Exploring traumatized soldiers: the intersection of War, theatre, and British Society in Mark Ravenhill's Shoot/Get Treasure/Repeat

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Abstract
This research paper titled "Exploring Traumatized Soldiers: The Intersection of War, Theater, and British Society in Mark Ravenhill's Shoot/Get Treasure/Repeat" examines the impact of the Iraq War on British soldiers, their families, and society as a whole. Utilizing theoretical frameworks from psychology, specifically the works of Sigmund Freud and Cathy Caruth, the study analyzes the concept of trauma within the context of war. By focusing on Mark Ravenhill's play Shoot/Get Treasure/Repeat, the research investigates how the play portrays the experiences of British soldiers affected by the 2003 invasion of Iraq and the subsequent challenges faced by the British people. Through the analysis, the study aims to uncover the psychological and emotional consequences of war trauma on individuals and its broader societal implications. The utilization of psychological perspectives provides a deeper understanding of the complexities of war trauma. Drawing on Freud's and Caruth's theories, the research explores the lasting effects of trauma on soldiers and its intersection with theater and British society. By examining the portrayal of traumatized soldiers in Shoot/Get Treasure/Repeat and analyzing the psychological dimensions of trauma, this study offers valuable insights into the interplay between war, theater, and British society. It contributes to a broader understanding of the long-term impact of war on individuals and communities, emphasizing the role of theater in addressing and representing collective trauma. In conclusion, this research paper provides a significant exploration of the experiences of traumatized soldiers, the effects of war on British society, and the capacity of theater to engage with and depict collective trauma.

Keywords: Traumatized soldiers, War trauma, Collective trauma, Iraq War, *Shoot/Get Treasure/Repeat*

Introduction

The portrayal of a battle-scarred soldier onstage dates back to at least *Ajax* and *Philoctetes*. Sophocles wrote both plays, set in the same period 2,500 years ago, about troubled warriors. After the events of the Trojan War, Ajax's protagonist, the titular warrior, is enraged because he did not inherit Achilles' armour. The gods prevent him from killing his generals, so he blows up all the Greek loot and kills himself. The hero of *Philoctetes* is a Greek warrior who, after being bitten by a snake during the Trojan War, is banished to a deserted island, where he finds himself in conflict with both the gods and mortals (Binus, 2014, p. 32). The psychological and physical consequences of war are a recurring theme in drama, dating back even before the inception of the art form. Shakespeare's plays Coriolanus and Macbeth, along with more recent works like Sean O'Casey's *The Silver Tassie*, Berthold Brecht's *Schweik in the Second World War*, and John Arden's *Sergeant Musgrave's Dance*, all explore the impact of war on individuals and communities in similar ways. These dramatic works, simply by focusing on war, demonstrate that frontline soldiers are particularly susceptible to the mental trauma caused by warfare. Since the Iraq War in 2003, the intersection of social class and war trauma has become a contentious issue. In 2009, Tom Sutcliffe praised the theater for presenting relevant war narratives, suggesting that those seeking a portrayal of contemporary British life should consider attending a live performance instead of relying solely on television (Wierzoch, 2020, p. 115). At the moment, financial potential and current urgency propelled conflict to the forefront. However, the performative more generally links theater and war. According to Suman Gupta, in her book *Imagining Iraq*, in the context of a war zone, the environment becomes akin to a theatrical stage, where individuals who find themselves there undergo a shift in identity, becoming self-aware performers detached from their ordinary lives and thrust into an illogical and surreal setting. The dislocations of war may be effectively depicted and communicated under those circumstances, even if the conflict is distant or past, because the theater stage and performers materialize and experience, momentarily removing spectators from their ordinary lives and actual selves (Gupta, 2011, p. 96).

Julia Boll suggests that the use of phrases such as "theatre of war," "players" or "actors" involved in a conflict, and the deliberate display of political power through the public exhibition of violence all highlight the correlation between war and theater. The word "theatron" alludes to a venue for watching (2013, p. 21). Numerous strategies are available in contemporary British literature to deal with how recent conflict and the cultural home environment interact in fictitious dramatic stories. As a reaction to the anarchic climate of the 20th and 21st centuries, contemporary British theatre is replete with war narratives and the resulting condition of trauma. The modern theatre has seen performances representing the personal and societal traumas of war-torn societies, in addition to a wide variety of plays depicting the negative impact of war on returning troops (Edgar, 2007, p. 11). The characters in these plays are often of lower ranks, and the plays focus on their relationships with friends and family back at home. Private military contractors, sometimes known as "soldiers for hire," are one example of a variant of this theme (Sutcliffe, 2009, p. 6). The abundance of dramatic narratives centred around soldiers reflects the preoccupation of contemporary theater with exploring the effects of Britain's recent wars on the home front. In numerous plays, the soldier is portrayed not as an active combatant, but as someone who has returned from war and struggles with the repercussions of their experiences on their post-war life. The returning soldier symbolizes the exchange that occurs between the realms of home and war, highlighting the established boundaries of belonging while also challenging them by crossing over and

raising questions about their validity (Frank, 2012, p. 220).

This study looks into the concept of traumatized soldiers, the setting in which these soldiers experienced the conflict, and, in particular, the accounts of difficult trips made because of the difficult circumstances in Iraq. Bringing to light the pain-filled lives of individuals is the most effective way to depict this collective trauma. *Shoot/Get Treasure/Repeat* by Mark Ravenhill is an example of how the British soldiers are troubled by the incidents of the 2003 invasion of Iraq and the resulting hardships for the British people as a result of these problems. Ravenhill's *Shoot/Get Treasure/Repeat* was chosen for this study since the Iraq War primarily affects the situations and people in play. The conflict, a significant variable under research in this study, is the primary cause of the majority of the occurrences. Additionally, the primary characters exhibit symptoms of traumatized people, representing and having an impact on many British civilians experiencing the trauma of war in their nation. Thus, Ravenhill's *Shoot/Get Treasure/Repeat* was chosen for this study after careful reading using a criterion of whether or not they address war trauma and its impact on British society. The study of the text is done while keeping in mind a model for dealing with trauma that aims to go past the overwhelming occurrences. This method entails acknowledging and changing the legacy of trauma while attempting to move past its crippling consequences. Thus, the study focuses on how the characters deal with the traumatic events that have left them permanently changed. Although the events depicted in the text are by no means the playwright's historical accounts, they nonetheless serve as significant public forums because they foster readers' empathy by showing how the war affected survivors, fulfilling the moral obligation to preserve the lost and frequently disavowed moments of history. Follow the soldiers and events to the front and back. The analysis will rely on the psychological study of trauma in terms of Sigmund Freud and Cathy Caruth.

