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A Comparative Study on War Trauma and Psychological Effects in Postcolonial World

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Abstract

The research delves into the concept of trauma, particularly the war trauma and its psychological effects in Post colonial world. Cathy Caruth gives her idea of trauma that trauma is a violent event which has lifetime effect on the minds of victims and survivors. At the first stance trauma is not felt by the victim by later on its memory always haunt the victim. Trauma has psychological effects on the mind of victims as they feel constant fear and sense of loss. The victims become unable to cope up with the situation. Red Birds by Muhammad Hanif and Weep not Child have the same psychological effects as both of these novels are in war and post war era of post colonial world.

Keywords: War Trauma, Psychological Effects, Trauma stress

Introduction

The word Trauma has its origin from Latin word TRAUMA, which means a serious wound and injury to the body. Trauma is cited as emotional wound which leads towards psychological injury or it might be an event causes distress. It is believed that trauma has more psychological effects than physical, and the effects are mental threats. These threats can lead mental and even physical breakdown. In this post modern era trauma theory has earned it independent scope and is studied as trauma theory. The theory of trauma has its root from Freud's Psychoanalysis and says, "all neurosis was a result of previous traumatic experience" (Rick 2).The term "Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder" (PTSD) is a fundamental concept to trauma theory; it was propounded from Freud's "traumatic neurosis" by the American Psychiatric Association in 1980. PTSD is considered one of the world's fatal illnesses. In the war inflicted parts of the world, victims of terror do not suffer terror attack as much as they suffer PTSD that

becomes persistent afterwards. It can be said this PTSD leads towards war trauma. War trauma has its deep impact on psyche on the victim and survival of the traumatic event. For the study of these perspectives works, *Weep not Child* by Ngugi WaThiong'o and *Red Birds* by Muhammad Hanif have been taken as key texts. The core idea of this research is based on Cathy Caruth's idea that trauma cannot be located as simple violent act or event in individual's past rather it is a the way not known in the first instance—returns to haunt the individual later on. The traumatic experience puts a negative and frequently psychological effect on consciousness and memory that prevents the past from becoming incorporated into a present life of victim or survival. The characters in both of these novels are somehow survival as well victim of war trauma. Caruth's model of trauma emphasizes the suffering caused by an external source that makes internal changes to the mind and irreversibly changes identity. Caruth argues that trauma is the response to a deeply distressing or disturbing event that overwhelms individual's ability to cope, causes feelings of helplessness, diminishes their sense of sense and their ability to feel the full range of emotions and expression. Trauma theory and Caruth's model provide a plenty of space to explore the effect of war and trauma associated with war and post war in post colonial world. With the help of trauma theory the research indicates the psychological effects of war and post war trauma on the psyche of victims and survival and to understand their behavior under PTSD. Moreover this research opens the path for future that war trauma not only occur at psychological level, but it has it impact on culture, socio-economic norms of the victims and survivals. The war trauma becomes the major cause if identity crisis in the life of victims and survivals.

Literature Review

In her review about *Red Birds*, Supriya Nair proposes that the novel is set in unnamed war-torn Muslim country. The country may be Pakistan or Afghanistan. If we consider long term bombing of America and allied drones in suspicion about Taliban and Al Qaeda, it may be the border line of Warizistan. Ironically Americans has called the territory as Nowhereistan as it is a border town. On one side there is a refugee camp and on the other side there is a Hangar of American troops, used for war operations. The teenage protagonist name as Momo found a pale skin American pilot Ellie in desert when his plane crashed. The time was damn time when Momo and Ellie met with each other. *Red Birds* is not about the absurdities and irrationalities of colonial encounter but actually it is a long trek of action to follow. In this novel, Muhammad Hanif writes like Buster Kreton; fearless, poker faced and not just making balancing comedy with tragedy but providing the idea of real difference between these two perspectives.

