

تشكيل الصدمة والعنف الاستعماري وما بعد الحرب في رواية تشينوا أتشيبي "الأشياء تتداعى"
ورواية أحمد سعداوي "فرانكشتاين في بغداد"

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Reframing Trauma, Colonial and Postwar Violence in Achebe's Things Fall Apart and Saadawi's Frankenstein in Baghdad

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المخلص

تتناول هذه الدراسة نظرية الصدمة ما بعد الاستعمار بوصفها أداة تحليلية مهمة لفهم الآثار النفسية والثقافية للاستعمار والحرب في روايتي "الأشياء تتداعى" لتشينو أنشيبى و"فرانكشتاين في بغداد" لأحمد سعداوي. وعلى الرغم من أن النظرية الغربية للصدمة تميل إلى التركيز على معاناة الفرد، لكنها غالباً ما تتجاهل الأبعاد الجماعية والتاريخية للصدمة في السياقات ما بعد الاستعمارية. تعتمد الدراسة على منهج تحليلي أدبي مقارن نوعي، يستند إلى القراءة الدقيقة للبنية السردية، وبناء الشخصيات، والتمثيلات الموضوعاتية للصدمة. ومن خلال وضع الصدمة ضمن إطار ما بعد الاستعمار، تُبين الدراسة كيف يصوّر أنشيبى التدمير النفسي لمجتمع الإيكبو في مواجهة الغزو الاستعماري، وكيف يُجسّد سعداوي حالة الفوضى والجنون في العراق ما بعد الاحتلال عبر خلق شخصية كائن هجين يرمز إلى تفكك الهوية الوطنية. وتشير النتائج إلى ضرورة تفكيك الخطاب الغربي للصدمة وإعادة النظر فيه، كما تؤكد على التأثيرات النفسية طويلة الأمد للإمبريالية والحروب على الأفراد والمجتمعات.



وترتكز الدراسة على منهجية أدبية مقارنة نوعية، ودمج بين نظرية ما بعد الاستعمار ودراسات الصدمة، وتوظف التحليل النصي الدقيق لاستكشاف التمثيلات النفسية والثقافية للصدمة في كلا النصين.

Abstract

This paper argues that the postcolonial trauma theory is an invaluable analytical tool for understanding the psychological and cultural effects of colonialism and war in both novels *Things Fall Apart* (1958) by Chinua Achebe (1930–2013) and *Frankenstein in Baghdad* (2013) by Ahmed Saadawi born (1973–). Although the Western theory of trauma tends to focus on the patient's suffering, it ignores the group and historical levels of trauma in the postcolonial world. The study is based on a qualitative comparative literary analysis, close reading of narrative form, characterization, and thematic representations of the portrayal of trauma. Putting it in the context of postcolonialism, the paper will show how Achebe depicts the psychological destruction of the Igbo community in the face of colonial invasion, and how Saadawi allegorizes the insanity of post-invasion Iraq by giving life to a monstrous character as an embodiment of national identity disintegration. The results support the need to decolonize the discourse of trauma and indicate the long-lasting psychological impacts of imperialism and war on individuals and communities. The study is grounded in a qualitative comparative literary methodology, integrating postcolonial theory and trauma studies, and applies close textual analysis to investigate the psychological and cultural representations of trauma in both texts.

Introduction

The postcolonial trauma theory has become a dominant critical approach to the study of the psychological and cultural impacts of colonialism and political violence. According to theorists, mainstream Western conceptions of trauma have traditionally excluded the experiences of colonized people by ignoring the accumulating psychological harm caused by the long-term mechanisms of oppressive systems. Although many formerly colonized nations achieved political independence during the twentieth century, the social, cultural, and psychological legacies of colonialism continue to shape postcolonial societies; the influence of colonialism on the social, cultural, and psychological aspects of the postcolonial societies remains evident even today. As a result, individuals and communities continue to experience long-term trauma that shapes identity, memory, and collective consciousness. (Craps and Buelens 3–4)





