliable sources of comfort and strength have a lifetime advantage—a kind of buffer against the worst that fate can hand them" (131). Likewise, as John Bowlby (2005) identifies, infants learn "to discriminate a particular figure, usually (...) [the] mother, the making and breaking of affectional bonds and (...) [to develop] a strong liking to be in her company" (58-9). Yet, as Bride is abandoned by her father and brought up by a demanding and unloving mother who constantly warns her to be silenced and invisible, she loses the advantage of having the natural strength against all the harsh realities of life, as expected to be transmitted by powerful and supportive parental figures.

In actuality, Bride is unable to make sense of how quickly Sofia Huxley changes "from obedient ex-con to raging alligator". Hence the shame and scars inflicted by Sofia will always be remembered by Bride, who additionally emphasises "[m]emory is the worst thing about healing" (29) after all her traumatic somatic, psychic, and emotional wounds. Similarly, Roger Luckhurst (2008) highlights that "trauma disrupts memory, and therefore identity" (1), and in harmony with Freud's repetition compulsion as a traumatic response, Luckhurst also maintains that "an event can only be understood as traumatic *after* the fact, through the [bodily and mental] symptoms and flashbacks" (5). Bride, thus, recalls the grim fact that she turns Sofia into 0071140 as a prisoner of child

abuse whose crime is regarded by the guards and convicts as “the bottom of the heap of murderers, arsonists, drug dealers, bomb-throwing revolutionaries and the mentally ill” (66). Accordingly, Sofia illustrates the sufferings of Julie as her only friend in prison who kills her disabled daughter Molly but tells her fairy tales every night without asking for forgiveness. Shortly afterwards, Julie tries to hang herself since she is molested by a gang of four women. Therefore, all Sofia’s violent reactions to Bride can be considered normal, whereas Bride deeply suffers the sense of abandonment and rejection by not only her mother Sweetness but also Sofia and Booker as the love of her life. Thereupon, Bride repeats Booker’s hurtful remarks, “[y]ou not the woman” before his abandonment, and her overgeneralisation makes her feel in pain as follows: “[e]ven Sofia Huxley, of all people, erased me” (38), which causes Bride to portray everything as lifeless, empty, and trivial as the mental and emotional symptoms of her traumatic experiences.

Morrison’s *God Help Child* apparently provides bad mothering figures, first and foremost Sweetness, Rain’s mother, Booker’s aunt Queen Olive, and Sofia’s ‘Mommy’, who all traumatise their children and misshape their future in one way or another. In this respect, Sweetness treats Bride so oppressively in her childhood that Bride ends up their unhealthy relationship during her adulthood but just sends her money. Sweetness perceives Bride’s hatred, anger, and abandonment as her punishment for the bad parenting and thinks that Bride regularly sends her some money so that she could stay away from her mother and silence her conscience. Sweetness, however, states how she feels regretful of all the things she does wrong or does not do at all as follows:

I remember when she had her first period and how I reacted. Or the times I shouted when she stumbled or dropped something. How I screamed at her to keep her from tattling on the landlord—the dog. True. I was really upset, even repelled by her black skin when she was born (...) I know I did the best for her under the circumstances. When my husband ran out on us, Lula Ann was a burden. A heavy one but I bore it well. (177)

Despite Sweetness’s remorse for how she treats Lula Ann as a little blue-black skinned girl, she justifies her mothering as the necessary way depending on the possibilities and life circumstances that she possesses at that time. Likewise, Sweetness addresses the difficulty of mothering upon hearing about Bride’s pregnancy with no knowledge of Booker and states that “[i]f you think mothering is all cooing, booties and diapers you’re in for a big shock” (178) because owning a child comes at a price. As a matter of fact, Bride herself pays a heavy price for being raised with the sense of shame, cowardice, and inferiority by Sweetness as a hard-hearted and neglectful parent.

Nonetheless, Sweetness defends herself, claiming that she is not a bad mother but obliged to do some damaging things to Lula Ann so that she could protect her from the cruel world where she is possibly “sent to a juvenile lockup for talking back or fighting in school” (41). Sweetness also clarifies how Lula Ann’s black skin would make white people laugh or scare them, which leads to justify her disciplinary way of upbringing as follows: “if I hadn’t trained Lula Ann properly, she wouldn’t have known to always cross the street and avoid white boys” (41). Morrison, nevertheless, presents how Sweetness as a bad mothering figure turns Lula Ann into a little girl who lacks confidence and tells a big lie that destroys an innocent woman’s life just to gain her mother’s pride and love. Thus, when Lula Ann testifies against Sofia Huxley as a so-called pervert teacher, Sweetness feels so proud of her child and holds her hand walking on the street since Lula Ann remains calm despite her fear and does not moan or cry like some other child witnesses, whereas several witnesses either are delayed or fail to appear in court. Sweetness additionally buys Lula Ann a pair of earrings to show her delight at her only child’s victory against a white woman in the courtroom as it is rare “to see a little black girl take down some evil whites” (42). During the years when Lula Ann comes into the world, Sweetness confesses that she is unable to love her baby owing to her skin colour. Yet, she now finds Bride so striking, bold, and confident in her white clothes that she even forgets her blackness. Sweetness, on the other hand, believes that Bride turns out a rich career woman thanks to her strict upbringing which indeed results in Bride’s abandonment of her identity and past built by her mother.

Attachment, as Bruce Perry and Christine Ludy-Dobson (2010) assert, is a long-lasting “relationship with a specific person that is characterized by soothing, comfort, pleasure, and safety” (30), displaying that the most significant attachment relationship is between the infant and the mother whose loss or even threat of loss results in the child’s intense distress. Thus, particularly Bride and Rain as the novel’s traumatised children suffer from intense distress as well as anger throughout their lifetime. From this perspective, Raisin, renamed as Rain when Evelyn and Steve as her maternal surrogates find her in the rain, is filled with great anger to her biological mother because she makes her tormented by sexual abuse at a very young age. Rain’s rage at her mother is so deep that she utters that “I’d chop her head off” (102) when Bride asks what Rain would do if she saw her mother again. Rain additionally identifies that she is compelled to learn how to survive as a homeless little child since she often escapes from her mother and

the pain inflicted by men who sexually abuse her, which leads Rain to see men as scary and to feel sick. Likewise, van der Kolk (2015a) maintains that “children with histories of abuse and neglect learn that their terror, pleading, and crying do not register with their caregiver” (134), proving the fact that nothing stops the beating or helps them get their caregivers’ attention, as Bride and Rain experience during their childhood. Hence upon listening to Rain’s trauma story, Bride feels great empathy with Rain due to their similar childhood traumas with their mothers’ abuse and neglect although Rain appears more resilient than Bride even at her young age. Bride, however, pictures Sweetness, who could not bear to touch and even look at her for years, as the lesser of two evils compared to Rain’s mother, who throws her out when Rain bites the abuser that pays for her.

Bride and Rain meet each other when Bride embarks on a journey to Whiskey to find Booker and has a serious car accident in her Jaguar by crashing into a tree on her way. Until Rain notices Bride and brings Steve to help her, Bride could not do anything but just wait for somebody to save her all along the night, together with the feelings of anger, fear, and pain. In addition, despite the fact that the darkness and the silence totally terrify Bride, the possibility of being raped or murdered makes her feel stiff with terror even when Steve and Rain try to help her. That is why Bride begs them not to hurt her since she is already in constant pain and eventually faints in Steve’s arms. After Bride is brought to Rain and her surrogate parents Evelyn and Steve’s small house without electricity, Steve leaves to find a doctor in the village for Bride, whose ankle seems broken. This family apparently helps her in every way without any expectations in return, and when Rain and Evelyn begin singing while preparing the meal, Bride recalls a childhood “memory of Sweetness humming some blues song while washing panty hose in the sink, little Lula Ann hiding behind the door to hear her” (87). Thereafter, Bride falls deep asleep dreaming that they as mother and daughter could sing together in her childhood, but in truth, Lula Ann just strives hard to be pleased with the crumbs of Sweetness’s affection as a little child. According to Levine and Kline (2007), children are totally dependent on their attachment figures in order to “meet their needs for safety, support, nurturance, self-regulation, and reassurance” (40), but when even their basic needs such as love and protection are not met by their parents or parental surrogates, children like little Lula Ann are often traumatised and suffer silently.

