



Vol. 3 No. 11 (November) (2025)

Belated Trauma and Defense Mechanism in Tariq Rahman's Short Stories: A Psychoanalytic Reading

Abida Parveen

Research Scholar at the Department of English, University of Sargodha, Sargodha, Pakistan Email: aabiabakhtawar@gmail.com

Dr Rabia Faiz

Assistant Professor at the Department of English, University of Sargodha, Sargodha, Pakistan Email: rabia.faiz@uos.edu.pk

Hafiza Muarifa Masood Mirza

Visiting Lecturer at the Department of English, University of Sargodha, Sargodha, Pakistan Email: muarifamasood@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The present study investigates belated trauma in Rahman's selected short stories from a psychological perspective. While existing literature on Rahman's stories has showcased sociopolitical disorder, religious extremism, identity crisis, and violence, there is a limited scholarship on systematic psychological scrutiny of his works using rhetorical expressions through which trauma is inscribed belatedly. Utilizing a psychoanalytical lens, the study employs Caruth's notion of trauma as a belated experience in conjunction with Freud's Defense Mechanism as a theoretical model to illustrate the complexities of a character's traumatic memory, which is thematically represented through irony and metaphors. It focuses on the unconscious defensive strategy and psychological strains of the characters addressed through metaphoric distortion and ironic framing. The findings of the study highlight that repression appears through fragmented narrative omissions to modify internal struggles into symbolic forms. It allows the characters to prolong the direct encounter while protecting their return in the belated appearance of traumatic events. The study contributes to the analytical dimension of psychological reading in South Asian fiction, suggesting further exploration of contemporary trauma theory in literary contexts.

Keywords: Belated Trauma, Defense Mechanism, Psychoanalysis, Irony, Metaphor

Introduction

Trauma in existing literature has conventionally focused on historic and thematic constructions. It often transcends with direct narration, functioning through rhetoric devices which indicates the psychological conflicts and belated emergence of traumatic events. Trauma is experienced abruptly in the moment to be completely comprehended, therefore, occurs in fragmented and haunted recollection of memory (Caruth, 1995). Caruth (1996) proposes the contradiction that the traumatic incidents are not partially manifested in behaviour at the time of their occurrence rather suddenly reappear in the aftermath, as memory. Rahman employs Caruth's notion of belated trauma in his short stories, namely *The Dance of Beards*, *Doom*, and *The Alien*. Rahman represents the psychological state of the characters holding unspeakable pain inside them, surfaced in



Vol. 3 No. 11 (November) (2025)

the form of fragmented narratives.

Freud's Defense Mechanism (1936) renders a broader psychoanalytical understanding of how Rahman's characters respond to overwhelming experiences. It describes the mental state of his characters unconsciously defending themselves from immense traumatized experiences as adequate or subordinate hostile forms (Vaillant, 1992). Freud apprised in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) about the unconscious mental state which utters its restrained ideas in the form of cloaked and altered mental imagery (Freud, 1991). Therefore, these mechanisms can be manifested in literature using rhetorical devices such as irony and metaphor, sanctioning trauma to be indirectly embedded in the unconscious of the characters in the selected texts.

Rahman's short stories represent this link between belated trauma and defense mechanism. For example, in *The Snail* (1996), the individuals who undergo psychological issues want to change themselves either positively or negatively. When the Snail's friends left him in the forest, he was in pain but was as good as dead. The line, "It was blessed with a brain which was tucked away in the remote extremity of its tail", symbolizes the people who put themselves in danger to achieve something new (Rahman, 1996, p.24). Unlike Rahman, Morrison in *Beloved* (1987) interposed the historical trauma through symbolism representing the African American identity (Ali et al., 2024). McEwan's uses irony and metaphor in *Atonement* (2001) to frame belated memory and remorse raised after the terrorist attacks of 9/11 (Letissier, 2011). In each example, rhetorical devices provide mental representations which can be clearly comprehended through the prism of trauma, which is not always grasped in the instant of its occurrence, but emerges belatedly through intrusive memories, recurring images, and silences.