The aim of postcolonial trauma studies is thus to examine the manner in which colonial violence, displacement and political strife create psychological distress that is long-term among the affected populations. Craps and Buelens argue “that this discipline broadens the horizons of the classical theory by introducing the problem of dispossession, forced migration, enslavement, racism and political violence- some of which have had the most significant impact on the lived experiences of colonized peoples” (34). By doing this, the theory criticizes the universalization of Western theoretical paradigms and argues for the significance of cultural and historical particularity in the study of trauma. In the same manner, the very notion of postcolonialism is highly preoccupied with the cultural, political, and psychological implications of the colonial rule. In the explanation of the term postcolonial, as Stephen Slemon explains, it should not be interpreted as a time-marked term to refer to the period after independence, but should be viewed as a critical mode of approach that questions the ongoing presence of colonial power structure in cultural discourse and social organization (3). A common theme of postcolonial literature is cultural identity, the conflicts between colonial and colonized, and the legacy of colonial domination. Narrative representation gives a voice to writers in expressing both emotional and psychological trauma caused by colonialism and political violence.

Parallel to that, the study of trauma has become an interdisciplinary field of significance, which unites the contributions of literature, psychology, history, and cultural studies. According to Hanna Meretoja, it results in psychological harm because of disastrous events. The study of literary trauma, specifically, is concerned with the ways in which traumatic events are narrated, and the ways in which literary genres express the violence, war, and past atrocities. In analyzing fictional characters and plotting, researchers could possibly learn more about how trauma alters individual identity and collective memory (18–21).

In this context, literature gives a strong vehicle of expression of the traumatic effects of colonialism and war. *Things Fall Apart* describes the cultural shock and psychological trauma the Igbo people endured due to the invasion of the Europeans, and the social disintegration and suffering it caused among them. Likewise, *Frankenstein in Baghdad* is a mirror of the post-invasion Iraq, where the society is torn apart by bombings, lack of stability, and loss. The central character and monstrous major in the novel, which is a combination of the bodies of victims, is a symbolic representation of the national fragmentation and national trauma.

In this regard, the paper will discuss how postcolonial trauma is presented in *Things Fall Apart* and *Frankenstein in Baghdad*. Based on the trauma

theory, it examines how the two texts reflect the psychological and social effects of colonialism and modern war. Dependent on a comparative literary analysis, this paper contends that colonial violence as manifested in Achebe novel and the destruction of the postwar as expressed in Saadawi's text generates forms of collective trauma, which significantly contributes to shaping cultural identity, social structures and individual experience in postcolonial societies.

Comparative literature, especially as conceived by David Damrosch, can be an effective way of studying postcolonial trauma in literary works. Damrosch states that literature becomes world literature when it is read in a context other than that in which it was originally written, and it is read with respect to other traditions (Damrosch 4). This comparative framework allows scholars to transcend national boundaries and to explore an interaction between texts of varying historical and geopolitical contexts in common thematic interests. In this regard, *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe and *Frankenstein in Baghdad* by Ahmed Saadawi can be interpreted not as a stand alone text, but as a fragment of a larger transnational discourse on trauma, violence, and disintegration of culture. In this comparative approach, the theory of postcolonial trauma becomes an important critical instrument to examine the psychological and cultural implications of colonialism and war. Western theory of traumas has generally been preoccupied with the individual experience when comparative literary analysis suggests the collective, historical, and culturally particular aspects of traumas in postcolonial communities. According to further suggestions of Damrosch, when reading across cultures and interpreting in various historical and social contexts, texts acquire new meaning (Damrosch 6). This will enable a more in-depth examination of the ways in which trauma is reflected differently in Africa and Middle Eastern societies, as well as unveil common trends of suffering, resistance, and identity formation.

Placing the works of Achebe and Saadawi in the context of comparative literature, this paper will focus on the ways in which colonial and postwar violence brings about similar psychological destabilization and social malaise. The focus on the circulation of literary themes in such a reading not only highlights the globalism of literary motifs but also challenges the Eurocentric paradigms of trauma by anticipating the variety of cultural experience. Finally, the application of the comparative approach of Damrosch allows developing a more subtle concept of postcolonial trauma as a local and at the same time a global phenomenon.