In the aftermath of Bride’s awareness of that she is unable to move her ankle and compelled to stay in Evelyn and Steve’s house to heal at least for a month, she feels

embarrassed and unwilling to be dependent on these people for each of her basic needs. As a result, Bride often cries and behaves in a childish manner although everything is provided for her for nothing in return without hesitation, which Bride is not familiar with at all in her family home. Bride also feels infantile envy of this family's very simple but happy lifestyle without money or electricity, which makes them a real loving family. After spending six weeks with this family, Bride finds an opportunity to save Rain by risking her own life selflessly when a boy named Regis points a shotgun at them, like a caring attachment figure for her, apparently for the first time in Rain's life. Thus, Rain is deeply upset and misses Bride so much when she goes to Whiskey, but on the other hand, Rain presents her delight to tell Bride her trauma story precisely as nobody apart from Bride listens to Rain's true pain and suffering. Seemingly, Evelyn and Steve cannot bear listening to her tormenting story of sexual abuse at a very young age, which makes them a fake family according to Rain. Yet, as William Shakespeare displays in his *Macbeth*, "[g]ive sorrow words; the grief that does not speak, / Whispers the o'erfraught heart and bids it break" (1997: 214). Similarly, as van der Kolk (2015a) addresses, psychologists commonly assume that narrating "the trauma story in great detail will help people to leave it behind" (218), as obviously supported by Freud's talking cure.

Traumatic events, as Judith Herman reveals, shatter the essential human relations including the bonds of family and friendship as well as "the construction of self that is formed and sustained in relation to others" (1997: 51). Therefore, the wounded children of the novel have troubled relationships with their attachment figures and the outside world as well as their true identity. Similar to Bride and Rain, Sofia Huxley also suffers from her familial childhood trauma as she is raised as a maltreated child. Long years afterwards, even her Mommy's death does not suffice to leave her childhood sufferings behind. On the contrary, Sofia's all traumatic childhood memories come flooding back in her family home when she goes to her mother's funeral, and she elucidates as follows:

The blue-and-white wallpaper I came to know better than my own face (...) I stood there, sometimes for two hours; a quiet scolding, a punishment for something I don't remember now or even then. I wet my underwear? I played "wrestle" with a neighbor's son? I couldn't wait to get out of Mommy's house and marry the first man who asked. Two years with him was the same—obedience, silence, a bigger blue-and-white corner. (76)

Concerning the preceding lines, it can be stressed that Sofia like Bride has a miserable childhood due to her mother's very strict upbringing. Her family never contacts Sofia after being sent to prison as though they are glad to get rid of her. Likewise, the cruel

treatment in her marriage does not differ from the one in her family home, and teaching seems the unique pleasure in her life. However, little Lula Ann turns Sofia's life upside down testifying that Sofia is guilty of child molestation. Thus, when Sofia becomes aware of Bride's presence years later, she loses control of herself and beats Bride violently, and she feels as if she "was ripping blue-and-white wallpaper, returning slaps and running the devil Mommy knew so well out of my life" (77). Upon beating her, Sofia thinks that Bride does her a favour that is "the release of tears unshed for fifteen years" (70), which appears to free Sofia from her great pain and suffering.

Since little Lula Ann is starved for the delight of being touched by her loved ones from her birth, she regards Sweetness's slaps as the pleasure of the physical contact of a mother who always avoids touching her. Likewise, Marcel Proust confesses in his *Letters to His Mother* that "[f]or 'I'd have asthma and please you than displease you and not have it' (1956: 158). In this respect, Bride compares Sofia's beating to "Sweetness's slap without the pleasure of being touched" (79). Nonetheless, not only Bride but also Sofia and Rain remove their bad mothering figures from their lives at least physically despite their lifelong anguish of lacking a true loving mother. Accordingly, because she deprives her daughter Hannah of a mother's love, safety, and trust, another bad mothering figure of the novel seems to be Booker's aunt Queen Olive, whom Bride meets in Whiskey where she goes to learn the reason behind Booker's unexplained abandonment. Queen actually supports Booker more than his own family since his brother Adam's murder during their childhood, but on the other hand, Queen gets married many times, and none of her children comes to visit her. Booker points out that her children all detest Queen for some reason, also asserting that Queen abandons some of her children "to marry other men. Lots of other men" (169). Yet, Hannah's trauma story of her father's abuse is apparently her mother Queen's deepest regret and the reason behind Hannah's great anger at Queen, who ignores and refuses to believe her daughter. The ice between Hannah and Queen never melts, as illustrated by Booker. In terms of Hannah's abandonment of her mother, Queen can be said to blame herself and suffer guilty conscience, which leads her to hang Hannah's photos on her wall like a memorial and additionally to imagine Hannah to be there on her deathbed.

Indeed, Bride's arrival at Queen's home in Whiskey in the hope that Booker and Bride could confront their problems seemingly helps her overcome the bodily symptoms of her childhood trauma mainly triggered by the abandonment of Booker, whom Bride

manages to depend on wholeheartedly and tell her familial trauma story in truth. In this regard, Bride maintains that it is a mistake to have put her faith in Booker and to bare her soul because he never talks about himself and disappears one day, without saying a word. Subsequent to Booker's desertion, Bride's body strangely begins getting smaller and smaller every passing day and "changing back into a little black girl" (97), which can be thought to proceed in just Bride's wounded mind because this change is, in actuality, invisible to the outside world. According to Bowlby, "experiences of infancy and childhood play a large part in determining whether or not an individual grows up prone to develop psychiatric illness (...) from delinquent character formation to a personality prone to anxiety states and depressive illness" (2005: 56-7). From this perspective, Bride's profoundly traumatic childhood experiences increase the possibility of getting psychic and somatic symptoms such as nightmares, involuntary and intrusive traumatic memories as well as flashbacks, and hallucinations, together with the feelings of fear, distress, helplessness, loneliness, and/or anguish.

At the very beginning of the bodily symptoms of her trauma, she feels fearful that something bad seems to happen to her, and as she asserts, "I feel like I'm melting away" (8). Thereupon, Bride notices the loss of her pubic hair as the first scary change in her body and portrays it as follows: "[n]ot gone as in shaved or waxed, but gone as in erased, as in never having been there in the first place" (12-3), which she supposes to probably stem from allergy or skin disease. In the aftermath of Bride's awareness of her unpierced earlobes as the second change in her body, Bride displays her shocking experience as follows: "[a]fter all these years, I've got virgin earlobes, untouched by a needle, smooth as a baby's thumb?" (50-1), to Bride's belief, as the adverse effects of the plastic surgery and antibiotics although it seems highly impossible. Presumably, the greatest shock Bride has in terms of the somatic symptoms of her trauma is the discovery of her flat chest without her breasts, which causes her to worry about having a fatal illness. Shortly afterwards, she realises "that the body changes began not simply after he left, but because he left" (93-4). Bride's frightful bodily changes which are all visible to her but invisible to the people around her are also followed by "a strangely delayed menstrual period" (95) for a few months. Her situation is pictured by Bride as Booker's curse or "a hallucination, like the vivid dreams" (97) she has when she tries hard to fall asleep. Accordingly, Cathy Caruth (1996) portrays trauma as "an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in

the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena” (11). Therefore, Bride is apparently haunted by the belief in “her crazed transformation back into a scared little black girl” (142), without stable weight, pierced ears, pubic or underarm hair, breasts, and menstrual period.