The theme of war and refugee life is the themes of classic writings and many western writers have written on this topic. *Red Birds* is discarded from its political context but the horror and shocks of war are its real subjects. So it can be said Red Birds is Hanif's most sorrowful book. This novel is a shambles because it explains a shambolic world. On every page, a struggle is found so truthfully with its dark and hulking subjects.

In The Hindu, Irfan Aslam does conversation with Muhammad Hanif about Red Birds. During question answer session Muhammad Hanif opens up his heart about writing Red Birds and says, "I think the novel is set in war-torn, devastated, half forgotten place and that place is my head. We sometimes tend to forget that we have been at war for more than 40 years. The Afghan war started when I was starting high school and now my own son is in university. We are

still pretending that it is war happening only in Afghanistan and we have got nothing to do with it. But we are perpetrators, collaborators and victims of this war.”

Mark Athitakis, in *The Washington Post*, posts his review about *Red Birds* that at the end of the novel a U.S. fighter pilot who is stuck in the unnamed place and desert presents a hectic cynical rationalization of war. “If I didn’t take out homes, who would provide shelter? . . . If I didn’t obliterate cities, how would you get to set up refugee camps? Where would all the world’s empathy go?” these lines depict the atmosphere of darkly comic war novels with sarcastic irony. *Red Birds* is a shrewd laugh-out-loud novel that doesn’t often put up comedy. But Hanif takes his novel to an unbound limit of mere irony, expanding his critique of America’s military interventions to include satire, ghost stories and absurdist touches

Undoubtedly, that the central target of Hanif’s satire is the American military. But the location of *Red Birds* is unnamed, his satire is more powerfully universal, while depicting whole complex of refugees, aid workers and they are forced to live with the absurdity of war culture. Momo gets a little smarter and intelligent about what should be done to make money. His knowledge, like the novel as a whole, is at once witty and crushing. “I am always gonna support the free market,” Momo says, “but am gonna stay away from the drug trade because let’s not forget that there is way more money in weapons and oil and do-goodery and it’s all legal.”

The *Guardian* publishes review about *Red Birds* that novel depicts the ugly story of war by the teenage refugees and philosopher dog. Major Ellie has assigned a mission to bomb at refugee camp during his mission he ends up in crashing his plane. He wanders the desert for eight days and then rescued by Momo and his dog. Ellie has been taken to the same refugee camp on which he was supposed to bomb. Momo’s elder brother Ali is disappeared for several days after a mysterious transaction between their father and American soldiers in Hangar.

Hangar is the sign of terror and mystery for the refugee camp residents. The mysterious Hangar plays an important role in the characterization and action of the novel. Momo is the most significant character of the novel as he is clever, funny, very ambitious and heartbroken. Momo represents the picture of children in refugee camp that they are deprived of each and every facility of life and even war has snatched the innocence of their childhood.

Red Birds depicts the harsh reality of America's hypocrisy and the role of American in destruction of Middle East and South Asia. Mutt, the philosopher dog gives a sarcastic criticism on US foreign policy. Mutt shares the book's narration with Ellie and Momo. Mutt's wisdom comes from his god gifted instinct sense of smell, which leads towards to emotions and motivations, "Fear smells like rotting apples, unrequited love like mustard. Regret is burnt bread. Tricks smell like onions and delusions like vinegar". (The Guardian)

In essay on *Weep not Child*, published in Paperap, Mathew writes that this novel is about the hope of future but gradually all the hopes vanish. The protagonist, Njoroge always hope and dreams for better future through getting education. But unfortunately he had been forced to leave his education and worked in an Indian shop and for him it was a shame. In political turmoil of Africa, Njoroge got some hope from Jomo the political leader, but British imperialist with the help of traitor like Jacobo, destroyed the culture and civilization of Kenyan people by capturing their land. Njoroge's brothers' imprisonment his father's death brought more catastrophe in the life of Njoroge.