The Theoretical Framework of Postcolonial Trauma



The postcolonial trauma theory is valuable for social and cultural analysis. The trauma framework has gained increasing prominence due to its capacity to explain complex historical and cultural phenomena. From a trauma studies standpoint, postcolonial researchers observe that the Western theory often disregards the suffering caused by colonialism. This statement also holds for postcolonial societies. Even though most postcolonial people achieved independence throughout the twentieth century, remnants of the colonial system persist in various forms up to the present day. Hence, one may argue that individuals in postcolonial societies continue to experience the enduring effects of colonialism, resulting in a state of trauma. The primary objective of postcolonial trauma theory is to examine the psychological and emotional impact of colonialism. It aims to address this issue by establishing a discipline that explores the enduring psychological distress caused by colonialism in the lives of postcolonial individuals (Kalampung 208).

Slemon defines postcolonialism as, "the concept that is vary widely, but for me, the concept proves most useful not when it is used synonymously with a post-independence historical period in once colonized nations, but rather when it locates a specifically anti- or postcolonial discursive purchase in culture" (3). The postcolonial criticism of trauma studies seeks to highlight the painful experiences in non-Western contexts and acknowledge the cultural disparities in the treatment of trauma. The primary aim of Postcolonial trauma is to comprehend the many forms of Trauma resulting from colonialism, including but not limited to dispossession, coerced migration, diaspora, enslavement, segregation, racism, political violence, and genocide. Postcolonial trauma studies critique the practice of exporting Western theoretical and diagnostic models to non-Western settings. This critique aims to explore the potential for making alterations to these models in order to make them more widely applicable (Craps and Buelens 3–4).

The community started to experience trauma after the white man's killing. On the other hand, killing a white man signaled violence and trauma when he entered their clan. He was strange and did not look like "An albino." In addition, behold that he gracefully alighted upon a magnificent steed crafted from the finest iron. This scene reflects the initial shock and misinterpretation experienced by the indigenous community, yet he steadfastly remained, beckoning them to draw nearer. This moment reflects how individuals fearlessly approach and apprehend him in a stunning turn of events. The elders sought guidance from their Oracle, which prophesied that the enigmatic man would dismantle their

clan and unleash devastation upon them. They heard talk of Oracle and killed the white man. Achebe states that:

And so they killed the white man and tied his iron horse to their sacred tree because it looked as if it would run away to call the man's friends. I forgot to tell you another thing which the Oracle said. It said other white men were on their way. (138)

On the other side, she said that other men individuals were en route. The narrative suggests that the colonizers are metaphorically represented as locusts and that the first man served as a harbinger, dispatched to investigate the surroundings. The intriguing aspect is the disparity between the oracle's word and the killing of the man's individual. The killing of the white man does not prevent further colonial intrusion, thereby highlighting the inevitability of imperial expansion. Subsequently, the men individuals arrive and devastate the Abame community. The repercussions are profoundly influenced by the pain of colonialism; as noted by Mohasien, the figure Whatsitsname embodies the absurdity that emerged post-Iraq war. He posits that the entire country, particularly Baghdad, endured devastation. The city has entered a chaotic stage since the occupation, with lots of explosions, killings, and bloodshed (Mohasien 4-6). This, along with the low standard of living in the country, motivated people to flee Iraq. According to Mohasien, Saadawi succeeded in reflecting the image of post-war Iraq through his narrative. The experiences these individuals have had justify this (8). According to Saadawi,

Faraj had taken advantage of the chaos and lawlessness in the city to get his hands on several houses of unknown ownership. He turned these into cheap boardinghouses, renting the rooms to workers from the provinces or to families displaced from nearby areas for sectarian reasons or because of old vendettas that had come back into effect with the fall of the regime. (5–9).