Similar to Bride’s traumatic response to her mother’s lack of acceptance and affection, she feels helpless, vulnerable, anxious, and confused when Booker abandons and rejects her. However, Bride is determined to work through her greatest troubles so bravely that she goes to Whiskey and finds Booker’s aunt Queen, who encourages Bride and Booker to confront their problems. When Bride is reunited with Booker, they have a violent argument over their unreasonable behaviour that causes their separation. In this respect, Queen identifies that “[t]he anger, the violence on display between Bride and Booker, were unmistakable and typical of the young” (158) who are both closely connected to their childhood trauma stories of sorrow and pain inflicted on their innocent selves. Booker, who feels deeply traumatised by the rape and murder of his brother Adam in their childhood, seems to get furious at Bride since she tries to help Sofia as a child molester, but Bride confesses her lies about Sofia to gain Sweetness’s pride and love as a child who helps “put an innocent woman in prison (...) [with a] long sentence for child rape the woman never did” (156), which signifies how their traumatic childhood devastatingly impacts their adulthood. Nevertheless, when Bride confesses little Lula Ann’s sins, she feels “newly born (...) [n]o longer forced to relive, no, outlive the disdain of her mother and the abandonment of her father” (160), which proves Maya Angelou’s famous statement, “[t]here is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you” (*The Guardian*, 2014). Bride also completely recovers from the somatic symptoms of her trauma when she risks her life to save Queen from the fire.

Children, as van der Kolk (2015a) reveals, come into the world with “a biological instinct to attach—they have no choice” (137) whether or not their caregivers are caring and loving or insensitive and distant. Accordingly, the children victimised by their bad parental figures in the novel inherently need an attachment figure to survive not only physically but also emotionally and psychologically even if their parents are oppressive and abusive. From this viewpoint, especially Bride, Rain, and Sofia suffer poisoning parent-child relationship since their birth, but on the other hand, their vital need to attach their parents leaves these traumatised children helpless other than staying with them and probably normalising their tormenting way of life throughout their childhood. In this

regard, Levine and Kline (2007) illustrate that “[i]nfants and children, because of their limited capacity to defend themselves, are particularly susceptible to freezing and therefore are vulnerable to” (5-6) profound traumatising. Hence wounded children of the novel are all more prone to victimisation and traumatising in their lifetime. Nonetheless, all their pain and suffering inflicted by their families enable them to turn into resilient individuals who manage to make their voices heard.

4.3. Unseen Pains: The Child Victims of Racism and Abuse

A vast number of black people, as Lisa Firestone argues, “are born into a life of trauma (...) informed by a long history of brutal inhumanity, repression, violence, and injustice” (*Psychology Today*, 2020). Morrison, however, criticizes the wrongness of the ongoing racist perspectives through little Lula Ann as the protagonist in her *God Help the Child*. Whereas Evelyn as a good mother substitute wisely explains Rain the reason behind Bride’s blackness as “[f]or the same reason yours is so white (...) [b]orn that way” (85), Bride’s own mother Sweetness portrays her as follows: “she has funny-colored eyes, crow-black with a blue tint, something witchy about them too” (6). In this respect, Geneva Cobb Moore (2020) utters in her *Racism, Slavery, and Maternal Power* that many black people also suffer internalised racism, ultimately accepting “their Herrenvolk status and seek[ing] refuge in having a near-white-skin privilege” (71). Herrenvolk is described as “the German master race (...) [who rule] over a hierarchy of subordinate peoples and organize and exploit them with ruthlessness and efficiency” (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 2023). To put it another way, as Nazis view their race as superior to other races, a large number of black people internalise their inferior status within the white society where they strive to gain acceptance like Sweetness thanks to her lighter black skin compared to her blue-black skinned child Lula Ann Bridewell.

In terms of the damaging effects of racial practices, Morrison reminds readers of the grim fact that a great many black people, notably women and children, go through misery for long years due to their direct or indirect exposure to racism and slavery, as revealed at the very beginning of the novel. In this regard, Sweetness begins the novel in a shocked and disappointed tone as follows: “[i]t’s not my fault. So you can’t blame me” (3) since nobody in her family is even near Lula Ann’s colour and compares her colour to ‘tar’, causing Sweetness even to try to kill her new-born baby and consider

leaving her in an orphanage. Nevertheless, Bride's conversation with Booker clarifies that blackness is not a curse, but racism is a matter of choice as follows:

Complaining about her mother, she told him that Sweetness hated her for her black skin. 'It's just a color,' Booker had said. 'A genetic trait—not a flaw, not a curse, not a blessing nor a sin (...) Scientifically there's no such thing as race, Bride, so racism without race is a choice. Taught, of course, by those who need it, but still a choice.' (143)

From this perspective, Bride's father Louis also chooses not to accept little Lula Ann because of her blue-black skin which leads him to accuse Sweetness of infidelity and to abandon them. Thereafter, Sweetness even as a light-skinned black mother has difficulty renting a house owing to a large number of landlords' tendency to racial discrimination despite being against the law. Thus, Sweetness feels so fearful that Mr. Leigh as their landlord would evict them from the house which they find with difficulty when Lula Ann tells her that she sees Mr. Leigh molesting a boy. Sweetness also gets furious "[n]ot about a little crying boy, but about spreading the story" (54). That is why Sweetness explicitly forbids Lula Ann to tell this tragic incident to nobody else.

Long years afterwards, Bride freshly remembers Mr. Leigh's molestation of the boy as her buried childhood trauma when she tells Booker all her pain and suffering that belongs to her traumatic childhood and adulthood. Bride likens the molested boy's voice to a cat's meow but in a frightened and anguished tone. Mr. Leigh angrily commands little Lula Ann to close the window shouting at her "[h]ey, little nigger cunt" (55) when she witnesses the unbearable scene for a little child. Upon narrating her trauma story to Booker, she feels great relief, safe, and owned for the first time in her lifetime. On the other hand, Bride is compelled to face the harsh reality that she, in fact, points her forefinger at the landlord Mr. Leigh in the courtroom due to his sexual abuse of a little boy and his curse at little Lula Ann while pointing at Sofia as the so-called guilty of the child molestation. Accordingly, Bride elucidates her true feelings that belong to her oppressed, terrorised, and humiliated childhood experiences as follows:

I was six years old and had never heard the words "nigger" or "cunt" before, but the hate and revulsion in them didn't need definition. Just like later in school when other curses—with mysterious definitions but clear meanings—were hissed or shouted at me. Coon. Topsy. Clinkertop. Sambo. Ooga booga. Ape sounds and scratching of the sides, imitating zoo monkeys. One day a girl and three boys heaped a bunch of bananas on my desk and did their monkey imitations. They treated me like a freak, strange, soiling like a spill of ink on white paper. I didn't complain to the teacher for the same reason Sweetness cautioned me about Mr. Leigh—I might get suspended or even expelled. So I let the name-calling, the bullying travel like poison, like lethal viruses through my veins. (56-7)

Therefore, little Lula Ann suffers not only her mother's but also her fellow students' physical, mental, and racial abuse, leading her to suffer duality in her identity between Bride's own self-perception and how she is racially perceived by her parents and her peers throughout her life. According to Perry and Ludy-Dobson (2010), when children grow up with racial, ethnic, or religious values and beliefs that dehumanise and degrade other people, "the stress activation that results in an encounter with different peoples can be extreme" (27). It indicates Lula Ann's trauma-related stress due to her prolonged exposure to the racial discrimination by both her parents and the outside world.