Trauma and Hysteria in Mark Ravenhill's *Shoot Get/Treasure/Repeat*

Shoot Get/Treasure/Repeat by Mark Ravenhill is a compilation of 18 brief play segments that premiered at the 2007 Edinburgh Fringe Festival. It serves as a fragmented reaction to the events of 9/11, particularly focusing on the Iraq War. Throughout the collection, recurring portrayals of anxious and outraged middle-class individuals, wounded soldiers, instances of torture, governmental misconduct, and media manipulation establish connections between the plays. These recurring patterns and themes showcase Ravenhill's understanding of the contemporary complexities associated with the 'War on Terror.'. In terms of Laurence C.N. Cotterell (p. 105), one of the prominent aspects of the plays is their incorporation of Baudrillard's critique of the reaction to the 9/11 attacks, which primarily operates on a subconscious level. Baudrillard argued that the attacks were indicative of a massive post-traumatic response, both to the event itself and to the captivating allure it holds (Baudrillard, 2002, p. 12).

Trauma and postcolonial ethnicities resulted in distinctive differences between the West and the colonized minorities all over the world. Post-colonialism had extended to include all literary discourses that indict the defects of colonialism over the colonized nations. Literary writers attempted to decolonize the dominant colonial practices. They exposed the atrocities of the colonizers; and predominantly, their negative influence over the indigenous culture since such atrocities result in severe psychic trauma. This is because colonialism inflicts negative treatment on the colonized people. It puts them in an inferior social position. Such a position provokes the colonized people. The result is that they try to resist the colonizers to establish their own national identity. This means that the colonized nations' psyche is

tremendously influenced. The colonized people's psyche gets affected and adapted to the colonizers' colonial visions. Therefore, they become obsessed with liberty as a way of rejecting colonialism. The colonizers' aim, in this context, is to trigger violent actions against the colonized people; and trauma becomes a decisive phenomenon of postcolonial events. According to Cathy Caruth's perspective, trauma cannot be pinpointed solely to a single violent or initial event in an individual's past. Instead, it lies in the manner in which its inherently unassimilated nature the way it was not fully understood initially reemerges to haunt the survivor at a later time ((Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History, 2016, p. 4). The first play in *Shoot Get/Treasure/Repeat* is *Women of Troy*. The play features a chorus of women who actively seek to uncover the reason behind the terrorists' bombings in their city. Such bombardment is an indication of violet events that result in the characters' traumatic experience:

> We all …All of us: why do you bomb us?
>
> You see. We are the good people. Just look at us
>
> Take a look at us. Take a look at us.
>
> Gathered here today. And what do you see?
>
> You see the good people (2008, p. 7).

These violent events reflect the genuine factors of trauma within postcolonial contexts. Traumatic postcolonial factors are various, such as persecution, exploitation, slavery, and oppression. There are many key problems approached by postcolonial critiques concerning physical trauma. Yet, for this research, displacement and mimicry are very critical. The former relates to the type of immigration, whether forced or voluntary, caused by the colonizers to persecute the colonized minorities. The latter refers to the way the colonized people imitate and follow the colonizers' social and cultural ways of life. They are sometimes tackled by discussing other critical implications in postcolonial literary texts. This is the interdisciplinary nature of post-colonialism, that is, it incorporates other critical approaches to analyze a specific work of literature. In this respect, psychic trauma is the interdisciplinary side of post-colonialism. Caruth, consequently, ascribes this traumatic experience to bitter reality that makes the characters feel wounded by postcolonial truth: "Trauma seems to be much more than a pathology, or the simple illness of a wounded psyche: it is always the story of a wound that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available" (Caruth, Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History, 2016, p. 4). In *Women of Troy*, the truth of the devastating war is the major impetus of the characters' trauma. Their actions imply a lack of awareness regarding the ongoing conflicts in Iraq, Palestine, and Afghanistan:

> Me. Every morning I read the paper. I read about the . . .
>
> There is suffering in the world. There is injustice. Food is short. This morning a soldier was killed. His head was blown off. I am moved about that. I care. As any good person would.
>
> And yet you – (2008, p. 7).
>
> Soldier: I promise you that gun and tank and this flaming sword will roam the globe until everywhere is filled with the goodness of the good people. There will be good everywhere. And then, every day, peace will be war. Keeping the peace with the gun. It is my destiny (2008, p. 17).

In this sense, the blatant indicators of trauma span the time since the early critical arguments of Caruth. She emancipates the major critical insights about the human psyche and its work. He divided the human

mind into different psychic faculties. Buy the most noticeable feature of his division is the discrepancy between the conscious and the unconscious minds. These psychic faculties determine and shape the human personality and psychic maturity. Certain principles must exist to regulate the conventional formation of both the conscious and unconscious aspects of the mind. She renders each mind with some critical concepts that formulate the ultimate shape of the human psyche at work. She presents different and various argumentative concepts in the course of his critical observations. She depended on the works of some previous literary authors to come up with new and novel ideas about trauma and its pertinent concepts.

During her discussion of trauma, Caruth comes up with logical interpretations of the defects of the human psyche and the possibility of healing them. The most influential critical arguments focus on the internal mechanism of the mind and how they are affected by postcolonial events. On that account, she puts forth many concepts to define human traumatic problems and the way they might be cured. In *Unclaimed Experience* (2016), she explicates the details of a traumatic experience by dint of negative truth recognized by people who express it through their language and actions: "This truth, in its delayed appearance and its belated address, cannot be linked only to what is known, but also to what remains unknown in our very actions and our language" (2016, p. 4). In the second play, *Intolerance*, traumatic experience relates to the main character in the plot. The character is called Helen and she is a middle-class woman who devotes herself to breakfast and living a healthy lifestyle to get alleviated from psychic trauma triggered by the violet bombardment and war surrounding her:

There are bombs and wars and...

They only upset you really and what can you do?

If I'm going to be blown up – so be it.

As long as I'm in the centre of the blast (2008, p. 19).

In her city, there is war, but she pretends that everything is all right. Yet, her conscious mind begins to develop trauma as she is gradually affected by violent reality. According to Caruth, the conscious mind involves those actions and behaviors controlled by people who suffer from violence. People could control their behaviors deliberately. In contrast, the subconscious mind comprises uncontrolled behaviors. People repress or inhibit some experiences that appear in their behaviors. Some tragic or unfavorable experiences disturb people. Therefore, they begin to repress the violent experiences in the unconscious mind. Over time, the repressed feelings and experiences come out of the unconscious mind resulting in psychic disorders, i.e. trauma.

