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## Autocracy, Displacement and Struggle for Independence Presented in the Selected Bangladeshi Literary Fiction

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### Abstract

*This research explores Tahmima Anam's A Golden Age as political writing in the context of the Bangladesh independence war, depicting an ideological conflict between Bangladesh's social democracy and Pakistani political leaders. Bengali people's participation in social democracy justifies their appeal for social equality and moral responsibility. During the divested civil conflict, they bear witness to physical pain, anxiety, displacement, and psychological fragmentation. Anam represents the traumatized Bangladesh self totally through the ongoing war of Bangladesh. The conflict of Bangladesh implies not only pain, victims, suffering, and struggling but also apparently visible through their persistent creed in social democracy. The major character Rehana becomes a traumatized individual because her life is triggered by traumatic experiences of war devastation in Dhaka thus feels the nightmare horrors of her son, who is involved in the war as a freedom fighter. Similarly, her anxiety, witnessing of destructed scenes, nightmare, and fragmented psychology generate a traumatized individual.*

**Key Words:** Trauma, War, Displacement, Social, Politics, Anxiety

### Introduction

This research explores Tahmima Anam's novel *A Golden Age* from the perspective of traumatic experience. *A Golden Age*, as a war representation, depicts the vivid incidents of the Bangladesh war of independence. The Bangladesh independence war was an outcome of autocracy by Bhutto and Yahiya Khan upon the Bengali people. And at the same time, the power of Sheikh Mujib was also exercised among the political parties, and his socialist absolutism ultimately made the Bengali movement inevitable. Therefore, Anam, in this every work, pasteurizes the traumatic vision through the vivid depiction of the war-chipped Bengali society. Objectively, Anam's

major character, Rehana, bears the Bangladesh war independence, who is the witness of mass destruction; she projects herself with the pathetic lives of Bengali people triggered by the long times' independence war. Rehana, who is the mother of freedom fighters in the novel, bears witness to the fear and anxiety of the cataclysmic situation of Bangladesh. And she relates herself and the Bangladesh citizen's sorrowful psychological condition. Rehana presents herself with anxiety and fearful conditions due to the Bangladesh war of Independence and Bangladesh's people's traumatic condition.

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*A Golden Age* is a war representation of the Bangladesh War of Independence. Mrs. Chowdhary, as a citizen of Bangladesh, exposes the fearful condition of the war-chipped situation: "[A]t ten o'clock the tanks began to fire. It was the sound of a thousand New Year firecrackers of metal pipes being dragged across a stunning road of chilies popping in a smoking pan. 'Yah Allah!' Mrs. Chowdhary cried. 'What's happening?'" (AGA 55) This horrible and destructive picture of war conducted by Pakistani Armies reflects the ongoing civil war movement and its consequences. Similarly, Rehana, as a convinced democrat, shows her sympathy towards war victimized people: [A]ll the beds were pushed up against each other so that it looked like an unbroken stretched of bodies. She walked through the aisle, stepping over people (AGA 222). The above-mentioned reference provides the actual war picture and its dreadful consequences. Likely, Rehana deeply sympathizes with the sufferings. Thus, she projects herself with their agony and empathizes with the victimhood. Rehana is traumatized basically because of her objective participation in the war. Subjectively she did not participate in the Bangladesh war of independence, but her children were involved as a freedom fighter for the Independence of Bangladesh. Rehana suffers from anxiety, fear, frustration, and helplessness. It is because of her children's fearful lives and also Bengali people. The seed of the destruction of the Bengali civil war was the irresponsible political parties of Pakistani leaders. Especially Yahiya Khan and Bhutto show the autocracy, who did not want to give a chance for a rule all over Pakistan even come from the legally elected government of 1971. That, as a colonial zed country, Bengali people and Sheikh Mujib revolted against the Pakistani army and political leader by demanding an independent nation. Bengali people attempted to overthrow the Pakistani regime from Bangladesh. Hence, Rehana as an individual becomes traumatic, and her pathetic living in pain, agony, and anxiety represent the entire traumatic Bengalis-self.