James Murua Literary journal published review on *Weep Not Child* and considered the novel as the transition book. The novel portrays the way that how Kenyan villages were affected by their struggle for independence from British settlers. The dilemma of Kenyan people, the older ones who had lost their ancestral lands and linger onto fake hope that one day these lands will be returned by the British

settlers to the Kenyan people, represented by Ngotho. The fierce and impatient young men, like Boro who wanted their lands back at once, blamed the older ones for their cowardliness and betrayal and took refuge into the forest as freedom fighters. The young ones who wanted to make life better for their families and in doing so they worked for others represented by Kamau. Njoroge represented the youth with idealistic views on the foreign ways and considered education is the only way to cope up with the British settlers. Jacobo was the traitor who betrayed his own land and people in order to get riches and high status in the eyes of white settlers. Mr. Howland, the greedy settler who had the lust of the land, went to all lengths only to retain his hold on the lands of Kenyan people.

Kristen Williams in her review, published at Owlcation journal , discuss the character of Njoroge's father, Ngotho. Those lands belonged to their family for generation as ancestral land before Kenya became part of the British Empire, now on those lands Ngotho worked for Mr Howland. Kenyans could provide a good life and money for themselves through working on these lands. Ngotho believed in religious prophesy that the land would return to the rightful owners, so he "felt responsible for whatever happened to this land. He owed it to the dead, the living, and the unborn of this line, to keep guard" (Thiong'o 32). The difference in views between the father and son illustrates the effects of colonialism as generation gap. The new generation was willing to accept the white settler's traditions and customs while the old generation wants to remain intact with their native culture.

It has been observed that the British were imposing a binary on the Kenyan people as they used the term us/them. They had placed themselves in the higher superior position. In doing so, the native people of this country the Kenyan people, these "others" were the opposite of everything. The white settlers considered themselves intelligent, civilized, moral, and sophisticated. Trough these implication of superiority and inferiority, the British got the right to impose their culture, customs, rituals and laws on the Kenyan people.

Nasrullah Mambrol gives his analysis on Ngugi waThiong'o's works and says that he portrays the traumatic transition from colonized culture to an independent African society. His novels explain with brevity and clarity the problems which are created by this period of drastic change. The White settlers introduced the Superior European technology into Africa at the start of the twentieth century undermine traditional cultural values. This colonial domination led to a deterioration of indigenous culture. Nguni and Njoroge suffered from violence and trauma not only at physical level too. Nguni experience the harsh reality of self negation from self importance in the context of social violent turmoil. Njoroge faced trauma when his self image is distorted by Mr. Howland and he had been forced to abandon his education. And even he considered himself for all the miseries and hardship of the family.

Research Methodology

It is qualitative and interpretative research. For the analysis and interpretation, *Red Birds* by Muhammad Hanif and *Weep not Child* by Ngugi WaThiong'o haven been taken as key text. Cathy Caruth's model of trauma theory that trauma is not simple just an experience of any violent event rather trauma has a long lasting impact on human psyche and psychology. Traumatic event reoccurs in the mind of victim and survivor and haunts his memories. Even the traumatic event brings a permanent change in the personality and psyche of the victim and survivor. War trauma manipulates the human mind in several ways. War trauma not only has impact on the psychology of victims but also it brings transformation in society, culture and even in nations.

Analysis

The interpretation of the two texts is based on Cathy Caruth's model of trauma theory. Trauma is the response to a deeply distressing or disturbing event that overwhelms individuals' ability to cope, causes feelings of helplessness, diminishes their sense of sense and their ability to feel the full range of emotions and expression.

Psychological trauma is response to an event that a person finds highly stressful. Examples include being in a war zone, a natural disaster, or an accident. Trauma can cause a wide range of physical and emotional symptoms. Cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a dreadful event that leaves unforgettable marks on their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity ways. In first section I have analysed traumatic events in *Red Birds*.

In *Red Birds*, Muhammad Hanif elaborates different forms of traumas which are faced by the characters of very novel. These forms of trauma include; War trauma, psychological trauma, cultural trauma, identity trauma. In *Red Bird* these traumas can be observed very keenly because the novel has been written from the lens of refugees and post war era.