The psychoanalytical approach in the present study modifies a systematic reading of trauma in fiction. The study locates Rahman's literary contribution alongside other scholarly explorations of trauma as a belated experience. By connecting Caruth's belated trauma and Freud's defense mechanism, the study implements a coherent psychoanalytical interpretation of rhetorical expressions as a primary medium to articulate the undetermined mental conflicts thematically, rather than linguistically and structurally.

Statement of the Problem

The works of Rahman are surrounded by socio-political conflicts, displacement, and the aftermath of war. Despite the growing body of scholarship on Rahman's works, the existing literature has not been psychoanalytically rendered in terms of trauma at the level of narrative structure and character formation. Trauma in Rahman's fiction often appears in the form of fragmented narratives aligning with Caruth's trauma as a belated experience, highlighting a temporal delay. Simultaneously, Freud's model of Defense Mechanisms subtly shapes the attitudes and the behaviors of the characters and the coping strategies they adopt to deal with their traumatic histories. This study, therefore, addresses the gap in existing literature by offering a psychoanalytic reading of Rahman's selected short stories foregrounding belated trauma through the rhetoric expressions of irony and metaphors. The objectives of the study include how rhetorical and narrative techniques function as primary means to communicate psychological imprints of belated trauma and the resultant defense mechanism in the characters. The metaphors signal displaced experiences, whereas irony thematically discloses opposition among mental representation and reality, operating as indirect symbols of psychological processes.



Vol. 3 No. 11 (November) (2025)

Research Questions

The study has been planned within the broader paradigm of psycho-analytic studies and employs Freud's Defense Mechanisms which investigates Caruth's notion of trauma as a belated experience through rhetoric devices such as metaphor and irony in Rahman's selected short stories. The study deals with the following research questions:

How have irony and metaphor been utilized as psychological representations of defense mechanisms and belated trauma?

How is the conjunction between Freud's defense mechanisms and Caruth's belated trauma manifested in the characters of Rahman's short stories?

Significance of the Study

Rahman's stories reveal characters using irony and metaphors as vehicles of defense mechanisms to cope with belated trauma, affecting their societal interactions. The Defense Mechanism highlights the characters' self-perceptions and relationships with societal norms. The study enhances a comprehension of psychoanalytical criticism by rendering a systematic investigation of Freud's Defense Mechanisms in literature. By interlacing Caruth's belated trauma, the study explores the unconscious psyche traced in character's storytelling, contributing a replaceable and grounded psychoanalytical framework in South Asian literary contexts. The characters who suffer through trauma can re-determine their own world by coloring the internal representation of reality, consequently, gaining serenity in life.

Literature Review

Fiction represents life and helps the readers to understand themselves and resolve their mental and emotional conflicts through catharsis. The setting, plot, characterization, and events in the texts are a rich source of describing the psyche of the characters exploring the emotional, psychological, social, and personal experiences (Zafar, Ahsan, and Hussain, 2020). Rahman, in his narratives, has explored the socio-political themes, religious conflicts, and identity crisis. However, the psychological interpretation of his texts remain under-explored. The scholarship has vastly neglected the execution of trauma, in particular, the unconscious process as defined by Freud.

In parallel, trauma can often be associated with psychoanalytical perspective. Caruth (1996) mentions that narrative of an individual's discontinuous temporal state of psyche result in trauma. Relying on Freud's psychoanalytical essay of *Pleasure Principles*, Caruth describes trauma as a wound that exclaims pain revealing in the aftermath as flashbacks, memory lapses, and dreams in the form of distorted images (Balaev, 2018). For example, in Sidhwas's *Ice Candy Man* (1988), the metaphorical expression of cracking of the earth shows displacement which is central to Freud's defense mechanism. The narrative retrospection of Lenny indicates partition violence often working as a psychological buffer. The metaphor distances the character from an immediate recollection of traumatic memories. (Choudhury, 2020).

Simultaneously, the unconscious mental representation of the metaphor, *History House*, in Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997) represents the prohibited relationship of Ammu and Velutha (Outka, 2011). The repressed memory reappears as symbolic clues rather than Freudian site of return, where the repressed repeatedly re-emerges through symbolic cues rather than explicit recognition. The split personality of the individuals distorts their true self and they lose their ability to make a distinction between the conscious and the unconscious (Mohammed & Jassim, 2023). If one can celebrate a true sense of self, it will result in progression, but if there is no celebration of it, there would



Vol. 3 No. 11 (November) (2025)

be adverse effects (Ryan, 2007).