The primary symptoms of trauma recur in this war narrative in the form of frustration, anxiety, agony, and suffering, as well as fear. Because of this mental agony, the traumatic figure increases mental disorder, loneliness, anxiety upon lives, and psychological fear. In this regard, Anam writes that:

[R]ehana wondered if she should begin to prepare herself imagine a life without her son, carve out a hole where he used to familiarize herself with the shock of his absence" (AGA 101). These remarks justify the anxiety of Rehana by being framed away by her son Sohail. Thus, this revolutionary novel is filled with traumatic visions. Similarly, Cathy Caruth, in her essay "*Unclaimed Experience: Trauma and the Possibility of History*," defines trauma as a perplexing experience and other contrastive responses. She further elaborates: "Trauma describes an overwhelming experience of sudden cataclysmic events, in which the response to the events occurs in the often delayed, and uncontrolled receptive occurrence of the hallucination and other intrusive phenomenon" (Caruth 1991, p.181). The frustrating situation, anxiety, sleeplessness, disorder, irritation, demoralization of past events, which become an obstacle for the progress, and failure to maintain psychological equilibrium are the general characteristics of trauma. These characteristics affect the daily survival of an individual, and in this sense, trauma is described as a metaphor of existence. Modern man's life clings to dream hallucinations, imaginations, fantasy, and flashbacks so that the necessity of trauma in the modern devastated world is grown rapidly. Jeffrey Hartman, in his essay, "On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies," further clarifies this concept. For him, "where there is a dream, there is trauma" (Hartman 1995, p.546).

Freud, a critic, and explorer of trauma theory, relate trauma with the study of hysteria. Later, Freud also relates trauma with the historical development, especially in 'Moses' and 'Monotheism'. Freud elaborates the concept of trauma with the historical development of the entire culture. James Berger outlines the Freudian model of trauma theory in his famous essay "Unclaimed Experiences". He states:

"Freud's earlier idea, in studies in hysteria, concerned the dynamics of trauma, repression, and symptom formation. Freud held that an overpowering even, unacceptable to unconscious can be forgotten and yet return in the form of somatic symptoms or compulsive, repetitive behaviors. This initial theory of trauma and symptoms becomes problematic for Freud when he concluded that neurotic symptoms were more often the result of repressed drives and

desires than of traumatic events." ([Berger 1997, p.570](#))

The entire incidence represented in *A Golden Age* reckons physical waste as well as psychological fragmentation because of violent independence. Rehana feels: "[S]he spent the nights with the kerosene lamp on. Every sound incited afire, hammering in her heart. She thought she heard footsteps soft knocks on the door; she thought she felt someone tugging at her feet as she spent" (*AGA* 130). This remark explores Rehana's hallucinated psychology though she is alone at home. But she is still hunted by traumatic fierce in her memory. Here, Dominick LaCapra's opinion on trauma is appropriate:

"In traumatic memory, the past events somehow register and maybe relive in the present, at times in compulsively repetitive manure. It may not be subject to control conscious recall. But it returns in nightmares, flashbacks, anxiety attacks, and other forms of intrusively repetitive behaviors characteristic of an all compelling frame. Traumatic memory may involve belated temporality." ([LaCapra 2001, p.89](#))

### Research Objective

- To highlight the main characteristics of war trauma.
- To present the relevance of political and social scenarios in the war narrative.
- To analyze the subjects of historical development and culture.

### Research Questions

1. How has Tahmima Anam presented symptoms of trauma and war narrative in her novel *A Golden Age*?
2. How has Tahmima Anam addressed the issues of frustration, anxiety, mental agony, and loneliness in the selected text?

### Theoretical Framework and Research Methodology

Qualitative research as a methodology remains researcher-friendly and unique in analyzing literary texts. The critics vary in their reading of *A Golden*

*Age*. Different critics have interpreted the text from different perspectives, but the issue of 'war trauma' seems innovative and convenient in the text. Therefore, this research aims at projecting new ideas through the analysis of the essay in the light of war trauma in association with memory. The methodology of this research project is primarily based on trauma theory about war and memory. The term 'trauma' refers to the severe and emotional shock or wound which creates a substantial lasting effect on the psychological development of a person. Similarly, trauma theory as a primary critical category includes diverse fields with its special focus on a psychological and ethical basis. Among the different categories of trauma, 'war trauma' is a response to the repeatedly devastating and horrible exposure and empathic involvement with the traumatic situation. In such a case, an individual is traumatic because of his/her self-participation or self-projection with the victims.