Refugees have experienced psychological trauma because of political or religious oppression, war, migration and resettlement. Refugees may experience imprisonment, torture, loss of property, malnutrition, physical assault, extreme fear, and loss of livelihood. Refugees during war and after war frequently separated from family members.

Momo and his family face extreme psychological trauma due to war and post war conditions. They lost their homes and property due to bombing by America. When they are shifted to refugee camp, they become victim of homesickness as well as they become under the stress of resettlement.

“And I’m gonna tell you: look with care, there is nothing to steal because everything has already been stolen” (Hanif, p.13). These lines show the traumatic experience of Momo. The word stolen has symbolic importance of destruction that there is nothing left behind for destruction. The country has been converted to shambles and ruins due to bombing by America. Momo shows his psychological side that after bombing they are forced to live in refugee camp without having basic facilities of life. Moreover his country has been robbed by the bombing. “it ran up and down the streets, blaring a faulty siren, announcing new deaths, promising may be you’re not gonna die and only lose a limb” (Hanif, p.14). Through these ideas Momo is depicting the traumatic side of his nature that he becomes resistant to that situation of post war and post bombing. Momo ruthlessly talks about death that may be it is a blessing to get seriously wounded rather than to die. Momo blames the whole situation of his war torn country, which snatches the innocence of his childhood and became a mature man of age fourteen, “You can’t be a child in this place for long” (Hanif, p.15). It can also be related to the war trauma that has its psychological impact on the mind of children who face war.

Momo shows a special kind of resistance towards his war trauma because he decides to become a business entrepreneur and wants to do business with American companies. “Some might say that I am evil entrepreneur, post-war profiteer, a party black marketer, and I am gonna tell you that is jealousy speak” (Hanif, p. 17)

Red Birds depicts the sense of loss by the people who face war and post war era. They have lost their country, their land, their culture, their identity. The location of desert and even the first part of novel named as *In the Desert* symbolic importance because it renders the sense of loss and identity crisis of the people. The unnamed refugee camp indicates the deterioration of the culture of the people and country.

Ali's disappearance leads towards the unlawful condition of the post war era. People lose their family member not only during war but also after the war. Ali's mother show psychological trauma when she yearns to meet her son throughout the novel. Ali and Momo's mother express her psychological trauma when she tries to justify that why did she send her son to the Hangar, "Boys need to go out in the world, so I let him. A proper job in the middle of the war, a job that didn't involve fighting" (Hanif, p.218). Mother Dear reveals the pain of mother and psychological trauma when she always thinks about his lost son, "A mother is motally wounded when she gives birth" (Hanif, p.223). She blames herself and her husband for Ali's disappearance. Ali's father shows helplessness when he fails to search out his son, "Right you are. We are fugees and we can't do a thing about it" (Hanif, p.110). Momo does the same as his mother, he also blames his father for Ali. Momo expresses his feeling of disgust that his father got greedy and he tries to pretend and present himself loyal in front of American soldiers, only to get a little favour of so called job. Even this cowardliness shows the delusion of Father Dear about America that one day they will have better future. This condition of delusion leads towards the traumatic experience of loss of son and this delusion haunts Father Dear as scattered dreams about American hypocrisy.

Mutt, Momo's dog is the most philosophical character in the novel. He depicts the agony of trauma of war inflicted people in a very subtle way. He shows his trauma about love and family bond. Momo loves him very much but war has changed his feelings. Mutt expresses his deep sadness, "I begged, I pleaded, I yelped and I barked as if the Camp was about to be overrun by a bunch of foul smelling cats" (Hanif, p.24). This picture portrays by Mutt also has a symbolic significance. The rotten cats can be the symbol of dead bodies during war and post war

era. The begging, pleading and yelping of Mutt can be compared with the helplessness and psychological trauma of people who experience war.

