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A Two-Sided Novel of Trauma: Amy Waldman's *The Submission*

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Literature & Civilisations.

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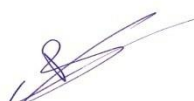
Declaration of Originality

I hereby declare that this submission is my work and that, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which has been accepted for the qualification of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution.

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Dedication

To my parents, sisters, and precious brother.

To my idol, my late grandfather BENCHOHRA Bouzid.

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Abstract

The effect of the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001 is no mystery whether on the cost of thousands of human lives, or the trauma that is still haunting people up to this day. Ultimately, these life changing events launched a whole new branch of trauma literature; the 9/11 literature. Thus, the current study is an attempt to examine the traumatic experience in the post 9/11 America on different scales. It tends to analyse various categories of the American society including the families of the victims, politicians, media, and provides a look on American Muslims' struggles after the tragic events. Therefore, an analysis of Amy Waldman's *The Submission* is to be undertaken. It will rely on trauma theory to provide a psychoanalysis of the characters representing the different parts of the American society. This method will allow clarifying the differences in people's responses to trauma and the main causes behind them including people's psyche and the external influences that triggered certain reflexes.

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List of Acronyms

KSM : Khalid Sheikh Mohamed

WTC : World Trade Center

CAIR : Council on American-Islamic Relations

MACC: Muslim American Coordinating Council

9/11 : September 11th, 2001

List of Appendixes**Appendix A: Biography****Appendix B: Plot Summary**

General Introduction

General Introduction

Literature has long been considered a society's reflection. In order to get knowledge on a certain category of people or a period of time, a literary text ought to be analysed through the context it has been written in.

Even more, since literature is related to the context and since the world is in constant exposure to wars, natural phenomena, or other drastic incidents; literature explores people's traumatic experiences and the psychological aspects of the characters; which paved the way to several studies in the field of trauma and its impact on literary texts.

Scholars like Cathy Caruth, Michelle Balaev, Arthur Neal, and Jeffrey Alexander have focused on the traumatic experience on the individual and collective levels, and its impact on every aspect of life.

Further, the last century has witnessed many life changing events that had their impact on people's life, and so on literature. Among these events is the tragedy of September 11th, 2001; the terrorist attacks on the twin towers of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. These attacks triggered trauma on a national and international scale, and provided the field of literature with numerous works, resulting to the emergence of a new category of 9/11 trauma literature.

While most novelists try to depict the aftermath of 9/11, Amy Waldman's first novel *The Submission* portrays the American society nearly a decade after the events. Her work is an attempt to explore the trauma via more than one perspective, with a slight emphasis on American Muslims' circumstances in the post 9/11 America. Thus, it provides a rich case study for this work.

The aim of this research is to answer the following questions:

- What is the renewed trauma experienced in *The Submission*?
- On whom does trauma have the biggest impact? Who is the most traumatized?

- What are the effects of trauma on the characters?

The previous questions have evoked these hypotheses:

- The novel illustrates the trauma of having a Muslim name on the memorial of 9/11 opening the wound of the attacks, and allowing the terrorists to a second hit on America.
- This trauma has greater impact on the winning American Muslim, his supporters, and his community than the families of the victims and the American people.
- Each character has a different response to the trauma since everyone is in different circumstance.

To answer the research questions above and test the veracity of the hypotheses, a qualitative research method has been adopted. Books, documents, journals, and articles have been used to collect data including researchers' and theorists' works in the field of trauma.

This research work is divided into three chapters. The first chapter will be devoted to the historical background of the 9/11 attacks, their impact on American and Muslim worlds, and the role of media in creating propagandas and stereotypes. The second will be a theoretical framework of the trauma theory including theorists' perspectives and some aspects of trauma literature. Whereas the third chapter will analyse the novel mentioned above in the light of the 9/11 events, through a psychoanalytic approach.

Chapter One:

Historical

Background

Chapter One: *Historical Background*

1.1 Introduction

When referring to the 9/11 events, most people think of the bombing that hit the twin towers of the World Trade Center. While in reality, there have been two more attacks on that day. Another hijacked plane crashed into the Pentagon, while another one was wrecked after falling in a rural area in Shanksville.

1.2 The 9/11 Commission Report

The first official report released by the US government in July 22nd, 2004 reports that in that morning, 19 terrorists boarded four different flights. Soon after the departure, they killed or injured most of the staff and took control of the airplanes that were fully loaded with fuel. It also provides detailed reports on what happened inside the planes relying on cockpit recordings and several investigations with terrorists and other people involved in the attacks.

The first plane that hit the North tower of the World Trade Center was American Airlines Flight 11. In addition to the Captain and the First Officer, there were nine flight attendants, and eighty-one passengers aboard. It took off from Boston at 7:59 and was meant to reach Los Angeles before it was hijacked by Mohamed Atta, Abdul Aziz Al Omari, Satam Al Suqami, Wail Al Shehri, and Waleed Al Shehri. The 9/11 Commission Report assumes that the hijacking began at nearly 8:14.

Two flight attendants: Betty Ong and Madeline Sweeney started reporting the events inside the airplane about five minutes after the hijacking started, and the last thing Sweeney reported was: “We are flying low. We are flying very, very low. We are flying way too low... Oh my God we are way too low.” (6), and then the phone call ended. What occurred next, as the Commission Report reveals: “At 8:46:40, American 11 crashed into

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the North Tower of The world Trade Center in New York City. All on board, along with an unknown number of people in the tower, were killed instantly”(7).

The second plane, United Airlines Flight 175, busted into the South Tower. The totality of people on it was: the Captain and First Officer, seven flight attendants, and fifty-six passengers including the hijackers: Fayez Banihammad, Mohand Al Shehri, Ahmed Al Ghamdi, and Hamza Al Ghamdi. It also departed from Boston to Los Angeles at 8:14, by the time that Flight 11 was being hijacked. The hijacking started assumingly between 8:42 and 8:46 according to the Commission Report. Flight attendants and passengers started reporting the events and calling their families, one of them even added that passengers were planning to storm the cockpit in an attempt to regain control over the flight. The plane was heading to New York City, and at 9:00 a passenger called his father and describes:

It’s getting bad, dad. A stewardess was stabbed. They seem to have knives and Mace. They said they have a bomb. It’s getting very bad on the plane. Passengers are throwing up and getting sick. The plane is making jerky movements. I don’t think the pilot is flying the plane. I think we are going down. I think they intend to go to Chicago or someplace and fly into a building. Don’t worry, dad. If it happens, it’ll be very fast. My God, My God. (8)

The phone call ended, and the Commission Report explains that what happened next was: “At 9:03:11, United Airlines Flight 175 struck the South Tower of The World Trade Center. All on board, along with an unknown number of people in the South Tower, were killed instantly”(8).

The third hijacked plane targeted The Pentagon. American Airlines Flight 77 had fifty-eight passengers including the terrorists: Khalid Al Mihdhar, Majed Moqed, Hani Hanjour,

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Nawaf Al Hazmi, and Salem Al Hazmi, in addition to four flight attendants, the Captain and First Officer. It took off at 8:20 from Washington for Los Angeles, and the hijacking began between 8:51 and 8:54.

Passengers started calling their families, and unlike the two previous flights, the Captain of Flight 77 reported to passengers that the plane was being hijacked. The Commission Report explains that: “At 9:37:46, American Airlines Flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon, traveling at approximately 530 miles per hour. All on board, as well as many civilian and military personnel in the building, were killed”(10).

The last hijacked plane story reveals a battle with the terrorists; and passengers of United Airlines Flight 93 will always be remembered as heroes. The aircraft departed with thirty-seven passengers from New Jersey at 8:42 for San Francisco. The hijacking started at 9:28 by Saeed Al Ghamdi, Ahmed Al Nami, Ahmad Al Haznawi, and Ziad Jarrah. Passengers and the staff started making phone calls which gave them information about the early two attacks of the towers and gave people on the ground accounts on the current situation. One of the last calls reveals that passengers and crew members voted on fighting the hijackers and retaking control of the plane, and so they started at 9:57. They ran up the first class and the pilot, Jarrah started rolling the plane to unbalance them; but that did not stop them.

The Commission Report assumes that: “The hijackers remained at the controls but must have judged that the passengers were only few seconds from overcoming them” (14). These were the last few seconds before “the aircraft plowed into an empty field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, at 580 miles per hour, about 20 minutes’ flying time from Washington, D.C” (14). Jarrah was assumed to target either The Capitol or The White House, but was bravely hampered by the passengers of Flight 93.

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Ultimately, the Twin Towers collapsed followed by several surrounding buildings, and the Southwest side of the Pentagon was destroyed. 2152 civilian died in the two towers, in addition to more than 400 firefighters and police officers.

1.2.1 Who attacked America?

The investigations led by the FBI, CIA and other government agencies assume that the 19 hijackers of the planes were members of the militant Islamic organization named Al Qaeda, founded in Afghanistan and led by the Saudi exile Usama Bin Ladin. He used his organization to attract, train and recruit Muslims all over the world to prepare for attacks on infidels under the name of jihad.