War trauma s interrelated with memory. Trauma is an unspeakably enigmatic form of memory, and a person is traumatic because of his/her identification with the horrible memories of the past. Avishai Margalit, in his book *The Ethics of Memory*, explores the ethical significance of memory. War trauma, too is interconnected with memory, morality, and humanity; thus, human ethics is projected with the traumatized people and their self-identification with victimhood. Similarly, Emmanuel Levinas, a prominent figure in 'ethics' and 'morality' states an absolute and primary obligation of responsibility to the 'Other human beings'. According to Levinas, we naturally do have a moral responsibility towards 'Others.' Since we are empathetic with other's sufferings, we become traumatic in one or the other way. Beings based on this notion; war trauma, ethics, and memory, this project has explored Anam's traumatic self in *A Golden Age*.

### Textual Analysis

*A Golden Age* as a war representation constantly focuses on the then fearful and cataclysmic Bengali situation and its evil consequences upon the entire republic. The evil impact of the Bengali civil war is apparent in the very domain in Bangladesh. The common people also could not remain unaffected.

The lives of people in search have been disappeared because of an all-around loud thunderous bang in Bangladesh almost destroyed and demolished. In this regard, trauma caused by the evil war in the entire nation is exposed in Anam's representation: "*Hai Allah! Hai Allah! Mrs. Chowdhury said. That is it, we are all finished?*" (AGA55). Mrs. Chowdhury, the neighbor of Rehana, above witnessing not only exposes the fearful psyche but also denotes the social disharmony. Such a chaotic image instantly reflects the despair and grief among the Bengali people. Thus psycho-social fragmentation and a horror environment can be labeled as traumatic situations. Such an unpleasant experience repeatedly hunts Rehana and other Bengali people though they live in their homes. Hence, the dreadful environment makes it traumatic for Bengali people because of the repeated anxiety and subjective and objective engagement with the war victims.

Moreover, Anam's representation exposes the bleak picture of Bengali cities, as well as Mrs. Chowdhury, who was lunching dinner in a fearful environment.

The above representation picture depicts Mrs. Chowdhury's fragmented psychology because she finds herself in between the deep trouble of life and death. Her frightful psychology can be observed through this textual reference. It is reflected the terrible psychology of the whole Bengali people. Similarly, her psychological effects like fear and anxiety with other warfare imagery, bomb and machine-gun; which is directly associated with violence, death, and delay. In this regard, Mrs. Chowdhury's dreadful experience can be interpreted from the perspective of Jenny Edkin's Trauma theory. Edkin's gives the definition of trauma as follows:

*"Returning combatants tell a different tale. Survivor is subdued, even silent may witness the deaths of those around them. They cannot forget, and some are hunted by nightmares, flashbacks to the scenes of unimaginable horror. In their dreams, they are re-lived their battlefield experience and awake again in sweat. First World War veterans were said to be suffering from shell shock."* (Edkin 2003, p.1)

As the trauma theorist believes such evil impacts last long. Thus Rehana as a real witness of catastrophic civil conflict suffers psychologically. In

other to justify Rehana's above anxious and frightful experience, Sigmund Freud's concept of trauma seems relevant. Freud writes:

*"How the memory of a trauma event cannot be lost over time but regained in the somatic forms when triggered by some similar event. In this way, each national catastrophic invokes and transforms memories of other catastrophic, so that history becomes a complex entanglement of crimes infected and suffered, with each catastrophe, understood that is misunderstood in the context of memories of previous ones."* (Freud 1974, p.570)

Anam's narrative provides the traumatic picture of the fear during the independence war. All the neighborhoods of Rehana are at the party of Mrs. Chowdhury's daughter Silvi's engagement. While going on parties, they as the war witness, faces the war experience by spending their whole night saving lives from bullets. Similarly, Anam narrates: "*[T]hey lingered in Mrs. Chowdhury's drawing-room, listening to the rat-tat-tat the sound of machine-guns. The night passed like a dream, no movement, and no words passing between them*" (AGA60). This remark exposes the ongoing violent warfare in Bangladesh. The night, they passed like a dream and mute less by preserving their lives from bullets and bomb attacks. Such a terrible experience made them traumatized and reflects the entire Bangladesh. Major, as a participant of the civil war movement witness, faces the deadly conflict in the gorilla war in Bangladesh. He has experience of war while keeping ambush that makes him wounded by the blasting of the bomb. In this regard, Anam narrates: "*[T]he major pushed me aside and it himself, but it was too late; he got caught up in the blast*" (AGA115). This remark simultaneously shows the bleak picture of Bangladesh society and Sohail's frightful psychology. Major's wounded body makes secret fear to Sohail. The following textual remark also shows the ongoing brutal and dreadful war in Bangladesh. A few faults may be Sohail wounded instead of major. This also reflects the threatening psychology of Rehana, which symbolically shows the entire situation of Bangladesh. Throughout the text, we can see the war image and its evil impacts like a bullet, bomb blast, wounded soldier, bloodshed, and horror. Therefore, this project can be labeled as a traumatic war representation. The entire representation is related to