In *Red Birds*, loss of faith with the note of existentialism can also be absorbed. As traumatic experience of war and psychological impact of war people lost their faith in God as many other postmodern and postcolonial works depict. Mutt shows this sense of existentialism in post war traumatic condition, “God left this place a long time ago, and I don’t harbor any delusion about my own role on this earth but I can imagine what he must have felt” (Hanif, p. 26).

The war inflicted post modern and postcolonial world in *Red Birds* describes the horrifying effect of war. People remain in constant fear and horror and even in post war era they are haunted by those traumatic events. Through war the lusty nature of imperial world is brought on the surface. Mutt forcefully explains this when he says, “It was horrible and smelled of the memory of calves forcibly taken away when still suckling and the foul smell of all that milk stolen by humans” (Hanif, p. 31).

Lady Flowerbody is the symbol of America’s hypocrisy. When came to camp for consultation Momo is the only character who resists her presence and ironically give his remarks, “it was simple they bombed us and then sent us well-educated people to look into our mental health need. There were workshops called ‘Living with Trauma’ for parents” (Hanif, p.44). This also show the Teenage age Muslim mind that how do they resist and cope up with their post war traumatic situation by simply to resist it.

Ellie is supposed to bomb at the refugee camp but after his crash he also experiences the horror of war. He becomes scared of his position because he is rescued by Momo and has been taken to the same refugee camp where he was going to bomb. Ellie counts his fear about war, “I

can hear my own dead comrades shouting at me, giving me directions, warning me not to take the route I am taking” (Hanif, p. 57)

Muhammad Hanif aesthetically captures the cultural trauma of the war inflicted zone by comparing it with red birds. “Depleted uranium. Common canaries have been drinking water contaminated with low strength uranium and have mutated into red birds, basically canaries dipped in colour and made dumber” (Hanif, p.83). This mutation in canaries symbolizes the loss of culture and identity of war inflicted country. Moreover, it also illustrates that imperial hegemonic countries tarnish the culture of under developed countries. Red birds also symbolize the tyranny and cruelty of imperial world that imperialism is engulfing the underdeveloped countries by inflicting war on them. Imperial hegemonic world is like cutting the throat of humanity. People in war zone suffer trauma due to uncertainty about the future of their country, their nation and of course their families, “when someone dies in a raid or a shooting or when someone ‘s throat is slit, their last drop of blood transforms into a tiny red bird and flies away” (Hanif, p.84)

Ngugi WaThiongo’s novel *Weep Not Child* captures the traumatic and violent experience of Kenyan people during the end of WWII and Mau Mau war. After WWII the British came to Kenya and settles there while capturing the ancestral lands of Kenyan people. Kenyan people were forced to work on their own lands and even the British settlers demanded heavy taxes from the natives Kenya. The British Empire sought help from Kenyan people in WWII and in returned the made Kenya their colony.

Ngotho and his son Njoroge experience the trauma during the time of revolution as their hopes and dreams shattered at the failure of revolution and even the Mau Mau war.

The title of the first chapter, '*Where Did Our Land Go?*' has symbolic importance because after the turmoil of WWII the Kenyan lands were snatched. Ngunjiri gets confused when he becomes unable to understand and comprehend the whole socio-political condition of Kenya. Even he does not appreciate the resistance towards Mr Howlands, who is the forced owner of Ngunjiri's lands. Njoroge asks Ngunjiri, "But where did our land?" (Thiong'o, p. 14) and Ngunjiri replies, "I am an old man now. But I have asked that question many times, waking and sleeping" (Thiong'o, p.14). These lines depict the psychological trauma of Ngunjiri that he cannot claim his own lands due to colonial turmoil.