Similarly, Irony has also been depicted as a defense mechanism in Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981). It is used to recollect the memories of partition, sanctioning Saleem Sinai's rationalization to highlight the harsh realities that protect the ego from psychological distress (Gaedtke, 2014). The examples highlight that the rhetoric expressions such as irony and metaphor often function as psychoanalytical tools besides being linguistic entities. When explored alongside this backdrop, the scarcity of research in the works of Tariq Rahman becomes clearly evident. The present study employs irony and metaphor in Rahman's short stories namely *The Dance of Beards*, *Doom*, and *The Alien* that intensely exemplifies Caruth's (1996) theory of belated trauma and Freud's psychoanalytical framework of Defense Mechanism to provide a broader understanding of character's traumatic experiences and their self-perception and flourish the scope of postcolonial trauma narratives beyond its current canon.

Research Methodology

The present study employs psychoanalytical interpretation of Rahman's short stories by interconnecting Caruth's Belated Trauma and Freud's Defense Mechanism. Through a qualitative, interpretative methodology grounded in psychoanalytic literary theory, the unconscious mental process of the characters in Rahman's short stories, *The Dance of Beards*, *Doom*, and *The Alien* are explored. The study adopts irony and metaphors as rhetorical markers of trauma that re-frame harrowing incidents to determine the character's defensive functions. Irony categorizes each mechanism, including denial, displacement, projection, rationalization, and regression, by performing a conjunctive validation with belated trauma. The next section synthesizes the theoretical lenses of Caruth and Freud to uncover belated trauma encoded, articulated and mediated within Rahman's selected short stories.

Analysis and Discussion

This present study demonstrates Rahman's use of metaphors and irony to highlight belated trauma in the selected short stories, *Doom*, *The Dance of Beards*, and *The Alien*. The present study examines the intricate structure through which the stories both disclose and conceal mental suffering and self-perception of the characters as analyzed through the lens of Freud's Defense Mechanism. The perspectives of Caruth's trauma as a belated experience has been applied to these narratives. The findings of the study amend the reader's comprehension of the relation between psychoanalysis and literature by presenting how rhetorical devices may be loaded with the idea of delayed trauma.

Analysis of The Doom

The Doom is a dreadful short story of control, maltreatment, power, and fragmented self as narrated by Rahman about Aamir, a man infested by his compulsion with supremacy. The rhetorical devices such as irony and metaphor signify falsehood in Aamir's actions and self-perception. The narrative ceaselessly questions his psychology of dominance by highlighting his weak masculinity and moral diminution.

Extract 1: Denial

"He walked bravely, steadily and the noise of the boots was hard and strident. But he didn't reach the door. He crumpled down just before the bathroom door" (p.108).

The example showcase Freud's denial through bodily represented metaphor as Aamir perceives himself as an unbeatable leader, whereas he collapses in the time of weakness. His harsh and strident boots resemble the ego of inflated military posture to repress



Vol. 3 No. 11 (November) (2025)

vulnerability, a classic defense of Freud, creating a facade of consistency. Therefore, he is facing a challenge where his strength is only an illusion and his body exhibits his undetermined trauma. Caruth's trauma unconsciously returns through deferred eruptions when the bodily collapse emphasizes failed denial. Similarly, Amir's character reflects irony. His character presents controlled actions as a symbol of dominance. Although his choreography unmasks the psychological conflict he endeavors to hide from society, the controlled behavior and unconscious disintegration constitute a patterned creates a patterned reciprocal action of self-control and belated return of events.

Extract 2: Regression

"It is ominous Mian Sahib, he was saying. 'Can't you do something' came the anguished voice of

his father.' "The stars are against it,' come the adamant voice. But precious stones can woo the

stars, muttered his father "Woo? Ha!" came the indignant response" (p.105).