This study examines postcolonial trauma in *Things Fall Apart* and *Frankenstein in Baghdad*. Before commencing the analysis, a brief theoretical discussion of postcolonial trauma is required. This is not just for definition's sake but also because many problems associated with postcolonial trauma studies must be resolved if such an analysis moves forward. This approach is holistic and oriented around the problem of approaching colonial complexes through a historical, psychoanalytic, and media studies intersection.

Postcolonialism examines the issues surrounding cultural identity in societies that were once colonized. This includes the challenges of establishing a national identity after colonial rule, the methods used by



writers to express and embrace this identity (often by reclaiming it from the colonizer and maintaining strong ties), the exploitation of knowledge from the colonized for the benefit of the colonizer, and the use of literature by the colonizer to justify colonialism by portraying the colonized as perpetually inferior in terms of people, society, and culture. Postcolonialism offers a distinct encounter with political and cultural liberation by critically analyzing colonial texts and postcolonial literature (Arbi 12).

As stated by Gu, Trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder research provide helpful theoretical frameworks for studying several disciplines, including literature, history, and culture. Despite disagreements among academics over the feasibility of weaving together horrific memories into tales, all agree that literary language is superior to everyday speech when it comes to depicting Trauma. Since then, trauma studies have used critical theories like narratology, feminism, and deconstruction to examine that through the prism of words. Essential to my study, this section will define several terminology from the field of trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) studies (Gu 80)

Trauma studies are a broad interdisciplinary field that intersects with psychology, neuroscience, and literary studies. One aspect of trauma studies deals with war and its consequences on the mentality of individuals. Hanna Meretoja defines it as "psychological injury, lasting damage done to individuals or communities by tragic events or severe distress". (17) Our unconscious shapes our reality and can be destroyed through various tragic events. According to him, "Our traumatized reality is explained by reference to catastrophic events that have had a broad cultural impact, such as the Holocaust and other genocides in Armenia, Cambodia, Bosnia or Rwanda, or the Vietnam War, or 9/11." (18). Therefore, our actions are significantly affected by the Trauma.

Analyzing literary works can help others understand the traumatized mentality in fictional characters and writers,

Literary trauma studies have often focused on historical catastrophes and explored their impact on both individuals and communities. Like cultural memory studies, they have frequently been interested in how literature explores the interplay between the personal and the cultural in narrating particular experiences of trauma (Meretoja 21).

In order to get a deeper comprehension of the correlation between Trauma and postcolonial identity, it is essential to grasp the functioning of postcolonial literature inside the framework of postcoloniality. In her book *Postcolonial Theory*, Leela Gandhi defines postcoloniality as a state that is forced to grapple with the contradictions resulting from its

undeniable historical lateness, its postcolonial nature, or its political and chronological origin from colonialism, on the one hand, and its cultural responsibility to be purposefully innovative and creative on the other. This explanation of postcoloniality as a multitude of internal conflicts is closely linked to the problematic significance of literature in postcolonial theory. It highlights that textual representations are inherent to the colonial encounter, involving both the colonizer and the colonized (141–42). The issue, as Gandhi explains in her chapter, is that the postcolonial literary critic is burdened with the task of developing a theoretical understanding of postcoloniality and its associated politics. By framing postcoloniality as a literary phenomenon, critics such as Tiffin and Lawson unintentionally give undue importance to the role and function of the postcolonial literary critic, whose academic expertise becomes the key to comprehending oppositional and anti-colonial meanings (Gandhi 142).