Bin Ladin first declared war publically on the United States of America in 1998, claiming that it declared war on God and his messenger. Thereby, he insisted that it is the duty of every Muslim to kill any American he faces. He even stated that: “It is far better for anyone to kill a single American soldier than to squander his efforts on other activities” in an interview by ABC-TV (64), in which he also declared that there was no differentiation between military or civilians: “they are all targets”.

1.2.2 Planning the attacks

The Commission Report qualifies that the principal planner of the 9/11 attacks is Khalid Sheikh Mohammed who used his wicked imagination and technical and management skills to scheme several terrorist attacks.

It maintains that he helped funding the 1993 attack on the World Trade Center, which got him inspired to plan attacks on the USA. He planned his first attack with Ramzi Yousef in Manila, Philippines, where they bombed 12 US commercial jumbo jets over the Pacific over two days.

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By mid 1996, he met with Bin Ladin in Tora Bora, Afghanistan. KSM proposed some terrorist operation ideas, among which he suggested to train pilots to fly planes into American landmarks. This precise suggestion was approved by Bin Ladin between late 1998 and early 1999, and would become the 9/11 attacks that were known in Al Qaeda as the “planes operation” (154).

KSM started planning these attacks while pursuing other possibilities of terrorist attacks, which made of him a popular figure in Al Qaeda. He ended up by a plan where 9 of 10 hijacked planes would crash into the 4 blasted targets on 9/11, CIA and FBI headquarters, nuclear power plants, and the tallest buildings of California and Washington. He would fly the 10th and last plane, land it at a US airport, and deliver a speech quarrelling America for its support for Israel and repressive governments in the Arab world, after killing all adult males on board.

Eventually, the last part concerning the airplane used to make a statement was cancelled, and Bin Ladin selected four men as key operatives for suicidal. Two of them got to the United States for pilot training, while the other two had troubles in getting their visas which lead KSM to the decision of dividing the plan.

The first part would remain as planned, while the second part consisted on hijacking planes flying across East Asia to destroy them overhead instead of crashing into specific targets. This part was added to facilitate things for the operational that could not get to the US, since there was no need for them to know how to fly a plane. KSM emphasized on the necessity of simultaneity in the execution of the operations to guarantee the maximum psychological effect.

Bin Ladin ordered the chosen 4 to join an elite training course, which KSM enhanced by purchasing a flight simulator software, selecting some movies on hijackings, and

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teaching them English language basics. Meanwhile, four other men were selected to join the planes operations, whom all were students in Germany. Their Western education, fluency in English, and familiarity with Western lifestyle qualified them to be key operatives.

Later in the spring of 2000, Bin Ladin cancelled the the second part of the plan for difficulties in coordinating while attacking the US. Later on that year, Bin Ladin with Al Qaeda leaders selected other hijackers who also received a special training to help in controlling the passengers. Ultimately, 15 hijackers were settled in the USA by the beginning of July, 2001, where they were awaited by 4 others who assisted them. In New York City, two months before the attacks, 19 hijackers were assembled together, ready and waiting to take action.

Short after this document was publically released, newspapers all over the country reported that Americans split up into two categories: the conspiracists, who believed in a conspiracy taking place, and the conventionalists, who agreed with their government's reports.

1.3 The Other Story

According to the legal dictionary (Gerald and Kathleen Hill), conspiracy is “when people work together by agreement to commit an illegal act” Some people might find difficulties in believing the official explanations of certain events that include assassinations and mass-murder. So, they start questioning their truth, and attempt to fill in the blanks themselves especially when the official accounts do not answer certain crucial questions persuasively or not answer them at all.

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These conspiracists raised questions about president John F Kennedy's assassination, Princess Diana's, and the July 7th London bombing. People who believe in conspiracy theory in the 9/11 attacks were not convinced by the official accounts provided by George W Bush's government. Their doubts, questions and uncertainties were translated into conspiracy theories.

It is hard to define an exact date for the launch of conspiracy theory on the 9/11, but it ought to be only few days after the attacks. However, the real tension was heightened in the rear of publishing the final 9/11 Commission Report in July 22nd, 2004. Individuals and organizations who question the credibility of the common narrative are known as The 9/11 Truth Movement.

The most eminent members of this movement include the Professor of philosophy of religion and theologian David Ray Griffin who has numerous writing on 9/11: *The 9/11 Commission Report: Omissions and Distortions* (2004), *Debunking 9/11 Debunking* (2007), and *The New Pearl Harbour* (2004). These works among many of his are very often cited in other works on 9/11. Other distinguished members are Richard Gage's group Architects and Engineers for 9/11 Truth (AE911 Truth), Steven Jones and his work with other chemists produced several 9/11 truth articles, Dylan Avery and Jason Bermas who created the documentary film *Loose Change* (2005). These works on 9/11 truth supported the claim of a conspiracy theory and persuaded large numbers of people.

This movement originated with the assertion that the 9/11 was an inside job, that the US government either participated in the attack or did not take measures to prevent it. The belief on the inside job stands on four main indications. The first is the collapse of the buildings of the World Trade Center each on itself in 15 to 20 seconds, not harming any surrounding buildings.

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This fact reinforces the claim that the structures were demolished by explosives as the AE9/11 Truth affirms, and so does Ray Griffin when he mentions the statement of the Responsible for Structural Design of the World Trade Center. He refers to John Skilling's statement after the bombing of 1993¹: "according to his analysis, if one of these buildings were to suffer a strike by a jet plane loaded with jet fuel, 'there would be a horrendous fire and a lot of people would be killed, but the building structure would still be there' " (ch.1, 2008). Richard Gage's claim that there were military explosives which he proved by the findings in the dust and the tons of melted steel is also supported and highly adopted by 9/11 advocates.

The second claim is built on the collapse of the non-hit building 7, and the fact that most of the official reports disregarded it reinforced suspicions. The only answer provided by officials about this building's free fall is fire, to which Griffin counterclaims: "there is no evidence of any raging fire" (2004 27). He claims that all the pictures taken of building 7 demonstrate tiny fires on few windows only. Then he goes further with the controlled demolition possibility, which he proves by quoting Eric Hufschmid (2002): "when building7 collapsed, the interior fell first, and that caused the outside of the building to move inward... The result was a very tiny pile of rubble, with the outside of the building collapsing on top of the pile. This is how conventional demolitions operate" (2004 29).

The other evidence held by The Movement is that neither the sound of the aircraft that hit the Pentagon, nor the hole it left behind indicates that it was hit by Flight 77 which was reported officially to be a Boeing 757.

¹ . On February 26th, 1993, a terrorist bomb exploded in a parking garage of the World Trade Center killing 6 people and injuring more than a thousand.

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To strengthen this notion, Griffin uses eyewitnesses' statements: "Danielle O'Brien, one of the air traffic controllers at Dulles who reported seeing the aircraft at 9:25, said: "The speed, the manoeuvrability, the way that he turned, we all thought in the radar room, all of us experienced air traffic controllers, that that was a military plane."" (2004 35). Other witnesses reported what they have seen either as too small to or too noisy be a Boeing 757.

The final straw in this case is that, unlike the other flights, no one reported receiving any call from Flight 77 except for Theodore Olson, the US Justice Department's Solicitor General who once stated that there might be legal reasons for government officials to give false information (36).

The mystery crashing of Flight 93 after several calls from its passengers claiming that they were to take control over it is a highly relied upon evidence. Besides the missing last minutes from the tape of the cockpit recording, reports of fighter military jets in the area by some eyewitnesses support the claim that the aircraft was shot down. Also, the remaining ashes from the plane were: "reportedly found over a mile away" (50) Griffin adds, which upholds the fact of the use of some missiles.

This raises the question of why, among three other hijacked flights, was this particular one shot down. Griffin concludes: "The evidence from this flight suggests, like the previous ones, active involvement of US military leaders in planning the attacks" (51).

1.4 War on Terror

In 1930, American and British oil companies discovered that Kuwait was loaded with oil. In 1961, Kuwait gained its independence from Britain, and Iraq claimed it as a part of

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its territory. This started a conflict between the two Arab nations which gave US the first opportunity to intervene in the Middle East in Iraq which had the world second reserves of oil.

Likewise, the United States is known for its policy based on abroad activism and military involvement in other countries' affairs over the years. Its intervention in the world is either to gain territorial or economic benefits. Moreover, the presidency of George W. Bush was marked by his National Security Strategy; which is considered a preventive war. It was used to justify military actions in some nations weather these nations held possible threat or not, which made this strategy highly criticized.

At the time of the 9/11 attacks, president George Bush was in Florida, but spent the day being shuttled around the country as a security measure, and at 9:00 he uttered a speech and declared: "Terrorist attacks can shake the foundation of our biggest buildings, but they cannot touch the foundation of America, these acts shatter steel, but they cannot dent the steel of American resolve". In the same speech he referred to the military response by adding: "we will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbour them".