the depression of Rehana during the wartime of Bangladesh in 1970. There, *the Golden Age* is a war representation based on the Bangladesh independence revolution. The illusion is noted in the text. There is nothing impotent even though she goes past her memory. 'The Eid moon-sighting and 'the smell of mangos repining on the trees' refer to the memory of Rehana. Her illusion succeeds in healing her bitter reality temporarily; after that, she again compels to return in the same fact from where she wants to live forever; hence, this representation reflects the traumatic psychology of Rehana and the entire Bangladesh people.

Anam's *A Golden Age* depicts the fear of death in the term of Major and minor characters of the novel. Through the soldier and other people pretend to a brave and courageous, they have the feeling of the fear of death. In this regard, Rehana says: *"I just want to protect you. Everything I have done for you and your brother"* (AGA 88). The above statement shows the anxiety of a mother towards her children's life. The fear towards children's lives reflects that mother's devotion. To make graceful life of children, the mother is easily ready to get their lives in injuries to save the lives of their children. Thus, the above statement implies the fear of death, which helps to increase as traumatic individual of a person. Anam's narration reflects the deserted and pathetic picture of the Hindu people of Bangladesh. In this regards, she write: *"Of course', Rehana said, 'you know what is best,' but there are disturbing reports, burning villages, Targeting Hindus"* (AGA 72). This statement presents the pathetic and associated condition of Hindus in Bangladesh by Pakistani soldiers during the independence war movement in Bengal. The Pakistani armies tortured and exploited the people by targeting Hindus. Such evil and devastated activities of Pakistani soldiers invite dislocation and anxiety upon lives. Hence, the identity crises and victimhood clearly show the traumatic situation of the entire Bangladesh. Furthermore, Hindus' experiences represent Bangladesh's regards fragmented psychology in general. War, by nature, is destructive and violent. In this regard, Ruth Leys definition of trauma seems relevant: *"Anything about horrifying events that lay at the origin of his pitiable state, dislocation or amnesia war, therefore, the hallmark of the war trauma"* (Leys 2000, p.85). As Ley's trauma

definition above claims, Hindus are not only suffer physically but psychologically as well. The psychological wound is incurably pain shocking remains during the chaotic condition. Thus, the above lines make clear that trauma is the shocking mental condition stricken by the unpleasant experiences and the similar events at present, this shows the entire Bangladesh peoples' traumatic condition.

Anam justifies the inspiration of Maya toward an independent war of Bangladesh. After Maya's brother participated in the war, she uses to go to marched past practice to relieve her depression and loneliness. Thus, Maya's intrusive depression anxiety upon nation makes anxious person, which is a form of trauma. Hence, Anam's narration presents *A Golden Age* as a war traumatic representation. The sensation war periods of Bangladesh give the painful experience and frightful psychology of theirs people. Very often, people who have experienced traumatic events are particularly troubled by the fact that they were unable to exert control over what was happening. The trauma of losing a sibling to illness, accidental death, or suicide and, in later life, experience the trauma or crisis of being flooded by all the guilt, denial, and conflict which has been described in Louise Tyson's textbook *'Critical Theory Today*. He further describes this process as following:

*"Crises bring into the spotlight wounds, fears, guilty desires, or unresolved, conflicts that have failed to deal with and that demand action. I am flooded by the past because I can now see what is going on. This is now I know myself through the crisis. Trauma is also used, of course, to refer to a painful experience that scars us psychologically."* (Tyson 2006, p.21)