Argument of Trauma in both novels

Sigmund Freud defines Trauma as "a consequence of an extensive breach being made in the protective shield against stimuli" (303). It can be understood as a profound psychological rupture affecting individual and collective consciousness. Roth asserts, "Trauma has become the dystopia of the spirit, showing us much about our preoccupations with catastrophe, memory, and the grave difficulties we seem to have in negotiating between the internal and external worlds" (90). It has two moments: the external moment and the internal moment. According to Jean Laplanche, Trauma consists of two moments: the Trauma, to be psychic one, does not occur in just one moment. First, there is the implantation of something coming from outside. Moreover, this experience, or the memory of it, must be reinvested in a second moment, and then it becomes traumatic. It is not the first act which is traumatic; it is the internal reviviscence of this memory that becomes traumatic. (11)

In Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Okonkwo observes that the white missionaries and colonists neither comprehend the local language nor fully understand the practices they consider harmful (176). In the precolonial era, the outsiders, sometimes called the other, did not attempt to listen to the indigenous people. This lack of effort diminished the self-esteem of the natives and devalued their practices. It can be claimed that Saadawi's unconscious mentality was formed during the dictatorship of the Baath Party and the era of suppression and fear. It can be argued that the war and the presence of US forces in Iraq for more than twenty years have had effects on the mentality of people and a writer-journalist such as Saadawi. It is stated in the second chapter of this novel that before US



forces, Iraq was controlled by the Baath Party, and they ruled by using fear and suppression. According to Elayyan, Fear has been ingrained in the lives of Iraqis since the days of the Baath Party rule when violence was the primary tool in the state's toolbox of strategies to subjugate the people and guarantee acquiescence to the one-party rule. The state spread fear among citizens through harsh punishments for all acts of disobedience and through a network of spies and informants who made the average Iraqi fear to express political opinions even to very close friends and family (13)

Surprisingly, the field of trauma studies does not uphold its claimed dedication to fostering ethical engagement across different cultures, as evidenced by *Things Fall Apart* and *Frankenstein in Baghdad*. These texts primarily focus on traumatic societal experiences and rely solely on critical approaches originating from a Euro-American perspective. The exclusive emphasis on Western traumatic events and theories in trauma studies may inadvertently reinforce Eurocentric perspectives and structures, hindering the promotion of solidarity among diverse cultures and widening the gap between the West and the rest of the world (Craps and Buelens 2).

Nevertheless, Okonkwo recollected accounts of profoundly distressing incidents in which Caucasian individuals infiltrated indigenous communities and perpetrated acts of violence against the residents, so creating a disconcerting impression on him. Consequently, when the white men started their encroachment into his clan, Okonkwo was prepared to respond with retaliation. When Okonkwo joined forces with men in Umuofia to engage in violent resistance against the colonists, they were subjected to a "few blows on the head and back" by the colonizers and then incarcerated (Achebe 195).

Saadawi commences his novel with a bombing scene.

Everyone on the bus turned around to see what had happened. They watched in shock as a ball of smoke rose, dark and black, beyond the crowds from the car park near Tayaran Square in the centre of Baghdad. Young people raced to the scene of the explosion, and cars collided with each other or into the median. The drivers were frightened and confused: they were assaulted by the sound of car horns and of people screaming and shouting (21).

He tries to depict a typical day in the life of Iraqi people where they live under continuous fear of death.

Okonkwo's fear of weakness and failure developed due to his fear of becoming like his father. "Perhaps down in his heart, Okonkwo was not a cruel man". But his whole life was dominated by fear of failure and

weakness. It was the fear of himself, lest he should be found to resemble his father". (Achebe 22–23) Okonkwo was ruled by one passion to hate everything that his father Unoka had loved. One of those things was gentleness, and another was idleness. On the other side, Saadawi introduces Elishva as a woman who experienced the explosion and the death of her son.

Sitting on the bus, minding her own business, as if she were deaf or not even there, Elishva did not hear the massive explosion about two hundred yards behind her. The window curled up her frail body, and she looked out without seeing anything, thinking about the bitter taste in her mouth and the sense of gloom that she had been unable to shake off for the past few days (22).

When the outsiders defeat the indigenous people, they experience a profound sense of remorse. Upon hearing Okonkwo's declaration of his intention to resist the missionaries, Obierika bleakly remarks that "it is already too late". This somber statement acknowledges that the foreigners' control over society is now permanent due to their inaction and the consequent responsibility they must bear. Obierika goes on to admit that

"white man was very clever," as he came "quietly and peaceably with his religion", and they were too "amused at his foolishness and allowed him to stay," leading many of the colonized to convert and now the "clan can no longer act like one" (176–77).