The events of 9/11 were immediately televised nationwide, and the US obtained universal support. As well as the instant response of the United Nations that called for a hasty retribution against terrorism (Resolution 1368 2001), and the NATO which declared that "an attack on any NATO member to be an attack on the entire alliance" (Invocation of Article 5 Confirmed NATO updates).

Concurrently, the Congress passed a joint resolution that allowed President Bush "to use all necessary and appropriate force" (Public Law 107-40 2001). Thus, he declared the War

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On Terrorism to be the main mission of the foreign policy of the United States. This war was supported mainly by Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Canada and South Asia.

For the public, this war was waged to destroy terrorist networks, and to preserve the sovereignty and democracy of the country by protecting its ideologies, freedom and principles. For the critics, the declaration of the War on Terrorism was considered the last straw in the series of evidence that 9/11 was an inside job. It was the excuse that the United States needed to intervene in Afghanistan, the Middle East and elsewhere, wherever seemed to be beneficial for it.

1.5 Post 9/11 America

The events of 9/11 marked a turning point in the history of the United States of America and the whole world. Consequently, airports were the most affected by changes in the post 9/11 era: passengers should be checked at least two hours before they join their flights, restrictions on the stuff they can carry along and even the size of certain carriage, and food and bottled water prohibition.

Airplanes are also more secure after those events, they have been equipped with hardened cockpit doors and hundreds of US Air Marshalls are ordered to board flights to act out in case of any terrorist attack. As a result, the No-Fly list has been enlarged since the last events.

On the other hand, the immigration officials have strengthened the American borders, precisely for Muslims and Arabs. Visas of students, tourists and businessmen were turned down repeatedly.

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Moreover, a series of policies and laws have been upgraded to focus on Middle Easterners and Muslims in general. These initiatives were contradictory to President Bush's speech about protecting the interests of Arabs and Muslims.

Socially, each category of people performed its role vis-à-vis this trauma. Film makers produced films on 9/11, authors published novels, singers and song writers memorialised it in their songs, analysts and critics gave their reports, photographers and reporters presented their documentaries, etc. Conclusively, 9/11 is almost culture that has emerged, with its diverse aspects and impacts that marked America and the world.

1.5.1 The view of Islam after 9/11

Americans linked Islam to Al Qaeda and thereby to terrorism. However, this was not an exclusivity since for long times Muslims and Arabs were stereotypically referred to as savage, cruel, and primitive people. Evidently, America became less friendly with Muslims after 9/11.

Many American Muslims report being physically attacked and suffering outrageous looks or hateful comments. Other anonymous groups burned up Masjids and hundreds of copies of Quran. In the few days following 9/11, 645 hate crimes have been reported by Arabs and South Asians according to the Council on American-Islamic Relations. The CAIR reported that the hatred degree increased abruptly which lead to a higher degree of violence and a marked number of murders (CAIR 2002).

All the while, Muslim communities and Muslim immigrants were under surveillance. They were assailed legally, politically, and socially under the name of National Security, their civil rights were limited and several names appeared on the FBI watch list for no

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reason, which lead to frequent checkups, interrogations and arrests among American Muslim citizens; while other harassments were never reported to the authorities since they feared deportation.

1.5.2 Arab/Muslim Stereotyping

Americans have always had a vague and contorted idea about Arabs. Evenmore, American media have perpetually portrayed them as greedy oil sheikhs and religious extremists, along with the notion of abuse towards their submissive wives and feeble children.

The most common American stereotypes consider all Arabs as primitive nomads, and assume that all Arabs are Muslims; and 9/11 has evolved this stereotype to become: all Muslims are terrorists.

According to Edward Said's *Orientalism*, these Arab stereotypes date back to the first friction between the East and Europe. He relates it to the constant gap between the East and West which depicted this latter as the superior one², and the East as inferior or simply referred to the as the others:

The war of 1967 marked the intensification of representation of Islam as a signifier of "evilness" and "otherness" which has exacerbated in the aftermath of the Iranian revolution... and deploy the assumption that all Arabs are Muslims and Islam is an inherently backward and uncivilised religion. (1978 32)

On the other hand, Hollywood negative images of Arabs, exploited American's fears and anxiety from the 9/11 and translated them into movies with the central figure of Muslim terrorists attacking their homeland.

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1.5.3 The Role of Media in Stereotyping

Media has a huge influence on people, it molds people's opinions and therefore affects their decision making; from the most important to the banal matter, including the way they treat others.

In their daily lives, people are confronted with news papers, radio, television, magazines, internet, etc. So, they trust the media and by repetition, tend to believe what is presented to them as facts.

Given the example of Muslim stereotypes in the post 9/11 America, media did not spare any chance to portray all Muslims as terrorists. It also depicted Islam as a savage and extreme religion, in a way that replicates the US Government's evasive prospect.

That way, media imposes their version of the truth on people in any given subject especially in the matters of religion, race, and appearances; which is generally ruled by governments; people in power have control over the media, so that they can manipulate the public opinion to fit the government policies, to let the public see the world from their governments' perspectives.

1.6 Conclusion

9/11 is a day that made and changed the history of the United States of America. Whether it was an inside or outside job, the lives that have been lost and the families that have been torn apart were the currency of the politics. This chapter attempted to provide a detailed course of the 9/11 events and their possible executers. It also comprised a binary look on life afterwards, including media involvement.

Chapter Two:

Theoretical

Framework of

Trauma

Chapter Two: *Theoretical Framework of Trauma*

2.1 Introduction

Due to the series of dreadful events that drastically affected the world and people's lives, such as the Holocaust, the two World Wars, and the 9/11 events; trauma, the Greek name for wound, became a common concept for the 20th century.

2.2 Trauma Theory

Trauma appears in many contexts and disciplines, which makes it quite difficult to select a precise definition. Besides, it sets the basis for a multitude of literary works in form of: memoirs, documentaries, films, and political analysis in addition to early works on trauma that aim to explore the phenomena.

Basically, according to the Merriam Webster dictionary, trauma is a disordered behavioural state resulting from a severe mental, emotional, or physical injury. "What seems to be suggested by Freud...is that the wound of the mind...is not, like the wound of the body, a simple and healable event, but rather an event that, is experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known" (Caruth 1996 19).

Freud's theoretical explanation of trauma exemplifies an accident where the person who suffered it leaves the scene "apparently unharmed" (1939 84), and only days or weeks later psychical symptoms appear as that person develops a "traumatic neurosis". The traumatic neurosis is the condition of the person who faced a traumatizing event, it starts developing in the individual's from the moment of the incident.

The time between the accidents and the appearance of the symptoms is called the "incubation period" which Freud refers to as "latency", more precisely, the time when the effects of trauma are not apparent.

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Besides, he maintains that between the accident and the latency there is an act of falling. This force of a fall, he argues, lays in the act of leaving the scene unconsciously; this notion represents the core of his theory on trauma.

Hence, the lasting harmful effect of trauma is referred to as post-traumatic stress disorder or as commonly known: PTSD, by the American Psychiatric Association. It is considered the most destructive psychic disorder that provides a direct link between the psyche and external violence.

Furthermore, what triggers trauma is usually an unexpected painful experience that interrupts an ongoing activity, according to Arthur Neal's *National Trauma and Collective Memory* (1993). Further, he states that: "Traumas are frequently of a sufficient magnitude that the individual feels that he or she has become damaged or permanently changed" (3). Therefore, feelings of danger, chaos, and a crisis of meaning alter safety and security due to the massive effect of the experience being faced, it harms the psyche and thereby causes a change in the personality of the traumatised person.

Additionally, Jeffrey C. Alexander, based his "lay trauma theory" on the claim that when people feel their human needs of love, order, and security being sharply undetermined, they will be traumatised in result. This trauma, according to him, can: precede the event as anticipation to what is to come, synchronize with it, or even occur after the event as a reconstruction.

In his book entitled *Trauma: A Social Theory* (2012), Alexander distinguishes responses to trauma into enlightenment thinking and psychoanalytic thinking: the last one, he claims, is not practical: "when bad things happen to good people...they become so frightened that they can actually repress the experience of trauma" (10). According to him, the truth about

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the event is perceived unconsciously, but on the conscious level, memory and actions face the denial defence mechanism.

Moreover, he argues that enlightenment thinking is suitable in response to traumatic events, because it helps mapping the road for programs of actions to be made: “when bad things happen to good people, they become shocked...the responses... are efforts to alter the circumstances that caused them” (8), which eventually brings feelings of trauma under control.

He also claims that events are not traumatic in nature. Instead, trauma is a social response attributed to the event. In the same claim, Cathy Caruth states in *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (1996) that trauma is not the event that is experienced; rather it is the feelings resulting from that event. In that context, she referred to trauma as “the unwitting re-enactment of an event that one cannot simply leave behind” (2), and insisted that: “to be traumatized is to be precisely possessed by an event or an image” (5).