As a war narrative, this project explores the psycho-social impact in the entire Bangladesh society. The brutality of Pakistani soldiers upon people of Bangladesh, murdered, raped, continuous firing sound and empty- Street justifies the evil impact of civil war and the pathetic living of Bangladesh people. The traumatic effect may consist or continue for a long even after the real events occur. Hence, Bengali people's witnessing and their experience with the victim's pathetic living makes them mentally shocked. Thus, people of Bangladesh's anxiety, frightful lives, depression of dislocation

increases irritability make them as traumatic. In addition, as a war narration, *A Golden Age* explores the victim's disintegrated psyche through Rehana's bitter experience. Since the civil movement of Bangladesh took an active role among the Bangladesh territory, the entire Bengali people suffered from fear, anxiety, and pathetic lives. Rehana's observation after attacking the place make us clear how horrible was the situation in Nawabpur Road. It not only shows the ongoing war picture but simultaneously reflects the pathetic livings during the civil war. When Rehana goes through the road of Nawabpur, she sees the devastated situation by war. The buildings are destroyed by a firecracker, dead bodies are laid on the roadside, horrible scenes. These all incidents give details of Bangladesh, and there are people. Moreover, Anam's narrative gives the picture of traumatic dread during the civil war. Some of the common people are dead by the Pakistani army's bullets. In this regard, Anam shows through the character of Rehana.

The textual reference above evidently exposes the ongoing war situation. Bengali cities were filled and destroyed with bombs and battles. The brutal war makes victims of innocent people who do not participate in the war. War's destructive and violent nature explicitly can be seen in the novel *A Golden Age*. In this regards this novel, as a war novel, reflects the independence war of Bangladesh. Thus her witness and evil impact of war resemble the traumatic situation of Bangladesh. As a war representation, this research examines the traumatic evil impact of war in all of the Bengali society. The destruction of buildings, roads, lives of people, women, rapes, torture, murder, curfew in Bengali cities prove the brutal impact of the independence war of Bangladesh. The traumatic impact remains for long, even after the real incidents occur. Thus, Rehana's and other people of Bangladesh witnessing makes their pathetic lives, dislocation, makes panic by remembering past, loneliness, unsecured upon lives make them as a traumatized individual. Rehana's witness of destruction by war represents this project's trauma representation. During the civil movement, she is hunted by anxiety, insecurity, and unimaginable horror. In this regard, Jenny Edkins trauma theory is relevant to Rehana's traumatic experience.

Rehana seems quite disappointed because she shows an unimaginable incident that her close friend and people of Bangladesh's lies are pathetic in Calcutta, India. Very often, people among the refugees are lost their families, dislocation, suffer from mental illness. Such pictures make Rehana frustrated and fearful psychologically. It is because while she met her friend Mrs. Sengupta in a mental illness, unspeakable condition, she feels inner pithiness, fear, and sickness. Thus, the trouble and terrible situation imply the war traumatic and frustrating situation not only in the personality of Rehana but entire of Bangladesh. Moreover, Silvi narrates her painful witnessing in Bangladesh with Rehana and Maya. At that time, Mrs. Haque's families are sifted to Calcutta for a few days except Sohail. Through her narration, she shows the conflicting and painful situation of Dhaka in *A Golden Age*. Silvi says: "*Your problem; Silvi said, returning with a plate for the shondesh, 'is that you cannot tolerate a difference of opinion. I happen to think this war-all this fighting- is a pointless waste of human life. 'When the army comes and massacred us and drove us out of the country, we should have rolled over?'"* (AGA 248) Silvi's above narration depicts the suspicious and terrible situation of Dhaka during the civil war. It explicitly exposes that how people in Dhaka were bear the terrible massacred. During the civil conflict, innocent people in Dhaka were arrested and put the victim of bullets. Anyone carrying arms would be arrested and tortured to death. In that situation, Silvi's observation of the genocide atmosphere, dilemma, and horrible not only reflects her frightful psychology but also represents entire Bangladesh's shocked terrible in general.

Moreover, Mrs. Sengupta's fragmented psyche and mental illness show the war traumatic condition in the novel *A Golden Age*. And therefore, Anam further writes: 'Mrs. Senguptas' hand moved slowly over the page. She finished a sentence, crossed it out, and then wrote again. After what felt like a long time, she handed the notebook back to Rehana. "*I left him and ran into the pond*" (AGA 232). In the course of the civil movement in Bangladesh, she runs away to save her life in Calcutta by deserting her child and husband. She tried to serve herself by jumping into the pond. It reflects the fragmented psychology of