Psychic disorders are the authentic influential manifestations of the unconscious mind upon people's traumatic behaviors. Among these disorders are trauma and neurosis. Trauma refers to certain incidents that occur tragically and leave a negative influence on the unconscious psyche. Traumatic people keep remembering these incidents, which later on, become neurosis. Such neurosis appears as an abnormal psychic disorder. The symptoms of trauma could be sadness, depression, lethargy, bulimia, anxiety and so forth. Sigmund Freud, in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1922), ascribes neurotic trauma to disastrous events in the individuals' lives: "The traumatic neuroses the dream life has this peculiarity: it continually takes the patient back to the situation of his disaster, from which he awakens in renewed terror" (1922, p. 8). In the fourth play, Fear and Misery, the scene unfolds at a dining table where the husband, Harry, and his wife, Olivia, are sharing a meal. However, their primary focus revolves around

keeping a watchful eye on their sleeping child, Alex:

> Olivia: QUITE. Shhh. Shhh now, Alex is sleeping. Alex only got off ... Quite. I just got Alex off
> twenty minutes ago.
> Harry: Sorry sorry sorry.
> Olivia: It's really important Alex doesn't –
> Harry: Of course of course of course. Is he all right? Did he seem all right?
> Olivia: I think so, yes.
> Harry: Any dreams?
> Olivia: Not yet. It's early. He might still ...
> Harry: You didn't let him watch the news? The invasion.
> Olivia: Of course not (2008, p. 43).

Here, trauma might be enhanced in Alex's dream since the family is surrounded by turbulent events. Similarly, Caruth tackles the original conceptual meaning of repression and its affinity with trauma. He relates the meaning of the concept of repression to Germany because it is first coined by the German writer Bertold Brecht. He tried to use repression in the sense of distance; he aimed to distance and deliberately estrange his audience from his writings by utilizing several literary devices; among them are banners and signs, projection, and exaggerated gestures, on the part of the actors, voices and performances, stage sets, and the abandonment of naturalistic behavior. Brechet uses these devices, especially the last one, to prevent the human sense of empathy or identification of his writings' characters or situations. Brechet's purpose was to make the audience involved critically. In addition to these purposes, he uses repression to unravel the material and historical magnitudes of the human activities in his stories; and the possible motivation for their traumatic life. Caruth argues that the narratives depict how what haunts the victim is not just the actual occurrence of the violent event, but also the realization that the full extent of its violence has not been comprehended or fully understood (Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History, 2016, p. 7). In *Fear and Misery*, the characters are trying their best to keep away from the effects of war, which is the essence of violence described in Caruth's arguments. Harry and Olivia have a strong desire to shield their baby, Alex, from the prevailing fears and anxieties that exist in society, recognizing the potential for such exposure to have a distressing impact on their child's well-being. It appears that they have been affected by war as is shown in the media. That is, they are doing everything to keep the media away from their child to avoid being negatively influenced by the violent actions of war. Accordingly, they could protect their child from being destroyed by traumatic experiences and their psychic sequences:

> Olivia: Our child was born in love and tranquillity and his life will be lived, he will never know,
> I will do everything I can to make sure he never knows the fear and – that I
> Harry: That we –
> Olivia: We, we have known. We will work together. Keep away from addicts. The madwomen.
> The bombers. The soldier with his head blown off. We will keep them away – yes (2008, p. 45).

In their world, there is violence, fear, war and soldiers. They do not want their son to have the same traumatic experience. They want him to stay asleep as long as possible and not wake up in this crazy world. In this sense, Alex is a victim of trauma which is enhanced during postcolonial times. By the

same token, Caruth contends that during the current epoch, authors seek to stage the human problems that flourish rapidly in modern society such as meaninglessness, confusion, fragmentation, frustration, disillusionment, repression, disintegration and deprivation which are primary indicators of psychic trauma. Being so, she claims that the concept of trauma has been widely used in postcolonial literary discourses. As such, the concept is used in various senses in different fields like sociology, psychology and post-colonialism. In a sense, the concept of trauma relates to the concept of neurosis in different ways. In the forthcoming section, the connection between trauma and neurosis will be explored and examined.

The concept of neurosis indicates behavioral abnormality. People with neurosis tend to act in a way that seems whimsical to other people. At the same time, neurotic people do not feel that they suffer from the severe symptoms of neurosis. Instead, other people evaluate them based on their behaviors that do not appear normal. The concept of neurosis, therefore, is judged in terms of behaviors, actions, speech and the like. In *The Neurotic Turn: Inter-disciplinary Correspondences on Neurosis* (2017), Charles Johns discusses the appearance of psychic neurosis about the non-standard personal "behaviors" (2017, p. 20). These behaviors are evident in the fifth play, *War and Peace*. This play is a continuation of the third play where we have Alex and a headless soldier from the desert war. He suffers from neurotic experience as he undergoes a bitter experience that leaves its apparent traumatic impact upon his personality:

> Alex: But Alex said: You're disgusting. You're horrible.
> Look at you. Ugh.
> Soldier: Soldier said: I know that son, don't you think I
> fucking know that? I fucking know how fucking horrible I am.
> If I could have my head back again – (2008, p. 52).

The relationship between Alex and the soldier is a true exemplification as a psychoanalytic concept widely argued in critical approaches. It represents the unstable human psyche influenced by tragic incidents. Analysts could recognize trauma through persons' tendency to recollect previous past events that left their impact upon their psyches. These events thwart persons' behaviors and make them aberrant. They could not cope with other people of the same social milieus. The problem of trauma is memory. This is because traumatic people keep remembering past events that affect their interactions with other people. According to Caruth, trauma is characterized as a fragile psychological condition that arises from catastrophic events. Trauma involves an overpowering encounter with sudden or catastrophic occurrences, where the response to the event manifests as delayed and uncontrolled reappearances of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena (Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History, 2016, p. 11). In *War and Peace*, Alex and the soldier embody the very notion of catastrophic trauma motivated by postcolonial war:

> Alex: I'm frightened sometimes, Alex told the soldier with no head. He told the soldier with no
> head: I wee the bed. Last time. Other times.
> Soldier: I didn't know that, said the soldier.
> Alex: I'm talking to a... it's a psychiatrist (2008, p. 53).
> Alex's predilection to go to a psychiatrist represents his transformational state. He becomes
> psychically traumatic by the effect of the violent war. Neurosis, in this regard, exemplifies Alex's
> traumatic psychic state. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1922), Freud discusses the concept of

neurotic trauma as "a psychic disorder that represents the persons' predilection to be stressed. The feeling of stress makes persons prone to psychic abnormality since anxiety is considered a perilous psychic disorder. In this way, anxious people feel bothered when they are victims of disturbing situations" (1922, p. 112). In *War and Peace*, the soldier shares with Alex the harsh realities of war and how it impacts his mental state: "Soldier: The army – it toughens you up, said the soldier. I've seen worse. And then the soldier asked: Can I touch your head again?" (2008, p. 54).