She also asserts that with the first experience of trauma, the traumatized person has no association with it, and thereby has no knowledge of the occurring: “trauma is not locatable in the simple violent or original event” but rather: “returns to haunt the survivor later on” (4).

This links back to Freud’s example of the accident where the victim leaves unharmed which means that he was not conscious during the accident. So, the shocking event is not traumatic itself, but the memory of it that the person holds and revisits repeatedly.

Correspondingly, in Michelle Balaev’s Pierre Janet (2014) based studies she points out that the traumatized individual develops a traumatic memory. Distinguished from ordinary

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memory, it is stored in a different part of the brain to return periodically haunt its holder.

She quotes:

Strictly speaking, then, one who retains a fixed idea of a happening cannot be said to have a ‘memory’ of the happening. It is only for convenience that we speak of it as a ‘traumatic memory’. The subject is often incapable of making with regard to the event the recital which we speak of as memory. (5)

In her studies on trauma, Caruth interrogates: “Is the trauma the encounter with death, or the ongoing experience of having survived it?” (7), and she counterclaims that it is a duality of a crisis of death and a crisis of life: the traumatised suffers from the shock of the event, the fact that they confronted death yet survived it; the event haunts their consciousness as both a survival and a near-death experience.

Trauma changes people in a way that they are always in an inquiry of the truth, in a constant quest of news and information and attempts to distinguish the apparent from the real, the right from the wrong, and to look for what is beyond the explicit according to Neal.

Both previous assertions link back to the Freudian early work with Joseph Breuer: *Studies On Hysteria* (2012), in which they write: “We may reverse the dictum “cessante causa cessat effectus” (when the cause ceases the effect ceases)” (361) thus, their study emphasizes that trauma is defined in relation to the process of remembering, that the remembrance of the event is traumatic and not the event itself.

Moreover, Freud asserts in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1948) that: “we...may regard the common traumatic neurosis as a consequence of an extensive breach being made in the protective shield against stimuli” (31); in this matter he argues that the breach in consciousness is caused mainly by the unpreparedness to react to such a sudden event.

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Consequently, because the consciousness is neither familiar with the state of survival, nor with the full experience of trauma, it forces the individual to face it frequently in forms of flashbacks or dreams in an attempt to grasp knowledge about it.

This affects the unconsciousness too, thereby leading to repetitious dreams about the events: “These dreams are endeavouring the stimulus retrospectively, by developing the anxiety whose omission was the cause of the traumatic neurosis” (32). Not only these dreams bring back memories of the experience, but the person also wakes up feeling the same as the moment of the incident in a state of “reliving the trauma” (64).

Consequently, as Caruth points out, modern trauma theories shed light on the “destructive repetition of the trauma” (63). That is, they consider the repetition of the event re-traumatizing to the person, and can damage the psyche in a way that explains the high rate of suicide among survivors.

2.2.1 From Personal Trauma to Collective Trauma

Collective trauma is the experience of an entire group of people. However, for a trauma to be collective, it ought to uphold a crisis from a social to a cultural level according to Alexander. It is the representation of social pain as a threat to the social sense of identity.

In Neal’s studies (1998) on national trauma, it is concluded that people gather in groups to debate the outcomes of the tragedy and express their pain, sadness and anger. The replay of the experience in the individual’s consciousness and in the share-groups is an attempt to grasp certain comprehensibility from the circumstances around it. For example, following the 9/11 attacks, people needed someone to point fingers at, something to direct their anger towards. So, American Muslims were the most qualified target.

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Indeed, when national trauma evokes collective sorrow, it is nourished by anger. Neal describes: “The ingredients of trauma include some form of bafflement, some level of suffering, and perceptions of evil in human affairs” (6).

He asserts that trauma is composed of the bafflement derived out of the chaos related to the event, which leads to suffering due to changes being imposed, which leads eventually to anger with people realising the existence of some people who do not share the same ethics and moralities with them. Thus, a frequent change of situation develops as Alexander describes: “social life has lost its predictability” (4).

National traumas have been created by “individual and collective reactions to a volcano-like event that shook the foundations of the social world” according to Neal (5). Further, he agrees on the collective trauma being a consequence to a harm that threatens the basic norms of social life.

Ultimately, this latter prevails a sense of communality, a social solidarity based on the awareness of the suffering, he states precisely that “these events are significant primarily because of the large number of people that respond to them” (10).

Hence, the number of injuries, deaths, and damages are not the only factors that make of a tragedy a national trauma. The public opinion’s response to it takes a big share in the polarization of the events. People tend to sympathize with experiences that harm their social values or interrupt their daily lives.

This great emphasis on a certain experience is what it makes it translated into a national trauma. Furthermore, because people admire their sympathy being sympathized, government pronouncements on such tragedies make them “official national traumas” and thus they grasp more attention to it, so, “the trick is to gain reflexivity” (7) as Alexander states.

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Another factor that distinguishes personal trauma of collective trauma is that “The communication patterns associated with the trauma at the individual level differ from the communication patterns associated with trauma at the national level” (13), according to Neal.

In his study he argues that people hesitate to communicate their personal negative experience, and that this uncertain outcome of delivering abominable information was evident long ago in ancient Sparta where the mediator of unsatisfactory news was sometimes sentenced to death.

People tend to keep personal bad news for themselves and thereby might cut themselves of social support. While in contrast, national trauma news are communicated briskly, voluntarily and in a more relieved manner which makes the recovery process easier with the possibility of social support and solidarity.

Otherwise, the opposite may happen, since collective psychological issues require time and low-key circumstances to be fully grasped, and media seizes the opportunity to keep news flowing and amplify the situation.

Whether it is psychoanalysis, psychiatry, sociology or even literature, the gaps of the traumatic experience have not, to this day, been grasped and interpreted. According to Caruth, it has not yet because: “it brings us to the limits of our understanding” (1995 4).

2.3 Overcoming Trauma

People can overcome trauma through a complex healing process over an extended period that goes under various stages. The time of the recovery differs from one person to the other depending on the type of the trauma and the individual himself. Therefore, complete

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recovery from trauma is often impossible, even though people's lives might seem to regain normality.

While Freud divided the process into two stages, Janet defined it in three distinguished stages but the core of both processes is similar. Additionally, Janet pointed out a prominent phase prior the recovery process which he called "the act of adoption" (1929 2). It refers to the person's decision to talk their disturbance, which results from their despair and hope for change.

According to Freud, the first stage is acting out; it suggests that the traumatized person lingers in the past to remember the facts of the experience. Nightmares, hallucinations and flashbacks often bring the person back to the scene whether consciously or unconsciously. In explaining this stage he uses the hypnotic treatments to illustrate the happenings:

In these hypnotic treatments the process of remembering took a very simple form. The patient put himself back into an earlier situation, which he seemed never to confuse with the present one, and gave an account of the mental processes belonging to it, in so far as they had remained normal; he then added to this whatever was able to emerge as a result of transforming the processes that had at the time been unconscious into conscious ones. (1990 148)

He also emphasizes on the resistances, since traumatized people often tend to isolate memories, which triggers repetitions in their behaviour. He states that: "the greater the resistance, the more extensively will acting out (repetition) replace remembering" (151).

So, whenever a person resists remembering he starts repeating unconsciously which gives therapists information about the trauma. Thereby, the last phase of this stage is to direct the person's attention to his core problem, which prepares the ground for the second stage.

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Working through is the second stage in this Freudian process. It starts by giving the patient time to confide his resistances to eventually discover the impulses that he is repressing; then, the person should take time to let things take their course.

However, the therapist or any active listener to the traumatized holds responsibility of unveiling the resistances in the repetitive behaviour, to make them gain certain knowledge of their trauma. As Freud defines: “Descriptively speaking, it is to fill in gaps in memory; dynamically speaking, it is to overcome resistances due to repression” (1990 148).

Nevertheless, Pierre Janet’s first stage of the process is stabilization and symptom reduction. According to him, people with post-traumatic reactions ought to rest and simplify their ways of life first. It could even include hospitalization and hypnosis to lower stress and tension in order to ease the air for memories to start working through.

The modification of traumatic memories is the second stage of this process. It starts first by uncovering the traumatic memory through hypnosis and automatic writing. Then it focuses on neutralizing them by reliving and narrating the trauma, and in some cases he used the substitution method.

Thereby, he substituted the imagery of the memory by another interpretation or even the patient’s emotional reactions, e.g. he successfully changed the imagery of the death of two children of a patient with the blossoming of two flowers.

The final stage of Janet’s process is personality reintegration and rehabilitation. In this stage he focused on the prevention of the relapse, reintegration of the personality and management of the residual symptoms. To overmatch this stage he provided three steps including: education, excitation, and drug treatment.

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2.4 Literary Theory of Trauma

Psychological trauma and memory field includes a large number of sources that all contain works of Sigmund Freud, Joseph Beuer, Morton Prince, Abram Kardiner, and Pierre Janet, who all are names that have their remarkable contribution in trauma studies that set the basis for trauma literary criticism.