Sweetness regards her dark-skinned baby as a burden and does not want anyone to know her as Lula Ann's mother since she thinks it is safer but, in fact, embarrassing for her in other people's eyes. On the other hand, Sweetness tries to justify her strict and insensitive treatment towards Bride by reflecting white society's racist attitudes to her black parents even during their marriage in the courthouse where there are "two Bibles and they had to put their hands on the one reserved for Negroes" (4), which presents their experience of racial discrimination even in a religious context. Sweetness, furthermore, supports the idea that groups black people as "the lighter, the better" (4) and clarifies why she is in favour of intra-racial discrimination as follows:

But how else can we hold on to a little dignity? How else can you avoid being spit on in a drugstore, shoving elbows at the bus stop, walking in the gutter to let whites have the whole sidewalk, charged a nickel at the grocer's for a paper bag that's free to white shoppers? Let alone all the name-calling. (4)

The preceding lines display that Sweetness's lighter skin enables her to live a more privileged life compared to darker-skinned black people like Bride. For this reason, Sweetness claims that she raises Lula Ann very strictly to teach her how to stay out of trouble because she portrays Lula Ann's colour as "a cross she will always carry" (7). In this regard, Villines differs racial trauma from some other traumas since it continuously "permeate[s] much of everyday life (...) [which] means that marginalized communities may face chronic trauma and aggression, making it difficult to recover from racist abuse" (*MedicalNewsToday*, 2020). However, Bride builds up a sort of immunity from racist tormentors so successfully that she becomes "a deep dark beauty (...) [she sells her] elegant blackness to all those childhood ghosts" (57) during her adulthood, which proves her resilience in one way or another.

Ironically, Bride's way to battle against racial discrimination is to wear only white all the time, as recommended by the designer Jeri, which signifies her conscious effort to meet the beauty standards of the white society. Indeed, Jeri's advice for Bride to wear white so that she could emphasise her blue-black body works well and makes her "[a] panther in snow" (34). Black sells, as Jeri highlights, because blackness is seen as "the hottest commodity in the civilized world" (36). Thus, Bride gets adoring looks wherever she goes unlike "the faintly disgusted ones (...) [she] used to get as a kid" (34). Yet, Bride lives in fear of being rejected and considered ugly as her own mother treats her during her childhood. In this respect, Freud (1957) asserts that "[i]n mourning it is the world which has become poor and empty; in melancholia it is the ego itself" (246), which causes the traumatised person like Bride to be prone to portray oneself as ugly, weak, or socially inferior. Hence Bride's self-confidence about her black beauty is easily damaged as soon as Booker leaves her stating that she is not the woman he wants. Upon his abandonment, she tries to console herself with the touch of his shaving brush whenever she feels depressed, which enables her to "imagine without grief times when I was made fun of and hurt" (35). That is why Bride gives the shaving brush to Rain as an overly abused and deeply wounded but resilient little girl so that she can find solace like Bride. Accordingly, Perry and Ludy-Dobson (2010) assert that "[c]hildren with insecure attachment feel inconsistent, punishing, unresponsive emotions from their caregivers and feel threatened during times of stress" (31), which explains the reason behind both Bride and Rain's tendency to feel more vulnerable at hard times.

In this regard, Morrison obviously illustrates Rain's overwhelming reactions to the horrors of child abuse in many ways but especially through the character Evelyn as her mother substitute in the novel. When Bride asks Evelyn how they find Rain, Evelyn tells the whole tragic story in detail. While driving home, Evelyn and Steve find "this little girl, sopping wet on a brick doorstep" (95) about at the age of six. They first think that she is lost, and she says nothing when they ask her name to help her. Due to her trauma of child abuse, she is highly sensitive to any probable threats, which causes her to jump up and run away immediately after Steve touches her shoulder. Thus, van der Kolk (2015a) elucidates the reason behind Rain's traumatic response as follows:

despite their alertness to trouble, the children who had not been abused still trusted in an essentially benign universe; they could imagine ways out of bad situations. They seemed to feel protected and safe within their own families (...) [Yet,] for abused children, the whole world is filled with triggers. As long as they can imagine only disastrous outcomes to

relatively benign situations, anybody walking into a room, any stranger, any image, on a screen or on a billboard might be perceived as a harbinger of catastrophe. (128-9)

The preceding viewpoints signify that Rain as an abused child deeply wounded by her own mother does not trust the outside world at all and may perceive even an ordinary action as a real threat to her safety and wellness. Therefore, when Steve decides to take Rain to their home, she screams and starts “cursing—nastier words in a little kid’s mouth you couldn’t imagine” (97). In spite of the fact that Evelyn and Steve just want to dry, clean and feed Rain, then try to learn where she belongs, Rain’s traumatic childhood experiences do not allow her to trust anybody completely.

Likewise, Brooklyn as Bride’s “only true friend: loyal, funny, generous” (98) and colleague at YOU, GIRL is molested by her own uncle during her childhood and neglected by a drunken mother, which results in her escape from her family house at the age of 14 and makes her compelled to grow up faster and toughen herself. Her childhood gift to read people’s minds also helps her protect herself in each part of her life. Brooklyn once screams “with a fake stomachache” to wake her mother “from her drunken nap” (139) when she senses that her uncle starts thinking of molesting her again. Since Brooklyn and Bride meet a similar fate, notably in terms of escaping home at a young age and being obliged to strengthen themselves all alone, Brooklyn feels great empathy with Bride and tries to be a companion of her despite seeing her as the chief opponent at the company. Hence Brooklyn drives miles so that she could find Bride at the hotel where Sofia beats her to death as soon as Bride calls her to ask for help immediately. Brooklyn pictures Bride as hysterical when she finds her “bloody and crying out of one eye, the other one too swollen to shed water” (23), requiring her to have plastic surgery. Possibly with the feelings of shame and guilt, Bride lies to her about an attempted rape that causes her such physical damage. Whereas Brooklyn easily senses the falseness of her story, she does her best to help her and insists on seeing a rape therapist. Eventually, Bride confesses that nobody attempts to rape her, but a woman whom she tries to help beats her. Bride, however, prefers not to tell her the truth about her false testimony which leads Sofia to be given a twenty-five-year sentence as a child molester.

During Bride’s healing process, Brooklyn supports her physically and mentally both at home and at work. She also becomes tolerant towards Bride all complaints like “I can’t eat. I can’t talk. I can’t think” (26). Yet, Brooklyn is unable to trust and accept Booker in Bride’s life since she regards him as a predator who takes advantage of Bride

in every way. For this reason, Brooklyn does not feel “a bit surprised he left her like a skunk leaves a smell” (59), and thereafter, she tells how she once flirts with him just for fun in Bride’s bedroom when she is out. Booker, nonetheless, appears uninterested and unresponsive to Brooklyn, who claims that Booker is the wrong person for Bride, and she would seduce him if she wanted to even though Brooklyn eventually admits that she misreads him. On the other hand, Bride feels disturbed by Brooklyn’s interruptions to her relationship with Booker, thus ultimately portraying her as an unpleasant pseudo-friend. In fact, before Booker’s abandonment, Bride feels free of her family bonds that comprises an oppressive mother and neglectful father thanks to Booker, for she could confess to him all her painful memories of childhood which “cuts festered and never scabbed over” (134). According to Michelle Balaev (2012), “the difficulty of speaking about a traumatic experience is (...) due to variable factors, including individual, social, and cultural factors that influence the remembrance and narration of the experience” (10). Therefore, Bride’s prolonged exposure to racism and abuse by her parents and the outside world in her childhood makes it hard to utter her pain and suffering aloud until she is able to narrate her trauma story to Booker eventually.