Mrs. Sengupta, who is not able to speak but says with writing about her pathetic and dreadful pain because of the bitter experience of war. In this way, Mrs. Sengupta accounts for the evil experiences of the Bangladesh civil war. And by showing her miserable condition, Anam attempts to expose the real predicament of war victims in Bangladesh. In the assemblage of various model of trauma, 'war trauma' refers to the effected of bearing witness to the emotional pain or violent situation between or among the countries or group of people resulting from the physical injury, psychological distress, emotional shock, and irritability through hallucination, nightmare, similar events, and situation. Thus war trauma denotes simultaneously the physical pain and mental shock deeply infected by the devastating events. Such trouble and painful psychics are said to be traumatic psychic as well. *A Golden Age* explores the war and its consequences. As a citizen of Bangladesh, Bengali people become shocked by the brutal phenomenon. The effects of war trauma may be seen in many forms but not associated with real events and situations. In general definition, trauma is related to the overwhelming experience of sudden catastrophic events, in which the uncontrolled form of nightmares, obsessive thoughts, flashbacks, psychological reactions, and other persistent re-experiencing of the violent or traumatic event Increased irritability, etc. To sum up, war trauma is the severe impact of the feeling of bearing witness to the emotional mental shock and the explicit details of other people suffering nausea loss and intrusive imagery. Here, Rehana's traumatic sentiment and nightmare are explored in the Bangladesh civil war context, while she was touched with the Bengali refugee in Calcutta and learned the pathetic condition of Mrs. Sengupta, she feels uneasy and anxious. It can see from Anam's narration. As she narrates: "[R]ehana drifted in and out of heavy-lidded sleep, her throat thick with questions. She dreamed of Sabeer, his cracked lips mouthing something incoherent, and Mithun, with a face like Sohail's underwater, waiting for his mother. 'Ma, 'she heard Sohail says, I'm here, ma'" (AGA 235). The above text explicitly shows the nightmare of Rehana. It occurs because of the evil impact of war, while she heard the death of Sabeer and losing of Mithun in a brutal war. This comes as a form of the nightmare of

Rehana, who sees the distorted mouth of Sabeer and wailing of Mithun as her son. Hence, the definition of trauma above claims Bengali people's dreadful experience and their miserable predicament reflects the entire Bangladesh self.

The above Anam's narration shows Pakistani armies' brutal and inhumanity intention. Colonel Jabeen and his fellow soldiers search the son of Rehana, Sohail. They considered that he is a traitor to Pakistan. In this regard the armies do misbehavior and torture as very often armies do in the war period. Colonel Jabeen suggests taking Maya to another room which reflects the inhumanities of Pakistani armies. Thus, Rehana's terrible and frightful condition reflects the war traumatic psyche and entire Bengali people. Similarly, the Pakistani armies' violation shows the dreadful and terrible environment of Bangladesh in *A Golden Age*. Though Rehana's empathetic engagement and her suffering from evil consequences reflect that she is psychologically frightful because she has herself feel the brutal and dreadful experience. Thus, Rehana's witnessing of the Bangladesh situation and her ethical affinity with the victims makes her a traumatized individual. Finally, every reference of the novel has been intertwined with the war of Bangladesh. This novel does explore how devastating and hellish war, as well as its consequences, are. There can be seen political turmoil and chaotic situation due to the dictatorship of Pakistani leaders. Very often people of Bangladesh and also Rehana faces brutal impacts of warlike death, displacement, separation, raps, murders, victimization, anxiety, and frustration; which are very supporting factors for letting the common people of Bangladesh destine to be traumatized. In this way, *A Golden Age* has portrayed the war trauma of the Bengali people, including those people who are associated with the war directly or indirectly.

### Discussion

Annam's *A Golden Age* concerned with war trauma in these regards, Anam writes: "[T]he gin rummy ladies Mrs. Akram had spent that night with the shooters closed and her hands over her ears. Later her husband would say she had been hysterical screaming about quaiyamat the end of the world" (70). Based on the textual evidence above, we can

interpret *A Golden Age* from the perspective of Lynna R. August and Barbara A. Gianola. According to them:

*"Post-traumatic stressed disorder (PTSD) as a subclass with in the anxiety, disorders diagnostic category. Symptoms associated with this disorder occur after a traumatic and stressful event. Example of such traumatic events includes natural disasters (flood, earthquake) and manmade disasters (Fire, plane crashes, bombings, concentration camps)." (Gianola 1986, p.821)*