The example portrays Freud's regression corresponding to metaphoric acknowledgment of astrology. Rahman reverts Mian Aziz's childishness as he relied on destiny and external guidance. The psychic retreat of Mian Aziz signifies his trauma as a failure to encounter his personal inability, therefore, he is probing for shelter in superstition. The shift in decision-making by blaming the stars and precious stones indicates Aziz's failure to bear contemporary distress. Caruth's belated trauma elaborates the insistence of astrological doctrine as it uncovers the psychological dependence embedded in current scenarios. The ironic expression "Woo? Ha!" portrays an anxiety between the power of control and the absurdity of quest through symbolic object. It highlights that Freud's regression provides both temporary comfort and later delusion.

Extract 3: Projection

"Look at the colony We live like dogs, said a man with a red beard" (p. 109).

The following statement is ironic, as Aamir views his employees as dogs. The internal dread and social marginalization has been laced with external circumstances. Aamir was once entirely dependent on his employees and now discards them due to his aggressive behavior. The employees' destabilized environment is a tangible state of their massive trauma, as they have been humiliated by the upper class. It highlights tension between the character's subjective experience and the worldly representation. Aamir is completely unconcerned about his trauma, which symbolizes his split mental state. Through collective experiences, the example illuminates psychic relief while directly involving in an unresolved trauma.

Extract 4: Displacement

"The General Manager was showing his father photographs of dilapidated flats, skinny children,

ulcerous, ugly women. There was horror on Mr. Aziz's face" (p. 110).

The example illustrates Freud's displacement as Aamir avoids responsibility due to internal anxiety caused by the industry by witnessing his father's reaction passively rather than actively taking part. The photographs showcased by the General Manager are metaphorical as it targets the ego of the character without engaging the internal conflicts. Due to horror on Aziz's face, the displacement resembles irony of immaturity in handling. Instead of facing the consequences handling the consequences of his actions. Moreover, the trauma of social cognizance is not processed at the time of the incident but



Vol. 3 No. 11 (November) (2025)

later returns as intrusive images in the temporal dimension. Rahman presents repeated patterns of irony and metaphors of mental defense to cope with trauma awaiting belated recognition.

Extract 5: Rationalization

“This time he struck at the workers colony. It was, he said, a white elephant” (p. 109).

Aamir’s psychological disintegration is reflected in the destruction of employees’ welfare. His disregard for the suffering of others and detachment highlight his moral and existential quandary. The white elephant labels his aggressive interference. He dehumanizes the employees by calling them brown bodies and chickenfuckers, decreasing their status to mere means of exploitation. The character’s ego metaphorically transforms a destructive behavior into a symbolic indication of economic value by uncovering the moral and mental conflicts. This rationalization allows an immediate psychological equilibrium while exploiting the potential for later circumstances.

In the analysis of *Doom*, trauma can be explained by Freud’s psychoanalytical theory of defense mechanisms. Aamir hides his anxiety with aggression and hate. His mental state appears to have exclusively reversed, as he has transformed and distanced emotionally and is incompetent of dealing with the fears of his past. Moreover, Rahman uses traumatic notion, particularly Caruth’s (1996) belated trauma, to foreground the familial cycles of violence and misery. The dissonant household and diachronic suffering that Aamir received from Mian Aziz, whose final words of doom and evil represent the unavoidable nature of this inhumane cycle, is reflected in his actions.

Analysis of The Dance of Beards

The Dance of the Beards, a short tale by Tariq Rahman, offers a scary look at dictatorship, power, and the psychological effects of memory. The story portrays a patriarchal and feudal society, and a young narrator attempts to navigate the terrific realm of authoritarian control, represented by the dominance of bearded elders. An environment where obedience is required and rebellion is not accepted is fostered by the metaphors of beards, which are a frequent emblem of authority and control for some and trauma for the rest.

Extract 1: Denial

“And then the dance of the beards started: white, red and black beards bent over me and receded and as they came near I shouted” (p. 51).