Ngunjiri always remains in hope that one day Kenya will get freedom from the British Empire as he himself was the part of WWI. He sticks to the delusion that white men will evacuate their lands, "My father's land was taken from him. He died lonely, waiting for the white man to go. But the white man stayed. My father died on the land, working for another man" (Thiong'o , p.15). Ngunjiri also expresses his disgust towards the hypocrisy of British Empire that the Kenyan people were used as a tool by British Empire and in return they themselves were becomes slaves of white people, "We helped the British to win the war and we came back tired. We said to each other: "We have helped them. What will they give us... they took our lands" (Thiong'o, p. 15)

Ngunjiri's calamity rises when he becomes the enemy of Mr. Jacobo and Mr. Howlands. Ngunjiri considers Mr. Jacobo a traitor because Mr. Jacobo develops acquaintance with the white settlers. Mr. Jacobo becomes the influential person, when he opposes the strike and accompanies Mr. Howlands. On the first day of strike, when Ngunjiri sees Mr. Jacobo on the stage, he becomes furious, "The battle was now between these two- Jacobo on the side of the white people and Ngunjiri on the side of black people" (Thiong'o , p. 39). At this moment Ngunjiri urges the crowd

to attack on the stage, on Jacobo. This incident brings atrocities to the life and family of Ngotho as he loses his job at Mr. Howlands' fields.

The sixth chapter of the novel named as *Fear and Anger* shows the trauma of the Kenyan people as they are feeling fear about the failure of strike as well as they want to show resistance against white settlers. Kori and Boro become the part of Mua Mua freedom revolution with some other young men of their tribe. When they visit their village they always, "They talked about war, unemployment, and stolen land" (Thiong'o, p.33) and the elders listen to them. These young men instigate the strike because they want to get their lands back and the white settlers to return to their home, Britain. They show the unity and resistance against the British Empire, "The strikers would show the white men that the black men were not slaves" (Thiong'o, p.33). But the failure of strike ultimately brings trauma not only for Ngotho but for the whole community because only after that the terms and conditions have been made harsh for the Kenyan people.

Kamau, Ngotho's elder son shows the traumatic agony of inferiority complex when he compares a black man with the white man and eventually Africa with Europe. He shows the sense of loss of dignity and glory which was associated with Kenya, with Africa. For Kenyan people land is kind of blessing which has been gifted to them by God. But now the white settlers have snatched this gift and the Kenyan people are now under the slavery. He expresses his disgust when he says, "Blackness is not all that makes a man. Rich men – black or white-never want to others to get rich. Sometime a European is better than an African" (Thiong'o, p. 20)

Ngotho bears the trauma of loss of his son during WWII. Deep in his heart he always remembers his son and ponders about the injustice which has been done by the British Empire. British Empire uses many young lives of Kenya in order to win the WWII but in return makes

Kenya their colony. Mr. Howland's son also dies in WWII but it was their war not the Kenyan people, in spite of this fact Kenyan people help British Empire. When Mr. Howland recalls his dead son Peter, Ngotho says nothing but in his mind want to say Mr. Howland, "You white men took my son away too" (Thiong'o , p.25)

Kenyan people suffer a lot even on the basis of colour and race. Njoroge listens about the failure of strike just because of colour bar. He comes to know that black people cannot eat in hotels because of their. For African people black colour is the symbol of beauty and celebration but after colonization, the white settlers make the black colour, a sign of inferiority, evilness, "The colour-bar was everywhere" (Thiong'o, p. 44)

The second part of the novel named as *Darkness Falls*, indicates the final decline of Kenyan people at the hand of white settlers. The British government declares the freedom fighters as terrorist and many of them taken to detention camp. Detention camp is they symbol of tyranny and cruelty where the white settlers torture the young men of Mua Mua revolution. Kori, after the failure of strike, is being taken to detention camp but on the way he escapes from the truck and reaches home. Kenyan people have been forced to live like thieves and terrorists in their own homeland, "Many, many young men have been imprisoned as terrorists" (Thiong'o, p.48).