Cathy Caruth pioneered in trauma studies in literary criticism in 1996, when she published her book entitled *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. The amount of scholarships elevated in the 1990's to examine the trauma concept in literature remarkably by Cathy Caruth, Shoshana Felman, Geoffrey Hartman, and Kali Tal.

Caruth introduced a theoretical trend with a psychoanalytic post-structural approach that conveys trauma as a fragmentation of the unconscious that brings to light the contradictions between language and experience.

This Lacanian approach, states Michelle Balaev in her *Contemporary Approaches* (2014): "crafts a concept of trauma as a recurring sense of absence that sunders knowledge of the extreme experience" (1), therefore suggesting it damages the psyche in a way that suspends linguistic value rather than referential expression.

Thereby, trauma literature relies basically on the unarticulated part in people's psyche, and the literary trauma theory examines the emotions in texts via psychological theories. Balaev claims that: "The unspeakable void became the dominant concept in criticism for imagining trauma's function in literature" (1), referring to the traumatic speechlessness as the groundwork for trauma literature.

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The concept of trauma has various theories that rise unending debates, which paves the way for psychologists and trauma scholars to work on a basis of diverse definitions of trauma.

The classical model of trauma theory leans on the combination of neurobiological theories and semiotic theories, which is the pairing of mind and memory mechanisms with the system of language organization and symbolization. Whereas the evolved model relies on the: “changing psychological definitions of trauma with the semiotic, rhetorical, and social concerns that are part of the study of trauma in literature and society.” (Balaev 2).

The classical model’s principle is challenged by new critics’ psychological frameworks such as Balaev’s model that generates different conclusions in terms of trauma’s effect on language and perception and society. The definition of trauma from a different psychological perspective provides a new particularity for trauma and memory.

A set of critical practices has been produced due to the evolution in literary trauma theory, which emphasizes on the particular social components and cultural contexts of traumatic experience.

Scholars of this contemporary model use various approaches to represent trauma’s function in literature as more inquisitive and diverse than the first model, because the values attached to the traumatic experience are influenced by factors that change overtime. So, this variation of approaches “broadens the parameters of literary trauma theory by suggesting that extreme experience cultivates multiple responses and values” (Balaev 4).

Another assumption of literary trauma is the dissociative model introduced by Caruth. It is based on the idea that when experiencing a traumatic event, the past is hidden, which produces a dissociative consciousness. She claims that history functions the same as trauma in terms of its inaccessibility when occurring: “for history to be a history of trauma

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means that it is referential precisely to the extent that is not fully perceived as it occurs” (1996 18).

In Caruth’s book *Unclaimed Experiences* (1996) she addresses the relation between the traumatized person, society and its history, all under the dissociative model. This eventually points out that: “one’s own trauma is tied up with the trauma of another” (8). She generates that listening to the wound of another evokes surprise and instant feeling of reliance, which Balaev referred to as “transhistorical trauma” (6). Transhistorical trauma is the trauma being transferred to other people who did not live the traumatizing event; they become traumatized for attaching themselves to the trauma of another.

In this model, Caruth diagnoses trauma as infectious, and refers to it as a disease that can be transmitted to others. It imagines that external events when narrated to a passive subject take a place in the sub consciousness and harm the psyche.

Experiences of traumatic events can be re-experienced by people who share the same ethnicity, gender, race, or nationality with the originally traumatized group, even decades later; which creates a collective memory. For example: the collective memory of slavery, which is trans-historically transmitted to African Americans nowadays makes them also slavery traumatized, because of the memory of their ancestors that haunts them.

However, the pluralistic trauma model introduced by Balaev affirms the traumatic experience’s outrage, but in addition, acknowledges the sources that provide definitions and representations. She confirms that it even: “may emphasize the active potential for meaning in the moment of harm” (6), which contradicts with the classic model that limits the definitions and the damage of trauma.

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The failure of language in representing trauma is also a contradictory point since, unlike the classic model, pluralistic trauma links linguistic relationships to specific time and place rather than declining it.

Therefore, one perspective is never enough to investigate the often contradictory representation of trauma in literature. Texts provide a groundwork for various individual and cultural values in terms of the self and society, which requires a different approach for each case.

2.5 Trauma Fiction

Trauma fiction emphasizes on the particularity of individual trauma and connects it to social aspects and cultural theories. It generally pictures the protagonist(s) in the typically traumatized character but inevitably draws distinct trauma responses, identity and memory forming, along with recovery processes to different characters facing different types of trauma.

It uses the fictional characters to refer a historical traumatic event which millions of people endured. However, it does not necessarily mean that every person in relation to that event has suffered trauma, since the experience is related to cultural values and each individual's personal feelings about it. In that claim, Balaev comments:

Novels demonstrate the ways that an experience disrupts the individual conceptualizations of self and connections to family and community, but the values attributed to the traumatic experience are also shaped by cultural forces created within the world of the novel. (18)

According to her, late modern novels of trauma reveal extreme emotions through the occasional focus on landscapes, silence, and the chaotic flow of thoughts to indicate mental

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confusion towards the experience. This divergence in the plot is meant to let the reader imagine what the character is facing, she refers to it as “narrative omission” (22).

Even though silence is agreed to be the common response to the experience of trauma, in trauma fiction novels it is considered a narrative strategy to indicate the different states of consciousness and confused assumptions.

Trauma fiction in American literature has taken a big turn after the attacks that awakened the Western World, the 9/11 attacks that targeted the World trade center and other monuments. This arose the question of what is to be next for writers of fiction, and indeed a considerable number of textual materials have been published since.

The post 9/11 literary productions contained in majority responses to the trauma and representations and interpretations of it in the United States and worldwide. The early literary works of 9/11 attacks were essays, brief personal reminiscences, memoirs, poetry, and political analysis. These works aimed to portray the event and the emotional responses to it.

However, other belated works endeavoured political matters and the aftermath of the event. Birgit Dawes, in *Ground Zero's History, Memory, and Representation in the American 9/11 Novel*, claims that: “by the end of June 2011, at least 231 novels from around the world are available in print which can be classified as 9/11 novels” (2011 6). She later states that even though these texts swirl around the same historical event, they have a diverse content.

According to Versluys (2009), post 9/11 novels can be classified under four categories: the novel of recuperation, the novel of first-hand witnessing, the great New York novel, and the novel of the outsider, the naming of these categories makes clear which novel goes under which category.

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The most notable works of post 9/11 include Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* (2005), Ian McEwan's *Saturday* (2005), Jay McInerney's *The Good Life* (2005), Claire Messud's *The Emperor's Children* (2006), Lynne Sharon Schwartz's *The Writing On The Wall* (2004), Ken Kalfus's *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country* (2006), and Frederic Beigbeder's *Windows on The World* (2003), and many other works.

Accordingly. The novel to be discussed in this dissertation, *The Submission* (2011) by Amy Waldman could be considered a recuperation novel according to Versluys's categorisation (2009). This novel, as the author describes it, is a "striking portrait of a fractured city striving to make itself whole". It deals with the trauma of 9/11 and the character's PTSD over the years following the event, with a notable focus on different categories of people's psyche.

Stories and narratives of trauma help people in dealing with their personal experiences and in confronting what has been restrained, through expressing traumatic memory; which may serve as a starting point in the healing process, since it opens the reader's imagination via the characters that experience new opportunities in life.

2.6 Conclusion

Psychological trauma has various definition and interpretations as much as it triggers different responses. People's responses to trauma differ upon each person's psyche, thereby differing in the healing process, and the ability to overcome or yield to it. The aim of this chapter was to explore trauma theory through multiple theorists' viewpoints, and its relation to literary text.

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3.1 Introduction

In her novel named *The Submission*, Amy Waldman embarked upon the 9/11 trauma. The novel concentrates on the effect of trauma upon the different parts of the American society. This chapter will analyse some aspects of the novel in the light of literary trauma theory, all centered upon the perception of duality.

3.2 Exploring the Characters

The Submission could be seen as a personification of certain 9/11 archetypes. Each character in the plot is a prototype of a category in the post 9/11 American society.

Initially, representing the face of trauma itself, is Claire Burwell. This female character is a widowed woman whose husband died in the attacks, leaving her with two children to support. She symbolizes the families of the dead, the ones who are directly the most related to the trauma. Thereby, she is representing them in the jury of the memorial selection.

On the other hand, Mohamed Khan, the architect with the winning design. He is representing the category of American Muslims, even though he is not a devoted Muslim and even referred to as an agnostic in the novel (Waldman 28).

Alongside Claire there is Sean Gallagher who represents the families of the dead. He is a New York liberal who lost his brother on the tragic day. Unlike Claire, Sean does not seem logical in his reactions towards the memorial selection.

Next, there is the governor's representative, Paul Rubin. He is also a member of the jury who represents the policy in the novel. He is supposed to be objective, ethical and law abiding.

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Also, representing the minority of illegal immigrants and the American Muslim women, there is Asma Anwar. She is a Bangladeshi young woman, who, like Claire, lost her husband and had a boy to raise by herself. Asma is a surprising character due to her bravery in representing the sound of hope and rebellion, but eventually, she faces a surprisingly tragic end.