The soldier's account of his brutal encounter in war exemplifies Freud's notion of trauma, wherein it becomes intertwined within a vast network of associations, coexisting alongside other conflicting experiences, and susceptible to correction by alternative ideas (Beyond the Pleasure Principle, 1922, p. 12). Freud examines the origins of trauma through the process of development. He suggests that trauma can arise from childhood experiences, particularly instances of abuse, wherein children recall and reenact these unpleasant encounters. Freud posits that children engage in such repetition during play as a means of gaining greater control over the intense experiences they previously endured, transitioning from passive recipients to active participants (ibid 75). This phase is the primal emancipation of trauma in the psychoanalytic sense of the term. Yet, I tend to link Freudian unpleasable experience to the soldier and Alex who perceives each other as a monster in the postcolonial military atmosphere:

> Soldier: And the soldier said: Do I look like a monster to you?
> Alex: Yes, said Alex.
> Soldier: And the soldier said: Fear's okay. That's a good thing, fear is. I've been scared so many times (2008, p. 54).

Alex's fear incarnates Freud's appropriation of the concept of trauma as an unpleasurable experience. This is because the case of psychic trauma might be treated in clinical methods. Freud suggests a therapeutic method for healing trauma and its relative associations with experience. In this way, there would be a viable remedy for traumatic persons, or as Feud puts it simply; the trauma victims, who tend to repeat their past experiences which are considered a form of trauma. In *War and Peace*, both the soldier and Alex seek to find therapeutic ways to get alleviated from their trauma. This is because they seem to be run out of food, money, and family which are essential to people's lives:

> Soldier: And then the soldier said: Too young to know it.
> But you wait – a few years you'll feel empty, empty, aching all day, like you lost yourself a long time ago.
> Alex: But Alex said: My life is good.
> Soldier: Empty, he said. But you always feel finished with this [gun] in your hand. Live without food, live without money you can do it, it's hard but you do it. Live without family, live without friends – that's easy. But live without war? No human being's ever done that. Never will. It's what makes us human (2008, pp. 55-56).

The soldier's emphasis on food, money, and family reflects his deep understanding of human beings. That is, they are integral factors that offer a good life for people to live with dignity and peace regardless of their harsh conditions. However, human beings become traumatic when they are deprived of food,

money, and family as the primary premise for human living conditions. Yet, postcolonial negative conditions lead these people to live in traumatic experiences.

Laplanche and Pontalis, in *The Language of Psycho-Analysis* (1967) argue that trauma encompasses "an event in the subject's life, defined by its intensity, by the subject's incapacity to respond adequately to it and by the upheaval and long-lasting effects that it brings about in the psychical organization" (1967, p. 465). In this respect, Laplanche and Pontalis discuss the implicit presence of trauma in the internal mechanism of a personality's unconscious mind. Once unconsciousness is violated by repeating past tragic experiences, the conscious mind triggers the repressed memories. The result of violating this repression is that the unconscious mind negatively affects physical behaviors. To illustrate, the repression of tragic incidents in the unconscious mind yields in the form of psychic disorders. Such disorder is various. It might include different aspects of behavioral abnormality; including, but not limited to, anxiety, neurosis, psychosis, paranoia, depression and so forth. In *War and Peace*, Harry and Olivia suffer from the destruction of war, which makes them traumatic. Despite Harry and Olivia's attempt to set apart Alex from the horror of war, he is deeply affected by it now. In this play, he meets a soldier without a head who has fought the war apparently in Iraq. The soldier recounts this tragic incident:

> Soldier: You're my only friend in the world. I need you. These nights we have, our secret nights, these are everything I've got. Soldier I'm in agony, son. I'm needing I'm wanting a . . . oh please, son – (2008, p. 59).

The concept of trauma extended to include a wide variety of psychological argumentations. It represents a critical milestone, especially in dealing with vital issues, such as personality development, the external influences on human individuality and the formation of the mind. The discussion of these psychological dimensions would explicate the core conceptual implications of trauma and its apparent influence on the human psyche. Trauma, in essence, formulates the ultimate shape of the behavioral disposition. Therefore, the examination of trauma from a psychological standpoint holds significant significance. This is because the encounter of a soldier, for instance, who witnesses sudden and extensive death surrounding them and experiences a numbing effect at the moment, only to relive it through recurring nightmares later on, represents a central and frequently recurring depiction of trauma in our era (Caruth, Trauma: Explorations in Memory, 1995, p. 11). Furthermore, Jacques Lacan, who is a prominent psychoanalytic theorist, describes the traumatic personality as an "object" of trauma. In *Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book II: The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis 1954–1955* (1991), Lacan asserts that the fundamental object, which transcends being a tangible object and instead becomes an intangible presence, is something that elicits the cessation of words and the failure of categorical understanding. This object represents the epitome of anxiety (1991, p. 164). In *War and Peace*, the soldier describes the monstrous lives of soldiers in fights and he tells Alex about the negative the military life:

> Soldier: And the soldier called out: I've been fighting. I want my reward. You took my estate. I'm fighting for your freedom and democracy... I'm fighting for democracy, the least you can do is-
> Alex: And Alex was angry and he shouted: You keep away from me, wanker. You – you – this is my room, this is my property, my family's. I do well in all the SATs . . . I'm gifted . . . We drive an SUV . . . I am so powerful and you're, you're . . . you're scum . . . you eat bad food, you have numeracy and literacy issues, you will never be on the property ladder, you smoke and play the

lottery, you're dirt and you don't belong in a gated community. Out, get out, away. You are a monster. You look like a . . . you are a deformed monster. Monster / monster monster monster monster (2008, p. 61).

Strikingly, Freud, in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1922), adapts the concept of trauma to the categorical peculiarities of trauma. To put it simply, trauma might be the cause of a malicious psychic disorder i.e., anxiety. The ultimate position of trauma, according to Freud, is anxiety. Such anxiety results in a severe behavioral disorder. When personality develops certain kinds of traumatic features, it turns to be turbulent; consequently, it becomes psychically disordered since "a condition may arise which has long been recognized and to which the name traumatic neurosis is attached. The terrible war that is just over has been responsible for an immense number of such maladies" (1922, p. 8). In *War and Peace*, the soldier and Alex are talking about the lack of ammunition as an indication of their deteriorating physic conditions:

> Soldier: Live without food, live without money – you can do it, it's hard but you do it. Live without family, live without friends – that's easy. But live without war? No human being's ever done that. Never will. It's what makes us human.
> Alex: Who you killed? asked Alex.
> Soldier: Towelhead. Coming for me so... Kid only a few years older than you but he's coming towards me with a gun so... phut (2008, p. 54).