They believed their gods and ancestors were lamenting due to the irreversible "shameful sacrilege they are suffering" (Achebe 203). Then Saadawi, as the narrator, mentions the presence of American troops in Iraq. He said,

However, when the Americans invaded Baghdad, their missiles destroyed the telephone exchange, and the phones were cut off for many months. Death stalked the city like the plague... (25)

The conversion of pre-colonial native tribes, who were ostracized from their communities and sought consolation in colonization, directly impacted their people by exacerbating the fragmentation between the clans. In *Things Fall Apart* the advent of the missionaries is seen by the clan's elders as a cause of sorrow. Nevertheless, a widespread conviction persisted among several individuals that the influence of Christianity and the divinity of the white man would be transitory and that the religious practices of the clan would finally triumph and transcend it. However, the individuals who first embraced the new faith were not from the privileged class but from the lower social stratum known as the 'efulefu' considered outcasts of the community. Their community condemned them, but the





evangelists offered them greater recognition on the condition that they converted. This provided them solace since they no longer felt like outcasts in society. Nwoye, the son of Okonkwo, became an outcast and saw Christianity as a way to escape the senseless violence that he could not comprehend inside his community (Achebe 143–47).

Saadawi starts the third chapter with another explosion that leads to the death of a hotel's guard. It seems that Saadawi himself was shocked by the Trauma of explosions, and he recurrently depicts the scenes of explosion in his story. Chapter Four started the same way with the news of a blast. Each chapter introduces a new character that might be related to the explosion. Said differently, the narrator tries to show the explosion from various points of view. Chapter Five starts with the depiction of the monster and Elishva.

Elishva put the heater close to Daniel in the sitting room, then went away for a few minutes and returned with a creased white shirt, an old green sweater, and a pair of jeans, all smelling strongly of mothballs. She had taken the clothes from Daniel's chest of drawers, where they had been kept for many years (67).

Challenging societal norms labelled him feeble, akin to the 'efulefu' but Christianity provided him with a platform to seek solace and comprehension publicly. Although the indigenous people were already marginalized, their conversion was not only strongly condemned by clan members, but it also caused division within the clan. This conversion further solidified missionaries' societal influence (Achebe 152–53).

In contrast to the novel *Things Fall Apart*, which represents the trauma through the disintegration of the Igbo society and its cultural and traditional inheritances, *Frankenstein in Baghdad* signifies the traumatic experience that results from the aftermath of war and occupation in contemporary Iraq. Both novels draw attention to the impact of trauma and war on collective and individual identities in colonial and postcolonial environments. They are, however, distinguished by their thematic choice. One author addresses the trauma of colonialism and its psychological consequences in a small village situated in the Igbo hinterland before the advent of white colonialists in Africa. In terms of thematic concern, the focus is on how traumatic dislocation and societal dislocation, caused by colonialism, result in unravelling and loss of cultural traditions. The other author focuses exclusively on the terrible trauma of bombing and occupation and the consequent psychic derangement of Iraqi society due to the invasion of Iraq in 2003, which led to the Iraq War and the creation of militias and mafias, rigged elections, religious intolerance, and terrorism. The representation of

traumatic dislocation occurs through dismembered human body parts, one by one conjoining to make a complete living figure of a monster, and then the emotional multi-trauma resultant aftermath in an unstable and distraught society between the pacifist and the trigger-happy elements just trailing behind the horrid Iraq war and the military occupation of the country. Both authors thus interpret trauma within the structures and the historical contexts of their different societies in terms of their psychological implications and symptoms.