Last but not least, representing a tough positioned category is Alyssa Spier. She is an ambitious journalist, who is willing to do anything to climb high in her career ranks. She represents the media, and the huge impact it has in and on people's lives.

3.3 The Trauma Novel

The Submission is filled with occasional focus on landscapes, silence, and the chaotic flow of thoughts. These three ~~aspect~~ aspects reveal extreme emotions in modern trauma novels, according to Michelle Balaev.

Throughout the novel, Waldman includes some long and detailed descriptive paragraphs of certain places. These paragraphs indicate the character's focus on the landscape; for instance, the place of meeting for Claire and Alyssa:

Its walls were mirrored, its tables marble, its espresso feral, its pastry stale. Wrinkled old men played dominoes at one table, the tiles clicking in place of talk. At another, three young men brooded, their eyes never leaving Alyssa and Claire. In posters on the walls, female fighters brandished AK-47s. Alyssa's glance lingered on them for a moment: Albanians were...Muslim. Maybe neutral ground wasn't neutral after all. (159)

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Other examples of the characters' focus on the landscaping are in the first paragraph of page 199 by Claire, the third paragraph of the seventy eighth page by Mo in the MACC's locality, the second paragraph of the one hundred and seventy second page at ROI, etc.

But the one that glares is: "Mo stared out the window. The sun in the gray sky looked like it had been sunk in dirty water" (44), this specific focus on the landscape might refer to Mo's look on his society. The sun sinking in dirty water suggests that the notion of society had lost its purity in his eyes.

The next particularity of a traumatic novel, the chaotic flow of thoughts is exposed in many cases via the characters. The character starts thinking of something and goes unstoppably thinking of the circumstances, causes, consequences, flashbacks, etc.

Two major events in the novel trigger the chaotic flow of thoughts and illustrate it in a distinct way. The first is when the jury found out about Mohamed's name, and the second is at Asma's death when Nasrudin panicked:

He was living in the past and present at once: the white man, he was tall, but everyone seemed tall next to Asma; or was his coat blue; or was there even a white man at all, or was that just Nasrudin's vision of who might be capable of this? He strove to remember that last moment he had seen Asma, but the truth was he had lost sight of her just before the stabbing; he was of no use; then he was in the future now too- whoever had done this was still among them, no one was safe, how could he protect his people without alarming them more? There were so many unfamiliar faces mixed in with the ones he knew; but he had to suspect the ones he knew, too.[...] So much pressure in his head, on his heart. He should have officially reported the threats against her. He should have stopped her from speaking that day. Now he was guilt sick along with his worry. (256)

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Finally, the silence takes a big quota in the events through Mohamed's character. After being asked to withdraw or justify himself, Mo has chosen to remain silent. His silence according to him was a protest to gain his rights like any other American citizen, as he tells his father: "America has to be pushed- it has to be reminded of what it is." (195).

Yet, this silence might as well be caused by the fact that the events traumatized him and raised the conflict of Mo not knowing how to identify himself, as Waldman describes that: "Mo began to put a psychological distance between himself and the Mohammad Khan who was written and talked about" (126). If Mo was confident about his authentic identity, he would have spoken out.

3.4 The Double Sided Trauma

In her novel, Waldman embarked upon the two sides of trauma in the light of the 9/11 events. In such cases, the focus is more on the traumatized victims' families, but she chose to shed light on the other side of the trauma as well.

On one hand, there is Mohamed Khan, who is referred to as "Mo" throughout the novel. He lives in the post 9/11 America that judges all Muslims and sees them as terrorists, since the attackers were radical Muslims. Mo is just a regular American guy who happens to be a Muslim, carrying a Muslim name. Yet, this is all what he is being judged for, and seen as.

This fact is distinctly illustrated in the jury's reaction to the name reveal, and in the Los Angeles airport where he was interrogated. The agents' demand of a proof that he was an architect, followed by several questions of whether he loved his country or would like to do any harm to it, are a clear announcement of racism. It shows that the agents and America did not see anything in Mohamed but his name.

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Also, Paul's interview of Khan after the selection, was clearly directed to question his Muslim identity rather than his actual personality. Paul has shown a similar amount of racism and discrimination towards him by finally asking him to proceed under the name of his boss.

This racist behaviour Mo faced by his native country, and the people he considered as fellow citizens, is not the only trauma he faced. He was doubly traumatized when he realized that alongside his mourning with his country, that was suddenly discriminating him, there was a whole Muslim community looking up to him while he merely identified himself as one of them.

The MACC sought opportunity in Mo's case to speak up to Muslim American's rights, but they were failed by his agnosticism. The Iftar at the Garcie Mansion shows how the Muslim community does not see Mo as the suitable person to represent them, as Tariq addresses him: "You're leading us to a bad place. It's you. Not the terrorists, who've hijacked our religion. At least the terrorists believe. What's your excuse?" (195). Mo's secularism led to his unconscious blasphemies at the hearing, a mistake that costed him the MACC's support.

Overall, Mo ended up being attacked by the MACC and the American public opinion. Both communities rejected him, which made him face a double sided trauma. The case of Mo highlights how American Muslims did not only face the trauma of their country being attacked. But also, having fingers pointed at them for belonging to the religion of the terrorists, and so, being called as.

On the other hand, there is the widow and jury member Claire Burwell. At the first chapter of the novel, she is holding tight to her choice of the Garden, as she sees its healing power and constantly relates it to her dead husband.

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Claire showcases the strength and desire for healing of some families of the victims. The choice of the Garden reflects that, as Waldman describes: “The Garden was an allegory. Like Cal, it insisted that change was not just possible, but certain.” (11); this quote highlights how change and moving forward is essential for going on in life.

However, the other finalist design of the competition; the void, suggests that the memorial serves for remembering the darkness of death and the sadness related to the loss. This design was backed up by Ariana Montagu, an artist who did not lose any family member in the events; which explains the lack of emotional attachment to since the memorial was for a national tragedy, and did not have any personal impact on her. This quarrel in choices reveals the two sides of the traumatized American people since sets the limitation of the memorial meaning for the directly affected people, and people who are not directly linked to it.

Further, as if her husband’s death was not traumatizing enough, Claire had to face the trauma of being attacked by public opinion and other victims’ families for her support of the enemy’s design. Those attacks revealed these people’s trauma of having the memorial designed by a person from the enemies’ side. The whole plot suggests that the two sides of the trauma have, in turn, two sides.

3.5 The Duality

Each situation stated in the novel is exposed in a delicate atmosphere with a duality of choice; which gives the impression that the whole novel orbits around the dualistic trauma caused by the difficulty of decision making.

First and foremost, the committee of the memorial selection has narrowed the options to two. Which created a slight division between whom supports what design. The Garden evokes meanings of life renewal and the ability to survive; the steel trees might also refer

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to man's ability to reproduce life, or to hold still and not be affected by winter worms or summer heat; thereby suggesting a theme of healing. Whereas the Void suggests emptiness and endless darkness and sorrow.

After the selection of the garden, at the name reveal, Claire has chosen to keep supporting her choice regardless of who the architect might be, unlike the other jurors. That decision got the public opinion and the victims' families to attack her, which placed her in a very tough, yet extremely sensitive position. She had to choose whether to resign to the public's will and withdraw, or hold still to her principles and what seems logical to her.

Claire was attacked, and Mo did not give any explanation. He had shown no gratitude for her support since he thought it was the right thing she was doing, and it was no extraordinary thing for him. This pressure made her lack reasons or the need to keep supporting him.

On the other hand, Paul who seems to have the objective position through the novel is also faced by a duality of choice. For his position as a politician representing the government, both giving Mo his rights and answering to people's will were the politically correct decisions. But, one could not go without affecting either parts of the community. So, he eventually suggested to Mo some unethical act to appear ethical.

Also, with the death of his brother, Sean found himself still living under his shadow. Between keeping living under his dead brother's shadow or having a name for his own, Sean chose the way of getting social respect by manipulating public anger. He did not stop objectifying Mo, his design, and the entire Muslim community, and even manipulated his family into following him.

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Besides, with the rising events, Asma found herself harassed by the duality of racism and sexism. She is seen as a savage terrorist by Americans for her Muslim identity. However, she is also receiving death threats from her community that did not accept her strength and bravery in taking a stand.

3.5.1 The Betrayal

This novel is the fictitious way of revealing the reality of people's mindsets regarding 9/11. Since every character is facing at least two traumatic incidents, each one of them is both guilty and a victim of betrayal.

The 9/11 events triggered the radical cultural assumptions about Muslims. Although Mo won the competition fair and square, people asked him to withdraw. His Muslim name seemed to block people from seeing what is beyond it, or even consider the design. The fact that it is easier to fear than to trust when in trauma, had the feelings of hatred and resentment to seize American minds.