Concerning the shattering consequences of vicarious abuse, Booker Starbern is displayed as another traumatised child who suffers from the harsh reality of the rape and murder of his brother Adam throughout his lifetime. As a matter of fact, Booker has a happy large family who gathers together to have breakfast and talk about their problems until Adam is kidnapped by a rapist and murderer. When Booker’s family requests the police for help to find Adam, they immediately search “the Starberns’ house—as though the anxious parents might be at fault” (113-4). Shortly afterwards, the police stop searching him because, as Booker reveals, “[a]nother little black boy gone” (114). Thereupon, Adam is found in a culvert in early spring, and his filthy corpse wears no shoes or pants. Subsequent to Adam’s murder, Booker feels so lonely and also dead like him since Adam as Booker’s unique companion in his life seems to fill the void that Booker always has owing to the loss of his twin when they come into the world. During Adam’s funeral, Queen is the only relative who can comfort and strengthen Booker while grieving over the death of his beloved one. According to Bowlby (2005), “the sequence of responses described – protest, despair, and detachment – is a sequence that, in one variant or another, is characteristic of all forms of mourning” (62), which signifies

Booker's mourning for Adam, whom Booker worships until his untimely and violent death, experiencing especially the stages of protest and despair.

In actuality, Booker is unable to overcome the deep suffering of his brother's rape and murder for long years, which also results in Booker's furious reactions during his adulthood when he witnesses any form of child abuse. Upon seeing a white man who licks his lips and watches the children in the campus playground with his lowered pants, Booker as a university student beats the abuser almost to death and displays the abuser's state of mind as follows: "the sight of the children was [obviously] as pleasurable to the man as touching them (...) in his warped mind" (109). In this respect, Booker protests that some people are unable to believe how such a nice man can be an abuser or a murderer, and they, furthermore, say that the so-called nicest man around the world is not supposed to hurt even a fly. Accordingly, Booker questions whether these people mean that such child molesters are "too tender to take the life of a disease-carrying insect but could happily ax the life of a child" (111). Six years afterwards, when Booker is a successful trumpet player at the age of fourteen, Adam's murderer known as a smiling and welcoming man by some people is caught and arrested for molesting, torturing, and slaughtering "six boys, each of whose names, including Adam's, (...) tattooed across the shoulders of the nicest man in the world. Boise. Lenny. Adam. Matthew. Kevin. Roland" (118). The rage and the public outcry for justice in the newspapers and radios throughout the days after the conviction of the rapist and murderer overwhelmingly affect Booker nearly as much as the death of Adam, which causes him to struggle to freeze and separate his own feelings from the sadness and fury of other families.

Kirby Farrell as the emeritus professor in the Department of English at the University of Massachusetts Amherst elucidates in his *Post-Traumatic Culture* that "[t]rauma exposes not only the ultimate nothingness of the self, but also the sickening falseness of the social world" (1998: 185), which presents the adverse impacts of trauma on the self and the social world as well. In this regard, trauma drives all the victimised children of the novel, including Bride, Rain, Sofia, and Booker, to the depths of despair in their both inner and outer worlds at some point in their lives. Therefore, Booker as a junior at college suffers from depression, and his classmates begin to bother him. Since he thinks that he learns nothing of value, Booker applies to a graduate school where he focuses "on tracking wealth from barter to bombs (...) [as an] intellectual journey that policed his anger, caged it and explained everything about racism, poverty and war"

(122). However, when he travels family home to celebrate his master's degree, Booker feels great sorrow upon seeing the room that he shares with Adam in their childhood is totally changed by his sister Carole. For this reason, they have a bitter argument that disturbs all the family members, which leads his father to harshly criticize Booker as follows: "[y]ou not the only one grieving" (123). Indeed, van der Kolk (2015a) clarifies Booker's repetitive traumatic reactions as follows: "people automatically keep repeating certain actions, emotions, and sensations related to the trauma" (214) subsequent to their deep traumatising. Eventually, Booker leaves home upon his father's unsympathetic and wounding remarks for Booker's belated traumatic response to Adam's death.

Booker's realisation of no trace of their childhood in their old room with Adam and his father Mr. Starbarn's rejection of Booker's proposal of a memorial for the loss of their beloved one indicate him "the savage absence not only of Adam but of himself" (125). That is why Booker decides to live a new life without his family and requests Felicity as his ex-girlfriend to allow him to move into her house temporarily. Booker feels grateful that Felicity accepts his request to stay in her house. Thereafter, Booker joins a music group as a trumpeter, and the group is named as 'The Big Boys'. When the group breaks up, Booker and two guitarists begin "to play on streets dappled with homeless veterans with cold fury in their eyes" (127). However, Felicity and Booker start to feel disturbed by each other's habits, but they go their separate after Booker's arrest for fighting a couple about their neglect of a two-year-old baby screaming and crying in the backseat of their car. Upon Booker's release from prison, he fortunately inherits a considerable amount of money from his grandfather and hence begins playing trumpet on the streets for pleasure. Shortly afterwards, Booker falls so deeply in love with Bride at first sight that even his never-ending suffering for Adam is relieved. In fact, Booker's first sight of Bride positively changes him, together with his music, and makes him feel "the disintegration of the haunt and gloom in which for years Adam's death had clouded him" (132), illustrating Booker's profound traumatising of his brother's violent death that haunts his life for long years.

Bride and Booker's relationship becomes flawless when Bride falls in love with him during the Black Gauchos' performance. Because Booker avoids narrating his own traumatic childhood, he notably likes Bride's "lack of interest in his personal life" (133). In this respect, as Leigh Gilmore identifies, "language fails in the face of trauma, and that trauma mocks language and confronts it with its insufficiency" (2001: 6), which

explains the reason behind the traumatised characters' unwillingness to talk about their traumatic past. On the other hand, Bride manages to narrate Booker "everything: every fear, every hurt, every accomplishment, however small" (53) for the first time in her life. In the aftermath of all her bitter experiences in relationships, Bride trusts Booker wholeheartedly. Before Bride meets Booker, she has relationships with several men who merely care about her physical appearance but not her thoughts. Accordingly, Bride addresses a negative experience in which her racist ex-boyfriend as a medical student exploits her to scare his parents as elderly white couple who fortunately welcome her warmly. Therefore, Bride suffers various painful experiences in her relationships that especially objectify her and even expose her racial prejudice. Unlike her ex-boyfriends, Booker appears helpful, tolerant, and respectful to her ideas. Yet, Booker suddenly abandons Bride without a word upon learning that she wants to visit Sophia as the so-called pervert since Booker does not know the grim fact that Bride just tries to help Sofia due to her guilty conscience. Not long afterwards, Booker learns that Bride's big lie during her childhood destroys Sophia's life as an innocent kindergarten teacher, causing her to receive a twenty-five-year sentence as a child molester.

With the profound traumatising of her parents, Booker, and Sophia's desertion, Bride feels "helplessness in the presence of confounding cruelty [and] [t]oo weak, too scared to defy Sweetness, or the landlord, or Sofia Huxley" (79). However, Bride is determined to track Booker and force him to clarify why she does not deserve an explanation or better treatment. After Booker's abandonment, Bride feels she gets lost and does not know what to do, comparing her existing emotions to the times when little Lula Ann never knows what is right to do as well as when she is rejected and oppressed by her mother. According to Levine and Kline (2007), traumatised children "in the fragile period during infancy carry the burden of trauma's imprint as a lifelong struggle that seems to add a murky layer over ordinary existence" (17). Bride also elucidates the true reason behind her tracking Booker owing to her feeling of hurt rather than anger after the desertion of Booker as the person with whom Bride once feels safe and without whom the world seems cold, shallow, hostile, and confusing for her. As a result, Bride suffers not only her childhood traumas stemmed from notably Sweetness but also Booker's abandonment which triggers all her traumatic childhood experiences because Booker as the unique person whom Bride can trust in her life breaks her protective shield and turns into the source of her intense pain and suffering more than a saviour.