In this example, metaphorical deformation has been revealed through Freudian denial. The disembodied white, red, and black beards as metaphors is presented through the narrator’s psychology into a dreamlike spectacle. As the reality becomes intolerable, the ego denies it directly. Rather than conflict, the dance creates a rhythmic movement where the narrator psychologically negates the complete acknowledgement of danger orienting with Caruth’s belated trauma. The scream of beards coming near arrest the deferred moment of memory when denial disintegrates. These metaphors highlight a pattern, initiating the character’s psyche to face trauma by denying the literal connotations.

Extract 2: Displacement

“I listened to them and sucked a mango here and a lime there. Then I escaped into the green world outside. And there boys flew kites” (p. 50).

In this example of metaphorical displacement, the speaker ignores trauma and immerses in the women’s quarter, often termed in the story as *Zenana*. Mango, lime, and the green



Vol. 3 No. 11 (November) (2025)

world work as an emotional escape. Fleeing kites, in the younger generation show their difficulty to cope with trauma. It shows their regressive illusion of escapism, where they find comfort in fruits, stories, and the environment. According to Caruth's belated trauma, the pain has been surfaced later which highlights the ironic state of the boys in Zenana. The Quranic teachings evoke dread rather than peace. It shows the narrator's failure of self, where he is incapable of asserting his importance. Rahman instruments the world as a metaphorical corner for temporary displacement to inhibit anxiety, however, setting up the scales for the delayed reappearance of repressed experiences at the same time. The lines disclose a recurring structure where rhetorical point of view inscribes psychological termination.

Extract 3: Projection

"They commanded, they taught, they prescribed what one was to eat, and what to drink" (p. 51).

The traumatic state from physical abuse to mental control, impacts character's thought and conduct. The narrator's self-perception depicted by this ironic expression is strained by socially defined inherited actions. Religious leaders have power over daily circumstances, despite their affirmation of moral charisma. It articulates character's self-perception when they prescribe all features of life. The grandfather's restricted authority and his demand for commitment from even a small child particularize the weakness of autocratic conceptions. Religious and social leaders who were supposed to be knowledgeable men and women became symbols of oppression. The narrator cannot blame his family's evils even if he is the heir.

Extract 3: Regression

"I went out cringing and the eyes of the Maulvi Saab drilled holes into me. And once I was

inside the hubbub of the Zenana, I forgot all about the lesson" (p. 49)

The example highlights the trauma as a patterned psychological breakdown by the characters in Zenana. To exceed the ego's capacity, Rahman portrays Maulvis's drilling gaze and hubbub of Zenana for escapism of the younger generation where they play, eat fruits, and listen to the stories. Instead of confronting their dread, they regress to childish behaviors, which is a sign of Freud's defense mechanism of regression. The drilling holes communicate an intolerable scrutiny that evokes an adult's ego. The contrast between Zenana stories and lessons from the Quran functions as a defensive erasure. The immediate "forgetting" of the lesson is not a mere distraction but an instance of regression functioning as a defensive erasure, where the psyche temporarily abandons mature cognitive tasks representing the interplay between ironic shelter and coarse metaphor used by the narrator.

Extract 5: Rationalization

"I and Bansi left the field and Bansi told me that the field was mine and the old man was an impudent dotard" (p. 50).

The example illustrates the narrator's privilege as she gives the justification of stealing food. It converts a morally disquieting incident into an apparently justified story. Instead of guilt, the character has been influenced by money which shapes her moral detachment. The condition of old man is ironic as he is surviving with trauma, facing the injustice by the girl and he is helpless. The field becomes a spatial metaphor of ownership. It resembles an imagined sphere of ego where he feels pleasure in stealing corn from the



Vol. 3 No. 11 (November) (2025)

old man's farm. This psychological consequence of subsidence transforms an indeterminate situation into a rational judgement that permanently protects the psyche of the old man.

The present study explores The Dance of Beards abiding belated trauma and depression about dominance. The characters are facing difficulties in establishing their personal identity in a patriarchal setting. The analysis reveals the narrator's sufferings shaped by trauma and reflection of the past as his personal conflict. The story, in the end, questions the readers to reckon the effects of inherited aggression, the damage of abidance, and the ways in which authority leaves its mark on the human mind.