Alongside the events, even though the MACC supported Mo from the beginning, they ended up standing against him for his blasphemies. Mo wants to stand up for his rights as an American by choosing not to explain, to obtain his rights like any other American citizen. Still, he ends up betraying his country and the MACC for not giving any explanation that might seize the public rage.

In a similarly hard position, there is Claire. Her support for Mo's design seemed betraying for the families of the victims and most of the society. She was considered as the enemy supporter and even a terrorist. Eventually, under the pressure of the public and media she ended up giving on Mo. For Claire, whichever side she picked betrayed either her society, Mohamed Khan, or even herself.

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In the same token, the Bangladeshi widow Asma Anwar was betrayed by the American society, Bangladeshi community, and Alyssa Spier. After the speech she delivered, some claimed her as a national and feminist hero, yet, still some people just could not let go of racism; as she started getting threats for murder.

Notwithstanding, Spier's leaked information about her illegal status had her face deportation. Even worse, it endangered other illegal Bangladeshi people who started blaming Asma, thereby leading to her tragic death.

Eventually, Asma never got what she wanted for Mo's justice, her American born Muslim son, and not even her dream of an opportunity as the author describes it: "clinging to America. To the possibilities it dangled, was her own small war of liberation, if a lonelier one" (147), when the country she came to rejected her.

By keeping sight on the character's lives, it seems that being betrayed by one's own society, the one being identified with, is the worst kind of betrayals. However, what could have the worst consequences is the betrayal of one's own self, since the regret never dies.

3.5.2 The Irony

When reading through *The Submission*, irony seems to have its big share in the plot, since many situations appear to have some ironical circumstances.

First and foremost, while America was facing its peak in Islamophobic times after 9/11, the name Mohamed Khan popped up, in a competition to memorialize the victims of those events.

Even more, people first came to America to escape religious persecution and ended up harassing Khan for his religion. They attacked him for his Muslim name while he did not

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even identify himself as a Muslim. Thus, even though America is a melting pot; it does not truly accept cultural differences.

Next, while people kept judging Mo for his Muslim name, Muslims called him ignorant in the matters of religion. His ignorance caused him a blasphemy at the hearing, which enraged the Muslim community. Ultimately, American people and the MACC ended up standing together against him.

On the other hand, Alyssa Spier has the most repelling role in the novel. Yet, in spite of her sneaky and malicious character, she should be thanked for breaking up the news about the winning design. Probably, if the news were not out for the public, the results would have been manipulated and the other design would have been declared winner of the competition.

Last but not least, Asma Anwar is living an ironical situation herself. Although she was free in America, she was still imprisoned by culture in her Bangladeshi community. More importantly, she became an icon after her speech at the memorial hearing, yet, it was her popularity that revealed her illegal status and led to her death.

Ultimately, the author's use of irony in the novel of this specific category is to showcase the controversies in America; whether in people themselves, the government, or the country as a whole.

3.6 The Role of Media

Media is considered the government's tool in controlling public opinion, for its huge share in people's lives since it is their eyes and ears on the world surrounding them.

In *The Submission*, Alyssa Spier is representing media. Although she leaked the information about the winning Muslim architect and started the whole conflict, she takes

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credit for that because there would probably be some other ways and Mohamed Khan's name would have never showed up.

This fact shows how media gives the truth, but in questionable ways. Spier exaggerated and twisted words to start a conflict that would spark the public's interest in Mohamed Khan's case.

Also, the way that she precisely picked what information to publish about Mo and about Asma's status, clearly shows how media takes what they want out of a situation to control public opinion. This way, media can make people side up to whatever situation they choose to bring into light.

Not to mention that Claire broke down under the pressure and twisted ways of Alyssa. Claire was the strongest in the jury, given the fact that she was an upper-middle class woman who spent time in the Ivy League to become a lawyer, which requires a lot of strength. This shows how media can shake people's faith and sense of logic no matter their status.

By the same token, Lou Sarge's radio show elucidates how he used his promptitude to play with words in order to confuse his guests and the audience. This procedure is clarified throughout his interview of Khan when he asks:

“So what did you feel, really feel, the day of the attack?”

“I felt devastated, like all of us. Like a hole had been blasted in me.”

“That sounds pretty bad,” Sarge said. “It must have been like finding out
your brother is the Unabomber.”

“No, that's not what i meant.”

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“And so you came up with this memorial, which has attracted a fair bit of controversy. Tell me, where’d you get the idea?” (188)

By the same manner he kept juggling with words and jump up right next to other questions to not let any time for Mo to respond persuasively.

On the other hand, the documentary realized by Claire’s children refers to the other side of media. It is a statement that not all media is manipulative and misleading, given the fact that the author herself is a journalist. Nevertheless, in Claire’s case it had a healing function, since it showed her the garden she dreamed of with her husband’s name on it.

3.7 “What’s In a Name? Nothing, Everything.”

The name Mohamed represents Islam, since it is the name of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him). It is directly linked to religion more than any other Muslim name, and is largely used across the globe.

Waldman specifically chose this name for her character to play on two extremities; the most religious name to the most non-religious person. Mohamed is not the person his name might suggest, he is a secular person. Yet, while some people freaked out at hearing the name, others were not bothered.

At one point, Paul, the objective person of the jury, says: “What’s in a name? Nothing, everything”(66). This shows the controversy that for some people, Mohamed’s name did not have an impact on their choice of the garden; whereas for others, it changed their perspective towards the design.

When some people saw that building the memorial by a Muslim was humiliating to the victims, others have seen it as an opportunity to show that Muslims were also traumatized by 9/11, and felt sad for their country, no less than any other American.

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Otherwise, the name Mohamed did not affect Claire's choice of the garden, since she admired the architecture and attached herself emotionally to it to the extent that it did not matter who the architect was.

On the contrary, for the other members of the jury, it was a garden suitable as a memorial, until the name Mohamed appeared and turned it into a martyr's paradise. In this case, people let their anti-Muslim ignorance be the judge; the name was the final judge in their decision.

The other example of a name meaning everything, are the cases of Paul and Asma's son. For Paul's, it opened opportunities to him and gave him some advantages in his social life; whereas for Asma's son, it took away his chance of living in America, and his own mother.

The name was nothing for Claire who supported the design, and for Mohamed who lived a secular life up until the competition; whereas it was everything in the case of the other jury members and the public, which blinded them from the real intent of the memorial.

3.8 Submission

Submission by a definition of the Google dictionary is the action of accepting or yielding to a superior force or to the will or authority of another person, or the action of presenting a proposal, application, or other document for consideration or judgement.

By reading the first few pages of the novel, it might appear to the reader that the title refers to Mohamed Khan's submission to the competition, since it started the whole conflict. But after reading into the core of the plot and the final chapter, it gets clear that the title could have more than one interpretation.

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First, after the rage of people at Mohamed Khan's winning, one can assume that people submitted to their ignorance about Islam and Muslims. They let their anti-Muslim assumptions control their decisions and emotions.

Next, there is Claire. After fighting hard for the garden, she finally submits to people's will under the pressure of the victim's families and media, and asks Mohamed to withdraw.

The title *The Submission* might also refer to Islam, since it means the total surrendering of one's self to God. Evenmore, the whole plot keeps pointing out American Muslims' issues.

Also, from an American perspective, Mo eventually submitted to his Muslim identity, his religion, his God. Other points of view might interpret it as finding his true self, away from the attachments of his controlling society.

Mo's suffering makes him more patriotic, his fasting makes him more related to Islam to the extent that he started identifying himself with the Muslim community; he unconsciously thought of the guests at the Iftar as his moderate Muslims (197). Further, the scene of him breaking his fast with orange juice (211) portrays his embracement of his mingle of his American and Muslim identity.

Even more, Mohamed started the conflict by submitting to the competition of a memorial, and ended up submitting to his fate. This way, the submission started the conflict, but his submission to his true self ended it.

On the whole, in this novel, every character lives a complete change in their mindsets and end up submitting to something that ends their traumatic experiences.

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3.9 Conclusion

In the middle of the crisis, when people are facing trauma, they seem to lose sense of identity, or they go on an identity quest. Given the example of Mo, who is clearly shaken by the events that pushed him to search for his identity. Also Claire, who is on one hand supporting Mo, then gives up while she is being taken back and forth between her love for her dead husband and her ex-boyfriend. And even Alyssa Spier who seems to hold the strongest position, is only trying to take a stand in media world. This crisis highlights how the America nation was uncertain of its situation, not sure of the enemy's identity, or what moves to make. In sum, it is the case of people searching for their identities in a country that was searching for its own.

General Conclusion

General conclusion

Amy Waldman is an American journalist; she opted for a fictitious work that reflects the reality for a start in novel writing world. *The Submission* provides a look on the post 9/11 America. It insists to cover all the categories of American people in the aftermath of those tragic events several years after.

Moreover, her novel explores the traumatic experience of the families of the 9/11 victims, American people in general, and the Muslim American community. She showcases each category through a character's distinct experience, response, and process of healing from the trauma.