Trauma, therefore, came into prominence to refer to the deteriorated human physios. Freud argues that the inherent interest of trauma was to delve deep into persons' psyches to come up with authentic and logical explanations of a person's psychological problems. According to his writing, Freud suggests that the concept of trauma encompasses a connection to a normally effective barrier. An event like an external trauma, he believes, undoubtedly triggers a significant disruption in the functioning of the organism's energy (Beyond the Pleasure Principle, 1922, p. 22). In the first phase of the nineteenth century, the necessity of finding reasonable justification for psychic ailments began to occupy the public interest in the motives of trauma disorders. Therefore, there had been serious attempts to discover the natural cause of psychological problems since then. Trauma, accordingly, was extensively taught during the ensuing decades till the mid-twentieth century.). In *War and Peace*, it appears that the headless soldier is deeply affected by war and his traumatic experience is evident in his conversation with Alex: **Alex:** Alex – Give me the gun/ **Soldier** Soldier – I gotta touch your head/ **Alex** Alex – Gun first. Gun gun gun gun gun gun gun gun" (55). Strangely enough, Alex wants to repeat the same traumatic experience; this is reiterated in the following quotation:

> Soldier: And the soldier held Alex's head and he pulled and he said: I'm never giving this head back, see? I'm going to keep this head forever. You know what was wrong with wars before? They ended. There was peace. But this one goes on and on and on. It's a war on terror and it goes on and on and on and on. There's no God, see? There's no end day. There's just this war on terror on and on and on and on and on... . What's that? Hah! Hah! Oh good boy, oh good lad. That's it. You shat yourself. Shit everywhere. Hah hah hah hah hah hah hah (2008, p. 62).

Trauma, here, could not provide tangible solutions to a person's psychic complications. They resorted to

remedial outlets for their psychological problems. Consequently, the need for psychological alleviation began to be required by people of different ages and genders; and Caruth claims that the recurrence of the traumatic incident in the flashback has the potential to retraumatize individuals. This repetition poses a threat to the chemical composition of the brain, and while it may not be immediately life-threatening, it can eventually lead to a decline in mental well-being (Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History, 2016, p. 63). However, Caruth says that trauma required psychic standards to be followed in order to explore the real problems of persons' psyches. Such standards would be beneficial if they undergo methodological investigation of human psyches. Expert scholars would be the right practitioners of this science. In the seventh play, titled *Crime and Punishment*, a soldier describes the deteriorating health conditions of individuals affected by the aftermath of colonial wars. He discusses this matter with a woman, even as she expresses gratitude towards him for liberating her country and establishing democratic and free principles - a situation laden with irony. Simultaneously, the woman expresses her desire to visit her mother-in-law, who is currently undergoing treatment at a hospital:

> Soldier: I really want you to love me.
>
> Woman: I've been a widow for five days. Your army . . .
>
> Soldier: I am in a lot of pain here. I want you to love me. How do you I make you fall in love with me? I am opening my heart to you and what am I getting? (2008, p. 88)

The soldier, here, describes pain which is the result of military confrontation. According to Freud, several psychological analysts tried their hands to grasp the real problems of a person's psyches. Notwithstanding, it is almost impossible to discuss the first psychological attempts without mentioning trauma and its negative influence on people's psyches. The evolution of trauma could not be elaborated, or even discovered, without approaching Freud's claims about the human psyche and its structures. The bulk of Freud's trauma writings concentrates on the natural structure of the psyche, which is commonly divided into three integrated parts. They are the ego, superego, and Id. These parts represent the internal psychic mechanics of psychological consciousness and unconsciousness. Furthermore, he contends that trauma arises from neurotic reactions that are developed in the unconscious mind: "These dreams are endeavoring to master the stimulus retrospectively, by developing the anxiety whose omission was the cause of the traumatic neurosis" (Beyond the Pleasure Principle, 1922, p. 32). In *Crime and Punishment*, the soldier's pain is entirely psychological in the form of trauma after witnessing the horror of war that leaves its negative impact on his unconscious mind. The woman does not respond to his love. Therefore, he kills her:

> Soldier, I will invade every fucking country in the fucking world, okay? I will fucking invade them all. Got the will, got the firepower and I will fucking do it. They want supermarkets, they want garden centres, they want Xboxes, they want Starbucks. They got it. It's coming. It's coming. It's fucking coming (2008, p. 91)

Again, the understanding of trauma would be impossible without taking these parts into consideration. They are the psychic fabrication of both the external and the internal shapes of persons' psyches. The human personality and its pertinent behaviours are determined, in discrepant ways, by the existential conditions of these parts for the sake of survival. This is because trauma is a way of survival, and it does threaten the stability of people's psyches: Caruth comments: "For consciousness then, the act of

survival, as the experience of trauma, is the repeated confrontation with the necessity and impossibility of grasping the threat to one's own life" (Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History, 2016, p. 62). In the same way, the characters in *Crime and Punishment*, struggle with violence, brutality and the sounds of bombs being dropped here and there. The soldier's and the woman's mission in war exemplify this painful psychic trauma:

> Woman: Hear me now. Look. In the eyes. Yes? I hate you I hate you I hate you I hate you I – He cuts out her tongue. She struggles and then passes out.
>
> Soldier: 9.47 a.m. I have cut out the detainee's tongue. My mission is pointless. Nobody loves me. Now I must choose if I shoot out my brains. Maybe there is love in another place, maybe if we invade again then a woman will say. . or maybe it is better to shoot now. I wish I had an order from a superior. Please somebody tell me, 'Shoot out your brains' or, 'Son, don't shoot out your brains'. But there is no order from above. The choice is mine. This is democracy. This is what we call democracy. Democracy – I hate you" (2008, p. 97).

The conditional presence of neurotic trauma is primarily discussed by Freud's earliest arguments. He managed to explore the possible external influences that might change their states. He proposed some problems which leave their impact on their conditional stability. Among these problems are sexuality, childhood, infancy and the relationship between a person and one of his parents, father or mother. Freud claimed that these problems might negatively affect a person's psyches. However, he unraveled the possible remedy for these problems by exploring the science of speech therapy. He managed to affirm that in a number of his arguments. These arguments initiated the application of trauma to multidisciplinary fields, such as post-colonialism, sociology, paediatrics and so forth. Strikingly, he connects trauma to neurosis as a negative psychic condition: "We may, I think, tentatively venture to regard the common traumatic neurosis as a consequence of an extensive breach being made in the protective shield against stimuli" (31). In this regard, neurotic trauma is a result of postcolonial phenomena, like destructive wars. To relate this to the selected plays, the eighteenth play, *Love (But I Won't do that)*, trauma is entirely a product of war. It is similar to the seventh play. There is a conversation between a soldier and a businesswoman called Marion. Again, the soldier is looking for love from Marion. He forces her to make love with him because he is in a state of psychological traumatic agony: Soldier: "I want a promise. Here. Now. I want you to promise that you will take off your clothes in front of me. No bathroom, no – I 'll watch as you get naked" (Ravenhill, 2008, p. 101). Marion finally understands there is no freedom and democracy in her country and that the soldier can do whatever he likes. In so doing, she tries to find a psychic outlet for her traumatic feelings.