No matter how hard to confront Booker, Bride decides to discover whether she is made of “cotton or steel” (143) and knocks on Queen Olive’s door in Whiskey to find Booker. Thereupon, Queen welcomes Bride warmly, and they have a sincere talk about their private lives as well as Booker’s childhood. When Bride tells Queen that Booker abandons her without any explanation, his own aunt Queen portrays Booker as a leaver and states that he leaves all his family except her since his family moves on with their lives in the aftermath of Adam’s murder, whereas Booker is unable to stop mourning for Adam’s death throughout his life. Bride and Booker’s acknowledgment of one another’s traumatic childhood enables them to comprehend the reasons behind their inexplicable and inconceivable actions. Booker, moreover, confesses that he abandons Bride in their first sharp disagreement and that Adam is possibly very tired of being his burden and his cross. Their relationship turns into much better after they can become honest and open to each other. Additionally, Bride’s body gets normal when she helps Queen in the fire that begins in her house. Even though Bride and Booker do their best to keep Queen alive, she dies from a virus she gets in the hospital, which makes especially Booker feel “unbearable loneliness as well as profound regret” (174), due to the grim fact that Queen as one of the very few people whom Booker trusts passes away.

Whereas Booker questions how long his childhood trauma of Adam’s death hurtles “him from the rip and wave of life” (174), Bride feels hopeful about the future since she is pregnant. When Booker learns about their baby, he offers Bride the hand she craves “all her life, the hand that did not need a lie to deserve it, the hand of trust and caring for—a combination that some call natural love” (175). In actuality, Bride experiences almost all the symptoms of trauma as highlighted by Luckhurst such as intrusive flashbacks, avoidance, and increased arousal (2018: 1), which makes it harder for Bride to recover from her childhood traumas and have a better future. Unlike Bride and Booker’s tragic childhood that includes abuse, violence, rejection, and/or loss of the loved one, Morrison displays their future with a baby as follows: “[a] child. New life. Immune to evil or illness, protected from kidnap, beatings, rape, racism, insult, hurt, self-loathing, abandonment. Error-free. All goodness. Minus wrath” (175). From this viewpoint, Morrison supports Nietzsche’s famous quotation as stated by Viktor Frankl as follows: “[h]e who has a why to live for can bear almost any how” (1985: 126), signifying that Bride and Booker can now overcome any difficulties in their lives because they share a common purpose to raise their baby in a much better world.

In essence, this chapter fundamentally addresses little Lula Ann Bridewell's childhood traumas in Toni Morrison's *God Help the Child*. By doing so, it pictures the damaging impacts of her traumas on her entire life, together with her significant choices and perspectives on her true self and the outside world. As soon as she comes into the world, she is rejected and unloved by her parents just owing to her darker skin colour. That is why her mother inflicts Lula Ann nearly all forms of violence, including beatings, humiliation, maltreatment, oppression, and neglect, whereas her father Louis abandons Sweetness with the thought of her infidelity. Little Lula Ann strives so hard to be accepted and loved by her mother that she causes an innocent kindergarten teacher Sofia to be found guilty of child molestation since she merely wishes Sweetness to become proud of her standing against a white woman as a black girl. When Lula Ann realises the grim fact that there is no possibility for Sweetness to love her wholeheartedly like a real mother, she abandons home and even changes her name to Bride, who turns into a successful career woman, with the hope that she can leave her traumatic past behind. Yet, Bride continuously re-experiences her childhood scars inflicted by her parents both in her wounded mind and through her bodily symptoms, whereas she tries to avoid her shattering lie about Sofia and confront Booker but with the loss of her temper. In her novel, Morrison illustrates horrors of racism and child abuse both through Lula Ann and the closely connected victimised characters to the protagonist like Rain, Sofia, Booker, and Brooklyn throughout the novel. Morrison, moreover, ends Lula Ann Bridewell's trauma story with a glimmer of hope for Bride and Booker thanks to her pregnancy. All their childhood traumas also enable most characters, including Bride, Rain, and Sophie to prove remarkably resilient without any loving and supportive attachment figures.

CONCLUSION

The paradox of trauma is that it has both the power to destroy and the power to transform and resurrect (...) Trauma is a fact of life. It does not, however, have to be a life sentence.

—Peter Levine, *In an Unspoken Voice*

Your vision will become clear only when you can look into your own heart (...) Who looks outside dreams; who looks inside awakes.

—Carl Jung, *Letters Volume 1*

Throughout history, each community has been victimised by many and various traumatic events such as wars, natural disasters, poverty, pandemics, violence, abuse, separation, discrimination, and/or humiliation, together with the prolonged devastating impacts on the body and mind. Children are apparently the most vulnerable sufferers in such tragic and scary circumstances, notably when there are no attachment figures who can provide support, affection, and guidance. In this regard, overly traumatised people suffer from consistent horror, anxiety, and anger, as well as the sense of unworthiness, uncertainty, despair, and insecurity. Indeed, the term ‘trauma’, referring to distressing, shocking, or terrifying events, has an intense and enduring effect on one’s sense of self and overall life, inflicting emotional and mental wounds, as well as physical symptoms. Trauma is, therefore, “the most avoided, ignored, denied, misunderstood, and untreated cause of human suffering” (Levine, 2008: 7). Nevertheless, literature has undeniably witnessed and given voice to the victims, especially women and children, revealing the roots of their traumas as well as the somatic, emotional, and psychic symptoms. Trauma theory in literature, thus, allows researchers and scholars to examine the devastating and long-lasting effects of the traumatic experiences on the mind, emotions, and body, as well. Accordingly, this study uncovers childhood trauma of war, racism, oppression, separation, abandonment, violence, neglect, or abuse, alongside their traumatic reactions not only in their childhood but also in their adulthood to their unbearable suffering through particularly the protagonists in Khaled Hosseini’s *And the Mountains Echoed* (2013), Glenn Meade’s *The Last Witness* (2014), and Toni Morrison’s *God Help the Child* (2015) from the viewpoint of trauma theory and psychoanalysis.

This dissertation with its interdisciplinary nature in terms of childhood trauma additionally draws upon various fields such as neurology, neuroscience, psychology, and psychiatry, as well as the contributions of influential figures, together with first and

foremost Sigmund Freud, who established psychoanalysis. This study also benefits from the research conducted by professionals such as Judith Herman, Peter Levine, Bessel van der Kolk, and Dori Laub in the field of trauma, alongside the trauma theorists such as Geoffrey Hartman, Dominick LaCapra, Ruth Leys, and notably Cathy Caruth, known as a pioneering figure in literary trauma theory. The memoirs of Virginia Woolf, Charles Bukowski, Franz Kafka, Anne Frank, Maya Angelou, and Frank McCourt as the world-renowned authors are scrutinised in this study to exemplify childhood trauma from real-life experiences and to prove that the children's severe mental, and bodily scars of the selected novels are not just the products of imagination. This study, hence, is supposed to attract the interest of researchers who want to analyse trauma in literature, trauma theory, traumatic memory, and specifically, the nature of childhood trauma. The health professionals, trauma theorists, and literary figures included in this dissertation also give credibility to this study, delving into the traumatised minds of the protagonists of the selected novels as the examples of realistic fiction and bildungsroman. By doing so, this study is most likely to contribute to the other fields such as education and cultural studies, especially closely connected to literature and childhood.