Analysis of The Alien

Extract 1: Displacement

"It was cold and the cold dug itself uncomfortably into his ribs. The overcoat he wore was frayed around the collar and hung loose in wrinkled folds It was hardly equal to the chill of the winter" (p. 175).

According to Freud's psychoanalytical theory of defense mechanism, the above statement shows displacement due to physical discomfort that mirrors Hasan's internal alienation onto external controllable factors. The cold weather acts as a metaphor for profound sufferings and insecurities. Therefore, he avoids to express his true emotions, displacing his psychological weakness onto the tangible perception of winter. The frayed overcoat is ironic as it covers the internal psychological strains. These unresolved struggles are not experienced directly rather in the form of environmental and substantial metaphors, predicting their re-occurrence in a more invasive and charged forms. This recurring pattern converts tangible psychological anxieties into socially conscious engagements where displacement functions as a structural mechanism through which trauma belatedly returns in the story.

Extract 2: Denial

"And so he tried to shirk it off. Just now, for instance, as soon as the bare one-room flat of the young men appeared in his imagination, another room rose in its place" (p. 175).

Hasan's complete denial is the ignorance of his surroundings that resulted in painful feelings. The character neutrally detaches himself from his surroundings, exchanging one-room with another where the ego contradicts with his actual emotions. This situation defines Freud's denial as an obstructing mechanism of the unconscious recognition, as he tries to avoid those memories, but they are getting more realistic through metaphorical substitution. Hasan's avoidance of memories illustrates that trauma might inadvertently resurface. The bare one-room flat denotes Caruth's belated trauma as a variation between mental traumatic struggles and psychological displacement. Furthermore, Rahman implies irony when another room rose in its place where the mind struggles aggressively under the burden of confronted actual memory. This condition highlights a disconnection between psychological appearance and hidden pain.

Extract 3: Rationalization

"It was too late to turn back so he kept walking briskly. They didn't say a word, just stared at him stolidly" (p. 175).

The following example portrays Hasan's rationalization as his ego built logical thinking to confront internal dread. Although he is ignorant and silent, yet from the inside, he is suffering from racial enmity. His briskly walk states an ironic condition of returning late



Vol. 3 No. 11 (November) (2025)

where his silence can be seen as ominous as explicit violence. It illustrates Caruth's belated trauma through temporal dynamics. Hasan's ego temporarily manages his perception and behavior, leaving inherent anxiety to reappear symbolically. This rationalization reveals irony as a patterned scheme to impose logical reasoning that threatens traumatic events.

Extract 4: Projection

"And dogs barked and rickshaws blew their horns and men quarrelled and the night was alive and he lay luxuriating in the bed not feeling lonely at all" (p. 182).

Hasan blames external forces such as barking dogs, honking rickshaws, and quarreling men and ignores his own internal exile. The ego impulses internal anxieties onto external environment. The city appears as a conflicting space where the character experiences a sense of control and discomfort. The noise is ironic as the character desires peace, stating conscious and unconscious projection of isolation in the external world. This statement represents Caruth's belated trauma as he cannot accept that his ideology and lack of political affiliation left him powerless. The harmony with the world is a defensive construction, highlighting the recursive repetition of anxieties, maintaining firmness in the ego and preserve belated awareness.

Extract 5: Regression

"This was in a way, his latest obsession, dwelling places. He thought of houses, villas, apartments, students digs, attics and huts" (p. 175).

This is a nostalgic reflection of the home. It highlights Freud's regression as a metaphorical retreat lapsing into primitive psychological modes when the present becomes challenging. The classification of dwelling places not only works as architectural content but also as symbolic refuge. The obsessional psychic listing of places signifies alteration from a mature personality to a childlike persuasion with nonhazardous enclosures, proposing the psychological scrutiny for containment. The continual occurrence of events among houses, villas, apartments represents a metaphorical endeavor to retrace refuge through notional places. It allows ego to obviate direct conflict with contemporary distress. The spatial imagery absorbs distress, however, the underlying hostility remains unrefined, reappearing in intrusive forms in the aftermath of reality. The character is finding difficulty to move on as his personal identity has been fragmented between his past and a disconnected present.