This military case exemplifies the relationship between trauma and postcolonial conditions which results in a better understanding of literary themes. In *Principles of Literary Criticism* (2002), Ivor A. Richards cites some examples of the thematic instances of traumatic insights in literature. The thematic distinction between the "good" and the "bad" could be determined by scrutinizing the traumatic recounts in the literary texts (2002, p. 39). Moreover, the literary traumatic insights lead to the study of the anthropological traits of people's races. The human experience depicted in literary works is conveyed by traumatic clues. In a similar vein, Caruth examines the colonial encounter as evidence of individuals' traumatic encounters, highlighting that trauma encompasses more than just the aftermath of destruction. It is, at its core, a perplexing blend of survival and devastation. By acknowledging traumatic

experiences as a paradoxical interplay between survival and destructiveness, we can also acknowledge the enduring sense of incomprehensibility that lies at the core of catastrophic experiences (Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History, 2016, p. 58). Caruth's emphasis on the thematic features of the relationship between trauma and survival promotes an earnest examination of literary works and their potential to elevate the broad symbolical functions of literature through trauma. In the tenth play, *War of the Worlds*, there is a chorus again as in the first play. This time the chorus is hysterical and in great pain.

> This is for you. We gather in this square for you. This is dedicated to you. You brave beautiful people. You unbowed children of freedom and democracy.
>
> You have been bombed. We are sickened.
>
> We are yes, we are yes, we are really, really ... sickened.
>
> We feel as you do. Here's the little girl – see? – the little girl I pick out running away from the blast, running away and she's a little black girl but she's been turned to white by the ash from the blast. See? See? (2008, p. 101).

The concept of trauma, in this sense, has grown ever more prominent in cultural studies, treated more as complementary to the interpretation of literature and its implied nuances regarding trauma. Freud, in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1922), argues that psychoanalysis's emphasis on the individual led to an unprecedented focus on the human psyche as the personal expression of the complication of the traumatic psyche, a development that aimed to encounter the decorum, traditionalism, and preoccupation with traumatic characteristics of literature: "[People] think the fact that the traumatic experience is constantly forcing itself upon the patient even in his sleep is a proof of the strength of that experience: the patient is, as one might say, fixated to his trauma" (1922, p. 13). In this way, Freud contends that some belligerent attitudes tend to ascribe heinous connotations to the concept of trauma since its early enfranchisement. The impetuses of these experiences lead to certain incidents that sharply influence the human psyche. In *War of the Worlds*, the little girl suffers from this postcolonial trauma: "The little girl is running towards the screen and I'm eating my breakfast and I call out to her – let me show you how I call out to her – watch me" (Ravenhill, 2008, p. 124). Moreover, there is a reference in this quotation to the soldiers who are fighting the war which is the inherent cause of their trauma:

> You run towards me. In your arms, you hold your dead child. Your child is dead in your arms and most of her dead has been blown away and you hold your child out to me like so as if to say, 'Oh help me oh help me help me.
>
> And I say – I don't say this in anger. I am calm. But please listen as I say: You had this coming. Can't you see – you had this coming? ((2008, p. 130).

The implications of the concept of trauma filtered into psychoanalysis, providing a set of pertinent terms and concepts that reach beyond the explicit meaning of trauma. Traumatic individuals suffer from devastating anxious reactions to their social peripheries. Caruth maintains that individuals, in literature, are described as newcomers since they are suddenly attacked by sudden accidents that play a role model both to imitate and to compete against past remembrances, wishing ultimately to emerge as a major rejection of negative accidents that make individuals traumatic: "in trauma, that is, the outside has gone inside without any mediation" (Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History, 2016, p. 59).

Consequently, tragic incidents represent the gradual culmination of individuality's psychic disorders, like insanity. The drive underlying motive of such psychic disorder, as Daniel Gross puts it simply in *The Secret History of Emotion: From Aristotle's Rhetoric to Modern Brain Science* (2012), might be "the traumatic loss of a near relation" (2012, p. 166). In *War of the Worlds*, the chorus is blaming the victim whose country has been bombed; and this bombardment left them traumatic. It is an irony here given the fact that soldiers suffer psychologically from the horror of war: "Oh. How I hate myself. I really . . . totally . . . You were bombed only a few days ago. I am laughing at you. What a wrong person I am. What a monster. Why did I laugh? I'm so sorry. So bad. What I'll do now is . . . I will fold everything" (2008, p. 132).

The concept of trauma is not only associated with tragic incidents but also with various kinds of psychic disorders threatening the stability of the human psychological disposition. Critics, accordingly, insist on the representation position of the human psyche as it controls the internal mechanism of the unconscious mind. The unconscious mind, in turn, controls the conscious behaviors which are the genuine appearance of personality. It is the explicit personal disposition of poison perceived and judged by other people. In *Approaches to Psychic Trauma: Theory and Practice* (2018), Bernd Huppertz argues that both the unconscious and conscious minds are inextricable i.e., they coeval psychic components entities complementing each other. They consequently typify myriads of psychically-related concepts, including trauma in the first place. In such psychic episodes, the existence of trauma entails the presence of neurosis. The treatment of this severe trauma could be achieved by psychoanalysts' erudite experience to have the patient healed by recalling past experiences. The psychoanalyst, then, could be able to understand the patient's traumatic case; Huppertz writes:

> It is not only the nature of the traumatic event that is critical to the effects that may follow but also the individual's evaluation, experience, and processing of the event. Psychological damage is identified where the usual management capabilities of the person concerned are overwhelmed. The intensity/massiveness of the trauma, as well as individual resources in the processing of the event, will play an important role (2018, p. 4).

In the Eleventh play, *Armageddon*, the author shows the relationship between Emma and Honor. Despite their religious viewpoints, they go to a hotel and express their love for each other. Strikingly, the play reflects the true sense of neurotic trauma that is triggered by negative events in the course of turbulent incidents. Consequently, the play demonstrates how the characters might be influenced by their surroundings which are full of destructive damage. In this regard, the notion of trauma as a result of a frightful experience succinctly introduces the character's psychic disorders. Some characters suffer from colonial oppression which forces them to be outcasts. As a result, they become traumatic since they undergo frightening life. The concept of trauma is associated with colonial tragic events like war. Being so, war could be another representative event that causes trauma. In *Trauma: Contemporary Directions in Theory Practice and Research* (2011), Shoshana Ringel and Jerrold Brandell maintain that trauma causes "disturbances may include intrusive thoughts or images, painful emotional reactions, emotional withdrawal, anxiety, and alterations of their sense of personal safety and trust of others" (2011, p. 225). These disturbances are created by the military wars which tragically result in psychic trauma. In *Armageddon*, Honor and Emma are war casualties and they talk about the atrocity of war since it radically destroys their lives. War, here, plays a crucial role in revealing the characters' obsession with

their security and peace. However, they do not gain security and peace as they are endangered by war and its aftermath: "Honor And I say: 'There's been another blast. In the war. The news is coming in. More of our boys are killed.' Emma And He hears my fear, as every day He hears my fear, as every day my fear. . as every day I watch the TV, more bombs, more of our boys killed, more of our boys fighting in his name" ((Ravenhill, 2008, p. 141).