Whereas there are some studies on collective traumas, such as the impacts of war, racism, and slavery, which mainly focus on characters in their adult years, there are relatively few studies that examine the somatic, emotional, and psychic impacts of childhood trauma both on the childhood and adulthood of the wounded protagonists. This dissertation, furthermore, offers dealing with trauma by means of this multifaceted research and the selected novels that bring various perspectives together to give a complete frame of childhood trauma, exploring diverse ways of experiencing trauma in different contexts, including poverty, war, and racism, which presumably makes this study unique in the field. In Margaret Atwood's words in her *Survival*, "[l]iterature is not only a mirror; it is a map, a geography of the mind" (2004: 26), enabling the selected novels of this study as cross-cultural research to realistically reflect the wounded minds of the children to discover their true selves. In actuality, unlike adults, children possess a unique capacity in nature for unconditional affection, attachment, and obedience to their caregivers. In this respect, this dissertation also displays the shattering worlds of the traumatised children in the selected novels who are much more severely affected by the absence or damage of their caregivers during traumatic events and go through severe

pain and suffering as terrorised, oppressed, and traumatised minorities in the shadow of power struggles that take place in different geographies and cultures.

Khaled Hosseini's *And the Mountains Echoed* presents the deep emotional and psychic wounds suffered by the Afghan siblings Abdullah and Pari. Abdullah, at the age of 10, carries the haunting memories of his mother's death and the loss of his beloved sister after her adoption by Wahdatis as a wealthy family. Similarly, Pari, at the age of 3, bears a lifelong burden of feeling a sense of absence due to her inability to recall her early childhood memories. The lifelong suffering of these broken siblings is primarily rooted in their exceptionally strong bonds built when Abdullah assumes a motherly role following their mother's death during Pari's birth. Their father, Saboor, and stepmother, Parwana, fail to provide the needed attachment and unconditional love for the siblings. Levine and Kline (2007) highlight the significance of "[p]redictability and the continuity of keeping a routine (...) for children of all ages" (429), which helps Pari mostly erase her memories of her early childhood. Despite Wahdatis' great efforts to lead Pari to forget her past completely, she always senses that something is missing in her life. The novel, hence, illustrates that the siblings' caregivers do not actively help them deal with their childhood trauma but instead inflict further pain. Saboor additionally prevents Abdullah from mourning their forced separation, while Pari's adoptive mother Nila exhibits irresponsible and self-centred behaviour towards Pari. As a result, the siblings, along with several other characters in the novel, experience psychological, physical, and emotional symptoms of childhood trauma during their childhood and in their adult lives. In this respect, Hosseini exposes losses, fears, despair, guilt, anxiety, and rage, as well as their bodily and mental pain by the characters such as Thalia, Roshi, Parwana, Nila, Markos, Abdullah, and Pari, all as consequences of their troubled childhoods.

Glenn Meade's *The Last Witness* focuses on a 10-year-old child prisoner Carla's profoundly wounded childhood, which exposes the indescribable pain and suffering endured by the victims of all ages during the Bosnian war. The power struggle among Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia ultimately results in massacres, displacement, and lifelong trauma for numerous people from diverse ethnicities and religions, especially Bosniak Muslims. In this regard, Carla witnesses all the atrocities of the Bosnian war such as beatings, rape, and killings also inflicted upon her parents Lana and David, as well as her 4-year-old brother Luka. Like the other victims at Devil's Hill and Omarska, Carla perpetually fears of being subjected to torment, abuse, and/or death, without even basic

necessities like food and water. Carla, furthermore, suffers a paralyzing shock during a mysterious conversation with Mila Shavik at Devil's Hill, where she seemingly learns about her mother Lana and Mila's love affair and discovers that Mila is her biological father, although she has no recollection of that day. Because of these tragic events, Carla as a war child suffers from somatic, mental, and emotional symptoms of trauma, carrying amnesiac traumatic memories throughout her life. After her husband Jan is assassinated, Carla seeks help from her childhood therapist Raymond Leon and reads Lana's diary, which triggers a flood of memories and, worse still, reveals the death of her entire family. Indeed, her profound re-traumatisation proves Spanish-born American philosopher and writer George Santayana's statement in his *The Life of Reason* as follows: "[t]hose who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it" (2011: 172). In *The Last Witness*, Meade vividly portrays the horrors of the Bosnian war and the deep traumatic scars they leave not only on Carla but also on the other closely connected characters such as Lana, David, Luka, Mila, Jan, Paul, and Baize. Yet, Carla finds her inner peace by confronting her childhood traumas, aided by the birth of her baby named Lana and the unwavering support and unconditional love she receives from Ronnie.

Toni Morrison's *God Help the Child* displays Lula Ann Bridewell's childhood traumas of mainly rejection and maltreatment of her parents solely due to her darker skin colour from the moment she was born. The novel also explores the lasting effects of these traumas on her life, including her choices and perspectives on her identity and the world around her. Her mother, Sweetness, subjects her to various forms of violence such as humiliation, oppression, and beatings, while her father, Louis, abandons Sweetness suspecting her of infidelity. Lula Ann desperately seeks acceptance and love from her mother to the extent that she falsely accuses an innocent kindergarten teacher, Sofia Huxley, of child molestation, simply to make Sweetness proud of her for standing up against a white woman as a black girl. In actuality, little Lula Ann aches for the crumbs of her parents' affection, as narrated by Sigmund Freud (1953b) in his *The Interpretation of Dreams* as follows: "[f]ather, don't you see I'm burning?" (509). Yet, when Lula Ann realises that Sweetness will never be able to love her unconditionally as a real mother, she abandons home and changes her name to Bride, hoping to leave her traumatic past behind. Even though Bride becomes a successful career woman, she continues to relive her childhood scars both mentally and through physical symptoms, while trying to suppress her painful lie about Sofia and confront Booker, which often leads her to lose

her temper. Throughout the novel, Morrison not only depicts the horrors of racism and child abuse through Bride, but also explores the experiences of other characters closely connected to the protagonist, such as Rain, Sofia, Booker, and Brooklyn. The story of Lula Ann's childhood trauma concludes with a glimmer of hope for Bride and Booker, as they learn about Bride's pregnancy. Additionally, the resilience displayed by these characters in the face of their childhood traumas suggests that they can confront their traumatic experiences without the presence of loving and supportive caregivers.

With regard to the trauma fiction, the wounded children in the selected novels of this study produce similar reactions to their traumas and use similar coping mechanisms without any affectionate and supportive protectors, in spite of their certain individual differences notably concerning their ages, cultural backgrounds, and the root of their traumas. In actuality, all these children pay a heavy price for the unbearable traumas imprinted on their minds and bodies. Although even a small event might traumatise a child under particular circumstances because of their vulnerable nature, the characters of the selected novels are deeply traumatised by multiple tragic experiences at their early ages. In this respect, Pari and Abdullah as two siblings in Khaled Hosseini's novel *And the Mountains Echoed* undergo significant childhood traumas related to poverty, separation, and their mother's death in Afghanistan. Whereas Abdullah takes on the role of caregiver as a young child himself, Pari develops a repressed and dissociated identity with fragmented memories. Likewise, the protagonist Carla in Glenn Meade's *The Last Witness* endures profound childhood traumas tied to ethnic cleansing and rape camps in the Bosnian war. Similar to Pari, Carla also experiences a repressed and dissociated identity burdened by amnesiac memories. Bride in Toni Morrison's *God Help the Child* additionally suffers the childhood traumas of growing up as a black child in a white American community and being rejected by even her own parents owing to her darker blue-black skin. Concerning these wounded children's childhood traumas, they have great vulnerability and difficulty expressing themselves due to their incomprehensible and unspeakable individual suffering and without any functional caregivers.