The novel is about a memorial designing competition for the 9/11. The winner is blindly chosen through the design, but when the name revealed says Mohamed Khan, it starts a conflict and a division among the jury of the selection, and the American society as a whole.

This research has studied the traumatic experience as it is represented in *The Submission*; through different perspectives on trauma theory and an applied Freudian psychoanalysis on the characters. It has explored the effect of trauma on the characters' psyche, which in turn affected their decision making. It attempted to study the literary text in its historical context, on a traumatic background.

It sought to explore the renewed trauma in the novel. It also sought to inspect the most traumatized of the characters and the effect on trauma on them; depending on their position and circumstances. In order to answer these inquiries, it has been hypothesized that the renewed trauma was people's imagery of who they referred to as the enemy having access

to the memorializing symbol of the trauma they caused. It also has been assumed that the winning Muslim and his supporters, Muslims or not, were the most traumatized; while the effect of trauma differs from a character to another.

Therefore, the first chapter dealt with a historical background of the 9/11 events. It included the events' process and executors as revealed by the American government in the Commission Report, as well as the versions adopted by conspiracists who believe in a manipulative plan. Next to the conspiracy concept, it provided a brief demonstration about the War on Terror.

It also involved a view on the post 9/11 America. It included the views of Islam and Muslim in the aftermath, Arab and Muslim stereotyping, and the role of media in the whole process.

The second chapter consisted of a theoretical framework of trauma theory. It contained definitions, aspects, and theories of trauma through different perspectives. It explored its psychological impact and features on the individuals. It also provided a distinction between individual and collective or national trauma followed by an outline of the healing process. Finally, it provided a glimpse on trauma literature, and ended up with a focus on trauma fiction and its characteristics.

The last chapter was devoted to an analysis of the novel. It analysed the character's psychological experiences and behaviours in dealing with the trauma. It also proposed some hints on certain motifs presented in the novel in relation to the concept of trauma and its psychological features.

The analysis of the plot and characters revealed that while they were still suffering from the trauma of 9/11, the characters were doubly traumatised when the undesirable result of

the memorial competition came out. It denoted that the American society was intolerant in the matters of Muslim citizens via the perspective of liberal New Yorkers.

It has also shown that the families of the victims and the winning American Muslim architect were the most affected by the trauma. Since they are directly linked and concerned with the memorial, the families faced a conflict from either sides of society whether supporting or opposing the memorial. Ultimately, so was Mohamed Khan since the events succeeding the memorial made him feel outcast in his own country.

The study has also come to conclude that traumatized people often face an identity crisis, since the trauma rises new conflicts that point out the gaps in the traumatic memory and thereby the personality. The notion of betrayal has also come out through the analysis; it was also double sided since each character turned up as guilty and a victim of betrayal in a way.

Further, it has been discovered that eventually, the whole traumatic experience is enlightening, whereas by discovering new aspects in one's personality, or bringing to light the innate ability of a person to overcome and conquer what first seemed undefeatable. It has shown that the final outcome of a trauma was a complete change in one's mindset, which results in finding its authentic identity.

However, similarly to any research process, this dissertation has been subject to some limitations. The first was the access to certain books and documents that were neither available in libraries nor in online versions. The second major limitation was the cultural bias, since the novel is based on cultural differences. One acknowledges that occasionally, the focus was more on the Muslim case.

Finally, there were some gaps in this work that would help in further research. An in-depth objective analysis of people's life in the post 9/11 America would be of a more

benefit. A more developed trauma theory focusing on trans-historical trauma, and a comparative research of worldwide life before and after 9/11 to measure American impact on the world would also be propitious.

Appendixes

Appendix A: Biography

Amy Waldman was born on May 21, 1969. She is an American journalist and author who worked for the New York Times for eight years. Waldman was a co-chief of the South Asia bureau for three years, where she reported in India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iran. She also has reported in Muslim communities in Great Britain, the former Soviet Union and other countries with Muslim minorities. She also was a national correspondent for the Atlantic, and has been a fellow at the American Academy in Berlin and the Radcliff Institute for Advanced Study. Her first novel, *The submission*, was published in 2011. It was awarded as Esquire's book of the year, New York Times notable book for 2011, Washington Post notable fiction book, and Amazon's best books of the month in August, 2011. The novel embodies the aftermath of 9/11, media storm, and political flap in a fictitious framework.

Appendix B: Plot Summary

Two years of the disastrous terrorist attack, a jury gathers trying to choose a memorial for the 9/11 victims. It encompasses a New York artist, an art curator, a retired investment banker as a chairman, a representative of the governor, etc, and the only person who lost a family member in the attacks Claire Burwell.

At first, Claire is trying to convince her fellow jurors to select the Garden, while Ariana, the artist, is backing the Void. The two finalist designs get into a standstill rivalry, but eventually the Garden wins. At the occasion, Paul, the chairman delivers an affectionate speech before opening the envelop with the winner's name which turns out to be "Mohamed Khan".

All in a state of total shock, the jurors discuss the dilemma they encountered: a Muslim winning the memorial designing contest. At the end of the day the chairman dismisses them because they did not make any decision, reminding them to keep the confidentiality of the results.

Further, Mohamed Khan, the architect at ROI firm had no relation with Islam except for his name. He is not a practicing Muslim and even refers to himself as agnostic, for he had no religious education as a child.

The day after the selection, Paul, the chairman, reads a report on Khan and ends up finding that there was nothing suspicious about him, even the picture attached shows Khan as a "regular" man more than a successful architect. Despite that, Paul keeps thinking of ways to let the jury consider picking up another designer.

Early in the next morning, an article published by Alyssa Spier highlights that a Muslim won the competition. Meanwhile, Sean Gallaher, the handyman who lost his brother in the

terrorist attack, is heading a meeting of the Memorial Support Committee to act against a Muslim designing the memorial. In those circumstances, Spier was the most beneficial as she reached the peak of her career with the propaganda she launched by that article. Later on, Paul meets Khan to tell him that the jury's decision was not final which rises an argument between the two that goes unresolved and both get out of the restaurant in separate ways.

On the other side of the city, Asma Anwar lives with her landlords after her husband died in the attacks. She is worried about her son's future because they lived illegally but is relieved after her community chief along with a Muslim lawyer help her get a compensation of more than 1million dollars. One day, Asma hears on the radio that names of illegals should not be enlisted in the memorial, but then the Mayor reassures people by saying that names of all the victims should be included whether legal or not.

Thereupon, the Muslim American Coordinating Council gathers to decide whether to support Khan or not since he did not seem to be solicitous for the Islamic case. Among the council members is the lawyer who helped Asma get her compensation money, Laila Fathi, who becomes Khan's personal spokesperson. Meanwhile, the governor and his representative deliver a speech to tell people that the jury's decision was not final and that the crowds' opinion weighs too. The representative and jury member Sean Gallaher seizes the moment to accuse Claire of not representing the victims' families appropriately, to which she responses by defending the Garden design and its suitability as a memorial.

Later on, Khan is revealed as the winner of the competition by the MACC at a press conference.

A few days after, Paul hosts a small reception for the official announcement of competition winner, which assembled no one other than the jury and Khan which frustrated

him. At the reception Khan is left with Claire most of the time as she was the only one to back him while he does not show any gratitude to her support, because he thinks it is something conventional. Meanwhile, critics are regarding the Garden design, rather than the designer, as Islamic. Some start referring to it as a “martyrs’ paradise” in a comparison to Islamic gardens worldwide, which rages fury among people who consider it as an affront to them and an encouragement to terrorists.

After those uprisings, Khan starts receiving threats and Claire is accused of backing the enemy. Newspapers, blogs, and magazines misrepresent Khan as the typical savage bearded Muslim, which makes him think over the differences in the imaginary personality presented by media and himself. To Paul, withdrawing was the best decision Khan would make, so he starts with his jury a series of conditions and changes that he knows Khan would not accept and thereby give up; but that made Khan even more steady in his position.

Paul organised a public hearing for the memorial, for Khan, where he delivers a speech to defend his design, along with other family members of the victims who all try to clear up their point of view. Unexpectedly, Asma rises up her hand to speak out about her late husband. In her speech translated by her community chief, she supports the Garden idea because it would be the only thing to hold her husband’s name. She receives threats for the action she took and drags the government’s attention to her illegal status. At the day of her departure, Asma walks through a huge crowd: police officers, news reporters and curious people where she gets stabbed and dies.

After the death of Asma, Claire and Khan meet to clear up things around the fuss, but Khan remains unresponsive. This meeting drives Claire to agree with the MACC on a conference to ask Khan to withdraw.

Finally, Khan leaves his country, where he starts a career in the Middle East, another jury gathers to choose among other designs, to eventually build a garden of flags as a memorial.

Years after, Khan is interviewed by two people who turn out to be Claire's children. They are making a documentary about the memorial, which is ended up by a demonstration of the garden. They show the documentary to their mother; the garden was finally built, not in America, and Claire's son used some stones to write his father's name.

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