Honor and Emma are both afraid of unknown things. But it is related to the effects of war that make them gradually traumatic. The historical background of trauma is also tackled in Victoria Follette's and Josef Ruzek's *Cognitive-Behavioral Therapies for Trauma* (2007). Follette and Ruzek elaborate on the relevant symptoms of trauma as a psychic malady. They also discuss the proper remedies for it. To arrive at specific therapeutic results for trauma, certain considerations need to be taken into account. "Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) for trauma" refers to a wide range of therapies that share common characteristics such as prioritizing observable improvements, alleviating symptoms, employing time-limited and goal-oriented interventions, and expecting active participation from patients in their journey towards recovery (p. 1). Consequently, the examination of trauma and its symptoms leads to the remedial notion of the "posttraumatic" period when traumatic persons are diagnosed. As such, the posttraumatic period is deduced from the literary writings that involved conflicts among combatants; and the result of their fights might be observed as the logical "reactions" of trauma. Caruth also contends that the anticipated responses of those engaged in combat will be perceived as manifestations of traumatic experiences that profoundly impact the human psyche. The condition known as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) reflects the profound impact of overwhelmingly distressing events on the mind. It involves the intrusion of these events into the mind, exerting control over it on both psychological and neurobiological levels, leaving the individual unable to regain control (Caruth, Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History, 2016, p. 58). In the twelfth play, *Mother*, trauma relates to three characters. They are Haley Morrison, a male soldier, and a female soldier. Haley has sent her son to war. She spent her days drinking and watching T.V. One day, a male and a female soldier come to her house to report her son's death. Such death and the soldier's military experience are the motivation for their psychic trauma:

> Female Soldier: Mrs Morrison –
> Haley: What's it to be? What are you gonna have in your breakfast roll?
> Male Soldier: Mrs Morrison –
> Haley: I'll do a bit of everything and you can choose later. You watch the breakfast telly while I – there, who wants to push the buttons? (p. 156).

Haley and the female soldier are the persons who suffer from war. Persons, therefore, become prone to traumatic symptoms, like denial, repression, and dissociation: "Traumatic events overwhelm the psyche, traumatized individuals must engage extremely primitive defence mechanisms such as dissociation, repression, and denial" (Follette & Ruzek, 2007, p. 3). Traumatic events, according to *Webster's New College Dictionary* (2020), formulate these psychic reactions. On that account, they are sometimes called stressful experiences that are also deemed diagnostic strategies for trauma because it is "an emotional shock that creates substantial and lasting damage to the psychological development of the individual, generally leading to neurosis; something that severely jars the mind or emotions" (p. 1173). To enhance this argument, Follette and Ruzek claim that "it is important to emphasize that there is a significant

amount of "normal" distress that follows exposure to traumatic events that should not be construed as pathological" (p. 6). This statement refers to some events that might not lead to severe psychic trauma. In *Mother*, Both the male and the female soldiers are unable to report the bad news to Haley. This is because they recount bad news about undesirable reality till the end the male soldier says: "Mrs. Morrison, it is my sad duty to inform you that your son Darren Morrison was – Haley No!" ((p. 149). The soldier continues speaking about the news related to war and its destructive sequences. This is due to the bitter fighting skirmishes in the military battles: "Male Soldier: Mrs Morrison, it is my sad duty to inform you that your son Darren Morrison has been killed in action. Darren was a well–respected and well-liked member of his regiment who died as he lived fighting bravely for a noble cause" (p. 152). Strangely, the mother Haley goes back to drinking and watching TV as if nothing happened. However, she is moved by the negative result of the war that previously deprived her of stable and peaceful life: "Female Soldier: I ain't a mother. Never gonna be a mother. Don't wanna – just fight for my country and that's" (p. 161).

Haley and the male soldier are the victims of military confirmations. They are suppressed victims of wars, and they become the harmed persons after the war. When persons develop sharp distressful experiences, they become more traumatic. Such experience, and many other forms of normal distress, is not an indication factor of trauma. However, when distressful events are associated with neurosis, they are genuine symptoms of trauma. In this psychic phase, trauma is described as traumatic neurosis. In *The Future of Trauma Theory: Contemporary Literary and Cultural Criticism* (2014), Gert Buelens and *et al*. argue that traumatic neurosis mingles with the nervous system and produces trauma in the form of psychic disease; and trauma includes the relative "non-comprehension" which "has come to describe (often at once) both our response to atrocity and the inability of language to hold traumatic experience" (p. 118). The association of trauma with neurosis, here, lies at the heart of Follette's and Ruzek's study. For this reason, the concept of trauma and the concept of neurosis exemplify the mutual critical affinity between them as they are strongly related to the personal plights of individuals. In the fifteenth play, *The Odyssey*, there is a group of soldiers who are preparing to go home after being in the war zone for so long and suddenly orders came that they should stay. The soldiers were dreaming of life in their home country. When the war ends, they seek stability and peace of mind as they become psychically traumatic. In the following quotation, the soldiers are discussing the negative conditions of their country:

> Stop! The battle is not over yet.
> Stop! The battle still rages!
> No.
> Stop! Another country. Another Country which is the cradle of hate. Another country will destroy the civilized world.
> My son has a girlfriend. He's messaged me. Please, I must see my son's girlfriend at least, please.
> This is the next war. This is the invasion. You will not return home. You will invade (p. 196).

The soldier, the woman, and the other people suffer from trauma since they are depressed by the war. Depression, like the case of repression in neurotic trauma, goes along with psychic disorder. Both neurosis and depression reflect the formation of a traumatic psyche. Danielle Mitchell, in *The Role of Depression, Social Support, and Gender in an Individual's Decision to Leave an Emotionally Abusive Relationship* (2006), examines the relationship between repression and trauma that appears through

internal conditions. When persons need to avoid previous memories and situations, they repress them in their unconscious minds (p. 46). The unconscious mind, in turn, influences the psychical structure of the body. The traumatic persons become behaving unusually. Behavioral abnormality is, in this sense, a reflection of a psychic ailment deposited in the unconscious mind. In light of this psychological process, Freud, in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1922), argues that the deformation of body behavior is caused by repression as an internal conditional mechanism of trauma. In contrast, depression is a psychic disorder caused by external trauma. Traumatic persons are disappointed by events or people which are, later on, incarnated in abnormal behaviors, such as living in loneliness because depression occurs in "traumatic neuroses have the characteristic of repeatedly bringing the patient back into the situation of his accident, a situation from which he wakes up in another fright" (Beyond the Pleasure Principle, 1922, p. 13). In *The Odyssey*, the soldiers have been waiting so long to go back to their country but at last, orders came to them to stay. Capitalization adds to the tension that is already there. And the soldiers are already suffering psychologically from the trauma of war:

Please, we are so tired, please we have to stop, please. Look. We have lived these last few years with bombs and mines. We lost track of who was an enemy and who was a friend. We are so lonely. We miss our families. We miss . . . so stupid but we miss all the tiny things about our lives, things . . . gardens, coffee, friends, a DVD with a child. We can't go on without these things (p. 196).