The victimised protagonists of the selected novels, furthermore, seem to freeze in their traumatic memories but are unable to escape or fight until they confront and work through their childhood traumas in their adulthood as they lack any protectors who might be also harmed during the traumatic events, or their caregivers are the ones who indeed inflict these traumas on their children. The psychological adaptation of such

traumatised children is based on their ability to establish and maintain an emotionally strong bond with their parents, even if they neglect and severely abuse their children. In addition, children seek unconsciously what they are accustomed to, even if it is violence or abuse. Accordingly, Abdullah and Pari would prefer to live in extreme poverty with their neglectful parental figures rather than be separated from each other, whereas Carla would rather live with her nuclear family even under wartime conditions. Similarly, little Lula Ann takes the risk of being beaten just to be touched by her mother and tells a big lie that destroys an innocent woman's life just to gain her mother's pride. Hence the wounded children of the selected novels do not benefit from their caregivers' affection and support during the traumatic occurrences in their childhood one way or another. Due to Saboor's negligence in the aftermath of Abdullah and Pari's mother's death, Abdullah is compelled to take on a parental role at the age of 7 for Pari as a new-born baby, but in fact, they are traumatised when their father gives Pari up for adoption. Likewise, Carla feels so profoundly traumatised that she is unable to recall her overwhelming childhood until her adulthood when she learns about all her family's death in the war. In Bride's situation, her mother inflicts her great pain through violence, abuse, and neglect.

Undeniably, children are prone to see the outside world in the eyes of their so-called omniscient and omnipotent caregivers who are supposed to protect them from all evils. Children, moreover, find a way to be content with what their caregivers give them and to maintain their trust in them as children are in desperate need of their caregivers' unconditional love and attachment. Therefore, the protagonists of the selected novels are all dependent upon their parents to work through their traumas, yet their caregivers themselves feel victimised, which makes them unable to assume their parental roles properly. Abdullah and Pari's father, Saboor turns into a dysfunctional parent after the death of his wife, while Carla's parents Lana and David are tormented and killed by war criminals. Bride's parents Louis and Sweetness are so brainwashed into the inferiority of their blackness that they unlove and reject their only daughter due to her darker black skin. Even though all these protagonists and their families' traumatic experiences are apparently personal, their childhood traumas share common prolonged impacts on their entire lives. Whereas they all go through identity crises and tend to repress their tragic experiences as a coping mechanism in the shadow of their childhood traumas, their predominant symptoms may differ from each other, alongside Abdullah and Bride's continuous re-enactment of their traumas as well as Pari and Carla's avoidance of the

insufferable emotions of the traumatic events. Their childhood traumas also make them suffer dissociation and the splitting of the consciousness, leading to detachment from their own emotions, thoughts, or memories as well as the duality between self-perception of life and others' expectations. Eventually, the fragmented spirits of these characters have great difficulty getting unified identities because of Abdullah and Pari's trauma of separation, Carla's war trauma, and Bride's trauma of racism and abuse.

In terms of the inescapable return of the repressed, their deeply buried and untold stories find their way into consciousness mainly through bodily, emotional, and psychic symptoms, together with flashbacks, dreams, and nonlinear narratives that are triggered by traumatic reminders. This actually allows the wounded children of the selected novels to confront their unbearable past experiences. Furthermore, as Jessica Stern elucidates in her *Denial: A Memoir of Terror*, "[s]ome people's lives seem to flow in a narrative; mine had many stops and starts. That's what trauma does" (2010: 273). Thus, Abdullah and Bride are emotionally and mentally tortured by the nonlinear remembrance of their childhood traumas. Even with his illness of dementia during his old age, Abdullah shows some bodily symptoms of remembrance of his traumatic past like weeping or screaming. Similarly, Bride has somatic symptoms of her childhood trauma belatedly after Booker's abandonment like her parents' rejection, and she feels as if her body goes back to little Lula Ann. While Abdullah and Bride are incapable of mourning or expressing their suffering, Pari and Carla, whose traumatic childhood memories belatedly come flooding back eventually, suffer from dissociative amnesia beginning from their childhood to their certain ages in their adulthood. Pari as an old woman at the age of 61 is accordingly re-traumatized when she reads her uncle Nabi's letter, and likewise, Carla's traumatic childhood memories are triggered during her pregnancy by her mother Lana's letter. Carla even suffers from survivor's guilt upon learning all her family's tormenting war experiences. Both Pari and Carla also wrestle with their guilty conscience since they are unable to recall their childhood with their beloved ones.

These wounded children's destructive individual suffering results in the collapse of meaning in their fragile lives for a long time, and they also fail to express themselves honestly and properly, which imprisons their true selves into their traumatic memories and proves that they are buried underneath everything they conceal. In this respect, Dori Laub illustrates a Holocaust survivor's statement in his *An Event Without a Witness* as follows: "[w]e wanted to survive so as to live one day after Hitler, in order to be able to

tell our story” (1992b: 78), which stresses the significance of both narrating and bearing witness to the unspeakably traumatising experiences. The wounded children of the selected novels as the primary and secondary trauma victims maintain their lives in different cities from their birthplaces in their adulthood when their traumatic scars are seemingly healed by confronting and uttering them aloud rather than the distortion or avoidance of the harsh realities. In this regard, Abdullah and his wife settle in California and name their only daughter after his beloved sister Pari. Abdullah seems to move on particularly thanks to her daughter but always fears abandonment. Yet, his adopted sister Pari’s early childhood memories are erased by her foster parents, whereas her memories are triggered by Nabi’s letter and, shortly afterwards, she comes from Paris to find her brother and nephew Pari, to whom she can talk about their traumatic past. Likewise, Carla recalls almost everything about her childhood that begins happily in Dubrovnik and ends devastatingly in Bosnia through her mother’s diary, confronting them thanks to her childhood therapist Raymond Leon. Bride, who accomplishes to start a new life in California, could also narrate her deepest childhood traumas to Booker but is cured after she proves her strength and bravery to herself facing Booker and helping Queen in the fire. Therefore, they all benefit from the talking cure and their quest for meaning and recovery in their adulthood as the victims of childhood trauma.

In essence, as Bruce Perry and Maia Szalavitz identify, “[f]ire can warm or consume, water can quench or drown, wind can caress or cut [a]nd so it is with human relationships: we can both create and destroy, nurture and terrorize, traumatize and heal each other” (2017: xxviii), signifying that the emotional, mental, and bodily well-being of children in the face of trauma can be sustained through the support and affection provided by notably the trustworthy and dependable adults. Although the protagonists of the selected novels are unable to leave their traumatic childhood experiences behind completely, they undeniably conquer almost all their challenges and accomplish to become resilient and hopeful for the future at last, which actually proves that not the tragic events but their perspectives and feelings on these events are traumatising for such characters under certain conditions. During the vulnerable state of childhood without any protectors, experiencing or witnessing severe traumas can easily and deeply imprint on their minds, emotions, and bodies. In spite of their lasting scars on their minds, Abdullah’s daughter Pari partly heals not only Abdullah but also his sister Pari’s wounds subsequent to the re-traumatising remembrance of her childhood memories, while Carla

and Bride succeed in resilience thanks to Carla's new-born baby and Bride's pregnancy. Hence Khaled Hosseini's *And the Mountains Echoed*, Glenn Meade's *The Last Witness*, and Toni Morrison's *God Help the Child* as the selected novels of this dissertation present hopeful endings for their wounded protagonists and the readers as the witnesses of their traumatic childhood realistically narrated to mirror the life itself.



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CURRICULUM VITAE

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