Post-traumatic Stress Disorder of both novels

The word PTSD or 'Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder' was coined later and defined as "the response to an event outside the range of usual human experience, which involves serious somatic and psychosomatic disturbances" (Calvo 2). *Things Fall Apart* makes no mention of PTSD. Still, its long-lasting impact on characters, most notably Okonkwo, is evident, so the paper attempts to show some quotes that showcase PTSD. Sensory experiences serve as conduits connecting the internal and exterior realms. The characters' emotional states may be influenced by weather, sound, and touch, which can cause emotions such as exhilaration and dread. These sensory impressions expose internal tensions, as seen by Okonkwo's emotional upheaval after the death of Ikemefuna. "Okonkwo did not taste any food for two days after the death of Ikemefuna. He drank palm wine from morning till night, and his eyes were red and fierce like the eyes of a rat when it was caught by the tail and dashed against the floor". (20) Despite the societal norms that provide Okonkwo the authority to murder Ikemefuna due to his lack of blood link or clan membership, Okonkwo experiences intense remorse. Okonkwo's abstinence from eating for two consecutive days reveals his guilty conscience. Despite the absence of legal support from the clan, Okonkwo's whole household regarded Ikemefuna as a family member due to their deep attachment to him (Achebe 63). The fear and suppression he experienced during that time could have exposed him to a continuous fear of arrest and torture, and it exposed him to trauma. Furthermore, the arrival of US forces in Iraq and vast massacre, bombardment, and continuous explosions in Baghdad and other cities might face him with a new trauma.

Therefore, *Frankenstein in Baghdad* can be considered the product of Saadawi's PTSD. Being a journalist helped him to meet these horrible scenes and terrible events. Therefore, it can be maintained that two crucial events may result in Saadawi's PTSD or at least influenced his mentality. These two are living under pressure and fear of the Iraq war.



Saadawi introduces another character Hadi in the novel that might show PTSD symptoms,

By the time Hadi sat in Aziz's coffee shop with Mahmoud al-Sawadi and some older men, telling more of his story, Nahem had already been dead for several months from a car bomb that had exploded in front of the office of a religious party in Karrada, also killing some other passersby and Nahem's horse. It had been hard to separate Nahem's flesh from the horse's... (39).

The influx of the proselytizers and the resultant social variations generate an intellect of damage and powerlessness in Okonkwo, donating to his psychosomatic suffering. Such contrasts and ambivalence in Okonkwo's personality are evident throughout his life. Okonkwo is aware that after being in exile for seven years, his homeland has little to offer him: "He had lost his place among the nine masked spirits who administered justice in the clan. He had lost the chance to lead his warlike clan against the new religion, which, he was told, had gained ground. He had lost the years in which he might have taken the highest titles in the clan" (Achebe 171). Nevertheless, Okonkwo is highly determined to regain his past honours and "the seven wasted years". Although being in exile for seven years has little effect on changing Okonkwo's thymos and hubris, this interval changes many standards in Umuofia. (Mordaunt and Avestan 32). On many occasions, Aziz saw Hadi as having a dual personality or being deceptive, as described by Saadawi (21). Aziz found Hadi's psychological divide to be rather evident. Aziz attributed Hadi's traumatic condition directly to the horrific death of Hadi's friend and business partner, Nahem Abdaki, in a terrorist blast: "shock of Nahem's death changed Hadi. He became aggressive.

He kept to himself for a while and then went back to his old self, laughing and telling extraordinary stories, but now he seemed to have two faces or two masks as soon as he was alone, he was gloomy and despondent in a way he had not been before. He also started drinking during the day... (21).

On the other side, Okonkwo abandon his hope and becomes precisely like his father by committing suicide, which is a dishonorable death: "Then they came to the tree from which Okonkwo's body was dangling, and they stopped dead" (Achebe 207). Okonkwo never wanted it to end like that but thought he had no choice. He could not run away because that was also dishonourable. Either way, he would have died a shameful death like his dad. The population's response to Okonkwo's perversity underlines the national and individual Trauma of his last act and the disgrace related to it.

Finally, at the end of the novel, Hadi is accused of all killings and is considered as the Whatitsname or the monster. In fact, he is the monster himself. They projected a large picture of him on a big screen and announced his name: Hadi Hassani Aidros, a resident of Bataween and commonly known as Hadi al-Attag, the junk dealer.