These are the feelings of the soldiers who got traumatized by war. The soldiers' depressed state is an embodiment of neurotic trauma, especially in postcolonial atmospheres. Caruth contends that trauma is another stage of the psychic disorder. Both neurosis and depression are two definitive elements of trauma. This is because traumatic individuals suspect other people of harming them; and "the experience of trauma, the fact of latency, would thus seem to consist, not in the forgetting of a reality that can hence never be fully known, but in an inherent latency within the experience itself" (Trauma: Explorations in Memory, 1995, p. 17).

Freud, on the other hand, says that these individuals suffer from the feeling that people will hinder their lives. Being so, they live in a constant fear of harm that is brought about by accusation and suspicion. Trauma, in this regard, stems from a variety of psychological tensions. Depression conditions may also differ from the notion of self-alienation. It refers to that psychological state in which persons feel that they are alienated in their homelands; Freud writes: "I am not aware, however, that patients suffering from traumatic neurosis are much occupied in their waking lives with memories of their accident. Perhaps they are more concerned with *not* thinking of it" (Beyond the Pleasure Principle, 1922, p. 13). The epilogue of *Paradise Regained* represents the story of two friends: Tom and Matt. They are old friends, but the war separates them. Tom goes to war as a soldier, and Matt stays in the city under the threat of bombing. After some time, Tom goes back to the city, and he meets his friend Matt. It is interesting to note that Matt gets wealthy and he is with a younger lover, unlike Tom:

Tom: Look at this city. Look at that.

Matt: It's been a long time.

Tom: It's been decades

Matt: It's been decades. Things move on. There's an inward investment. There's been a new infrastructure.

Matt: This city was – it carried on – their side shelling, bombing, sniping, our side shelling, bombing (2008, p. 211).

Tom and Matt are victims of war. They could not get along with each other as they interact within tense colonial circumferences. This means that they undergo repeated tragic experiences in this agitated and negative military confrontation. The bombing of the city is very destructive, which hinders Tom's and Matt's progress to be safe from war threatening their safe existence. In this sense, they exemplify Caruth's description of the concept of trauma as the power that triggers back people's unforgeable repeated postcolonial experience because the "power of the trauma is not just that the experience is repeated after its forgetting, but that it is only in and through its inherent forgetting that it is first experienced at all" (Caruth, Trauma: Explorations in Memory, 1995, p. 17). Freud, in *Moses and Monotheism* (1939), reiterates the same argument regarding the relationship between depression and trauma. However, he describes depressed trauma as "a shocking accident" which appears in the form of harmful psychic symptoms resulting in the apparent neurotic problems of trauma and its pertinent pathological sequences:

> Someone may get away, apparently unharmed, from the spot where he has suffered a shocking accident, for in - stance a train collision. In the course of the following weeks, however, he develops a series of grave psychical and motor symptoms, which can be ascribed only to his shock or whatever else happened at the time of the accident. He has developed a "traumatic neurosis." This appears quite incomprehensible and is therefore a novel fact. The time that elapsed between the accident and the first appearance of the symptoms is called the "incubation period," a transparent allusion to the pathology of infectious disease (Freud, Moses and Monotheism, 1939, p. 84)..

People feel that they are the original nation of a certain country. Yet, when their country is stricken by, for example, an economic crisis or political corruption, they feel that they are alienated since they are deprived of their rights as citizens. Similarly, the epilogue of *Paradise Regained* demonstrates the traumatic experience of Matt who lives bitter and harsh living conditions due to the military clashes surrounding his life. Furthermore, the other characters feel the contradictions between their national ideas and their positions as human beings as they are moved by the negative sequence of war. In this case, they incarnate the postcolonial trauma created by the military confrontations and their relative harm to the characters' lives. As such, the characters become self-alienated i.e. trauma caused by collective military events caused by war around them.

In this sense, trauma turns out to be an abnormal psychological state which is connected with depression because the characters are disappointed by the deterioration of their country's milieus. Because of the war, the epilogue of the play perceives both friends as extremely tired and devastated. They cannot tell the difference between a friend and an enemy. Both are feeling lonely and estranged in this vicious world. Hence, they are stricken by psychic trauma and its detrimental effect on their lives; Matt reflects upon this fact in the following quotation:

> Matt: Long time I thought: life was pain and struggle and if there wasn't pain and struggle then you weren't . . . I wasn't alive . . . but now I . . . I'm okay with the emptiness. Yes. The emptiness is better. Yes (p. 223).

It is an expression of Matt's trauma who has experienced the horror of war. Consequently, Matt

describes the atrocity of war and how it might destroy the psychic stability of individuals who undergo bitter military clashes. In this sense, Matt, and the other characters, are genuine exemplifications of the development of trauma and its relation to post-colonialism as Caruth argues. Furthermore, they represent the very notions of the unconscious culmination of trauma in the mind as described by Freud. Thus, the selected plays embody the impact of the Iraq War 2003 on the British soldiers and society in the selected works.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research paper delves into the profound impact of the Iraq War on British soldiers, their families, and society at large. By employing theoretical frameworks from psychology, specifically the works of Sigmund Freud and Cathy Caruth, the study sheds light on the concept of trauma within the context of war. Through a meticulous analysis of Mark Ravenhill's play *Shoot/Get Treasure/Repeat*, the research uncovers the play's portrayal of the experiences of British soldiers affected by the 2003 invasion of Iraq and the ensuing challenges faced by the British people. By exploring the psychological and emotional consequences of war trauma on individuals, this study provides valuable insights into its broader societal implications. The utilization of psychological perspectives, drawing upon Freud's and Caruth's theories, enables a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding war trauma and its enduring effects on soldiers. Furthermore, by examining the depiction of traumatized soldiers in *Shoot/Get Treasure/Repeat* and analyzing the psychological dimensions of trauma, this research offers significant contributions to the interplay between war, theater, and British society. Overall, this research paper serves as a noteworthy exploration of the experiences of traumatized soldiers, the profound effects of war on British society, and the transformative power of theater in addressing and representing collective trauma. It enhances our comprehensive understanding of the long-term consequences of war on individuals and communities, emphasizing the crucial role of theater as a medium for engaging with and conveying the experiences of those impacted by collective trauma.

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