Ngotho, once a brave man, now lives under fear for his family, his situation becomes traumatic when Boro joins Mua Mua revolution and kills Mr. Jacobo . Ngotho knows that Mr. Jacobo will never spare him and his sons. Ngotho's agony becomes much intense when he realizes that he cannot take back his father's land, "He no longer hoped that he would get his land back. The land of his fathers was lost forever" (Thiong'o, p50). This loss of land also symbolizes the loss of Kenyan culture and traditions. Boro like Ngotho also knows the reality but

in different manner. Boro judges the policy of divide and rule of British Empire. The British Empire not only subjugates the land by sending their own settlers but also spoils the traitor of native land by giving them money. Even native man like Jacobo, becomes the traitor, “White people stand together and this makes them strong. But black people are divided against each other” (Thiong’o, p. 50-51). Ultimately Boro kills Jacobo and Ngotho in order to save his son from white settlers torture, confesses the murder. Ngotho bear the torture of castration as he has been taken to the detention camp. Even before this traumatic event, he unable to save his son Kori and his wife Njeri, when they are captured by the police, as they break the curfew. Ngotho’s trauma ultimately leads him towards sheer sense of distress and disappointment that he could save his family and himself, “Jacobo has done this. He wants to ruin me-to destroy this family. And he will do it” (Thiong’o, p.53). Ngotho at his death bed experience the trauma of loss and destruction and even the decline of his own personality from self importance to self negation. His family becomes shatter and he fails to save his family from the traumatic experience of colonization, “The white men want my sons, they want young blood” (Thiong’o, p.73).

Njoroge’s trauma becomes much severe when all his hopes and dream dash to ground. Throughout his childhood towards his adolescence, he sees himself rebuilding the nation and country. He hopes that after getting education he will become a politician and will help the black people to get freedom, like Jomo who is the leader of nation. Njoroge always talks about better future with Mwihaki, “Everything will be all right in the end. God will help” (Thiong’o, p.59). When Njoroge reaches high school, he is captured by Mr. Howlands. He is taken to detention camp and accused of being the member of Mua Mua. They torture Njoroge at detention camp and force him to confess but he refuses to do so. At last he suffers the same torture of castration as his father did. His trauma reaches to height because he has been forced to abandon his

education and his family was breaking. He cannot do anything to stop destruction, “Njoroge hated the dead chief Jacobo even more. He cried with fear, but he did not pray” (Thiong’o, p.71). Njoroge self image of being a gentle man is crushed harshly by the white settlers. Njoroge seeks Mwhiki as a final hope but she also leaves him distress. Njoroge loses everything, his father, his brothers, his education and eventually his love. His dreams and hope of better future turn into nightmare of fear and sadness. In his deep agony and distress he tries to attempt suicide but he could not do so as he finds himself a coward, a coward who always remain in hope but ultimately ends in distress and disappointment, “Because you are a coward” (Thiong’o, p.79)

Discussion and conclusion

From the above analysis of both these novels, I have found some similarities and dissimilarities in the traumatic experience and its psychological effect on the characters. Momo in *Red Birdsshow* resistance like Boro, but Njoroge always remain in deception of better future. Momo hopes do business with American company and want to become an entrepreneur as Njoroge wants to become a politician after getting education. Ngotho like Dear Father always remains in the fake hopes for better future and ultimately fail to give protection to their families. The cultural decline can be seen in both of these novels as a result of war. In *Red Birds* people face cultural loss in shape of imperialism and in *Weep not Child* people face colonization. Destruction occurs in both novels not only at physical level but also at spiritual level too like in case of Momo, Boro, Njoroge. The trauma of war is different in these two novels but the psychological impact is almost same as we see the agony of the characters. The titles of both these novel have the symbolic significance as *Red Birds* symbolizes the bombing and deaths because after death the blood splashes convert into red birds and may be the mutation of birds symbolizes the mutation of culture and civilization after bombing. *Weep not Child* symbolizes

the life of Njoroge, the child in the title is Njoroge to whom writer consoles after the destruction and collapse of his family, nation and country.

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