The defendant had confessed to all the crimes he was accused of, including leading a murder gang, dismembering his victims, and planting them in back streets around Baghdad in order to spread alarm and fear... On top of that, the criminal was implicated in acts of sectarian violence and in murders for hire on behalf of gangs and sectarian groups. (296).

The words 'unstable personal life' show the fact that he could be the 'Whatitsname'. In fact, in order to avoid the trauma and its horrible remembrances. Hadi develops a double personality, and has this continuous delirium that he is a monster, and his aim is just to kill.

Moreover, Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is an effect of psychological trauma caused by extreme experiences of death, threat, or injury to oneself or others. It is also an essential theme in the study of trauma. The symptoms were mostly nonspecific and varied with previous investment in different symptoms as signs of PTSD. *Frankenstein in Baghdad* and *Things Fall Apart* depict traditional societies confronted and assaulted by colonial modernity, and the protagonists reflect their past experiences through other bodies. The experiences not only cause behavioural changes in the subjects but also change physiology and brain structure. Trauma victims often accept as real the traumatic experience, symptoms, and consequences. If the trauma is a collective experience, it follows from what has occurred, and the mental distension, flashbacks, and attempts to avoid stimuli can all be reproduced in a classical mass hysteria reaction.

Conclusion

This paper has shown that a postcolonial trauma theory can be used as the critical prism within the framework of which the psychological, cultural, and historical effects of colonialism and modern day violence can be better interpreted. By comparing *Things Fall Apart* and *Frankenstein in Baghdad*, one can see that trauma in postcolonial situations is not just episodic but structural and is woven into the material of the social and cultural life of the country. Both readings unveil how violence, either colonial or postwar, results in disintegrated sense of identity, interrupts collective memory, and restructures the connection between individual and community.



Telling of the traumatic discontinuity brought about by colonial intrusion, *Things Fall Apart* presupposes the dismantling of native epistemologies and the destruction of collective unity brought about by the imposition of foreign system. Okonkwo is not a tragedy of just one man, but a symbol of a wider cultural failure, in which the assimilation of colonial disturbance breeds radical psychological displacement. In that way, trauma is both a historical process and a continuing state, which defines subjectivity many years later than the first time of contact.

In its turn, in *Frankenstein in Baghdad*, Saadawi once again rewrites the trauma in the situation of modern Iraq, when the horrors of war are touched upon in monstrous and disjointed ways. The character of the Whatsitsname, the compilation of the remains of bomb victims, is a forceful allegory of the collective trauma and the embodiment of the loss of national identity and the vicious circle of violence. The unconventional narrative structure of the novel reflects the instability of a society torn apart between the devastation in the past and the chaos in the present implies that trauma, resists linear representation and therefore requires alternative narrative strategies.

Notably, both literary works criticize reductionist explanations of trauma as only devastating. As much as they are graphic descriptions of suffering and fragmentation, they point to some resilience, ethical reflection and narrative reconstruction. In works, trauma is not only a location of loss but also a place of critical intervention, where the repressed histories and the silenced voices can be expressed. This is consistent with the overall goal of postcolonial trauma theory, which is to decolonize the hegemonic discourses by anticipating culturally particular experiences and opposing the generalization of Western paradigms.

Finally, this paper highlights the importance of placing trauma in its historical and geopolitical contexts. Through intersections of colonialism, war, narrative representation, it shows the timeless applicability of the postcolonial trauma theory to the past and current manifestations of violence. The literary visions by Achebe and Saadawi, in their specific, but interrelated ways, demonstrate that the problem of trauma is not unique to the individual experience, but it is deeply rooted in the collective life. They are demanding a reconsideration of history, identity, and memory, and at the same time leaving the prospect of healing through recognition, representation, and critical consciousness.

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Reframing Trauma, Colonial and Postwar Violence in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Saadawi's *Frankenstein in Baghdad*

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