Conclusion

The present study explores trauma in Tariq Rahman's selected short stories by interlinking Freud's defense mechanisms. Through irony and metaphors, Rahman presents characters' psychological struggles where the protagonist experiences a fractured identity, torn between their beliefs and the harsh realities of authoritarian rule and societal expectations. Firstly, Amir's denial through metaphoric deformation and ironic framing fastens his mental disruption even when the family assists him in acknowledging his moral and emotional betrayal. Secondly, regression has been symbolically retreated into safe places for escapism, such as stars, precious stones, hubbub of Zenana, fantasized dwellings through which the individuals evade overwhelming psychological threat. Thirdly, the displacement constantly represents the prevision of internal struggles over external objects such as fad, photographs, and cold weather through metaphor and irony to mediate mental strains and confront social situations. Fourthly, Rahman's depiction of rationalization constructs socially acceptable



Vol. 3 No. 11 (November) (2025)

definitions to justify moral actions through economic power, forced obedience, and logical reasoning. Lastly, Freud's projection as the attribution of internal restraint onto individuals, places, and social circumstances, which alters personal anxiety into socially or environmentally unsubtle forms, sanctioning temporary stability in the character's ego. By interlinking Freud's defense mechanism and Caruth's belated trauma, the defense provides a temporary escape. The characters postpone the complete processing of trauma, sanctioning it to re-emerge subsequently in a fragmented future memory. Conclusively, Rahman's selected narratives reveal the psychological landscape through an interplay of rhetorical devices to construct defense mechanisms to fight against persistent, unresolved force of belated trauma. In this way, the struggles of characters in state of guilt, dread and marginalization are illuminated. Through a presentation of belated trauma in psychoanalytical terms, the present study lays a contributory brick into the trauma studies from South Asia adding to a scholarship in region's studies on conflict and displacement in shaping psychic life of the individuals.

References

- Adnan Ali, Seema, & Sameena. (2024). Reconstructing Memory and Identity in Beloved by Toni Morrison: Application of Trauma Theory. *VFAST Transactions on Education and Social Sciences*, 12(4), 16–24. <https://doi.org/10.21015/vtess.v12i4.2003>
- Balaev, M. (2018). Trauma studies. A companion to literary theory, 360-371.
- Caruth, C. (1995). *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Caruth, C. (1996). *Unclaimed experience: Trauma, narrative, and history*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Choudhury, J. (2020). Study of Trauma and Transgression of the “Adult-child” in Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy-Man*. *Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, 12(5). <https://doi.org/10.21659/rupkatha.v12n5.rioc1s9n6>
- Gaedtke, A. (2014). Halluci-nation: Mental Illness, Modernity, and Metaphoricity in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*. *Contemporary Literature*, 55(4), 701–725. <https://doi.org/10.1353/cli.2014.0041>
- Letissier, G. (2011). “The Eternal Loop of Self-Torture”: Ethics and Trauma in Ian McEwan's *Atonement*. *Ethics and Trauma in Contemporary British Fiction*, 209–226. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789401200080_011
- Mohammed, Z. T., & Jassim, A. K. (2023). A Psychofeminist Analysis of the Plays Chosen by Tennessee Williams: *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, and *The Glass Menagerie*. *International Journal of Development in Social Sciences and Humanities*, 15, 61-67.
- Outka, E. (2011). Trauma and Temporal Hybridity in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*. *Contemporary Literature*, 52(1), 21–53. <https://doi.org/10.1353/cli.2011.001996>. *Language and Politics in Pakistan*. Oxford University Press.
- Rahman, T. (2002). *Selected Short Stories*.
- Ryan, M. (2007). *Literary Theory; A Practical Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Vaillant, G. E. (1992). *Ego mechanisms of defense: A guide for clinicians and researchers*. American Psychiatric Association.
- Whitehead, A. (2004). *Trauma Fiction*. Edinburgh University Press.



Vol. 3 No. 11 (November) (2025)

Zafar, M., Ahsan, M., & Hussain, Z. (2020). A Study of Traumatic Experiences of Female

Characters in Sophia Khan's Novel —Yasmeenl. Sir Syed Journal of Education and Social Research, 3(4), 275-281.