Burton Clemency comments in *The Guardian* that the novel is in fact exploration of anxiety which formulates the painful and fearful expression of Rehana who is in a dilemma that how is it better for her children. It has depicted the helpless anxiety on life and fearful psychological condition as Clemency declares: *"With the conflict taking its bloody course in the East, Rehana realizes she cannot stop them from joining the Bangla effort as freedom fighters" (Clemency 2007, p.276)*. Bangladesh Liberation on the surface level but in deeper sense something else along with the outcome of the independence war period, she is being faced with different mental tension like war consequences, fear while living in war territory. Thus, Clemency tries to show this novel is a war novel. Similarly, Arifa Akbar also comments in *The Good Muslim* by associating that novel is carried as a war novel. This reflects the liberation war of Bangladesh and the political turmoil situation of East and West Pakistan. In this regards Akbar writes:

*"This novel has a historical sweep that ranges from the liberation war that left the nation's freedom fighter the book's central characters so psychologically ravaged to the political turmoil, military coups, and counter-coups of two subsequent decades. It ends in 1992, just after Bangladesh re-establishes its parliamentary democracy a happy ending, of sorts." (Akbar 2011, p.68)*

Akbar reviews *A Golden Age* in the perspective of thematically. It reflects the incidents of the entire novel. He starts the novel with political war which depicts the turmoil condition of East and West Pakistan. In this regard, Akbar asserts that this novel is associated with political war territory and its psychological effects upon character.

Moreover, Amardeep Singh holds that *A Golden Age* as a political novel gives every detail of the Bengali independence war 1971. Singh analyzes the Bengali people's inevitable involvement in an independence war of Bangladesh being aside of Mujib's communist ideology and their people's dreadful experiences during combat conflict in Bangladesh. In this regards he writes:

*"One can see that Anam sees the war of liberation firmly from a Bangladeshi perspective, where the Pakistani army is the villain. (Here I should say I fully agree with her; Yahiya Khan is thought to have said: kill three million of them, and the rest will be eating out of hands..... operation searchlight is described as are the attacks on East Pakistan/Bangladeshi Hindus. The Indian intervention is seen as a positive development, preventing what might have turned into an all-out genocidal suppression." (Singh 2008, p.25)*

Likewise, another critic Stargazerpuj associates *A Golden Age* in one-sided of the novel by relating thematically perspective of the novel. This depicts the contemporary of Bangladesh's war situation. In this way Stargazerpuj writes:

*"Motherhood is a strong theme of the story. And the idea of belonging and a place to take radical steps to make sure that their county is truly the people and willing to take the necessary risks to see this happen." (Stargazerpuj 2012, p.71)*

## Findings

After the deep analysis and study of Tahmima Anam's *A Golden Age*, the research has concluded that Anam's war representation explores massacre and traumatic Bangladesh self during the civil conflict. The main protagonist Mrs. Rehana Haque, through her experience, represents the entire civil war generation of the Bangladesh republic. This research has been carried the idea that the pathetic condition of the entire Bangladesh people who have been explored through their representative witnessing. Rehana as a substantial of that destructive civil conflict faces witness to psychological fragmentation of the victims and identifies herself with the genocide situation and victim's sufferings. The characters' each story has tried to demonstrate the divested Bengali society and

traumatizes the psychology of the characters. And as in all war, Anam also presents the scapegoated character of women in the war and victims' able lives. *A Golden Age* is political writing in the Bangladesh civil war context. It is all political disorder that invites physical destruction as well as psychological fragmentation. Rehana as a witness of the destructive civil conflict represents the traumatic psychology of the entire Bangladesh.

The novel deserves to show the dark side of the war in a sense of that women have been made scapegoat mentally or physically in the war movement. In usually they are like peace lovers but compelled to be victimized in the name of traitor, mother, or daughter of a traitor. Many women of Bangladesh were made the victim of war by rape, dislocation, and mental torture including Sharmeen, Mrs. Sengupta, and Rehana. These characters' dreadful experience shows the fragmented psychology of entire Bangladesh. Indeed, *A Golden Age* depicts traumatic dread through Anam's narration. As a war representation, it's not only accounts of the political calamities and women's devastation but also explores the physical and psychological sufferings of war involving people in Bangladesh. Rehana as a traumatized self represents entire Bangladesh's psyche. The term 'trauma' refers to the repetitive action in the form of hallucination, flashbacks, and nightmares caused by an abnormal mind to the body that is ultimately associated with fragmentation, distress, destruction, and disorder. Similarly, by applying trauma theory, the mental and psychic troubles of the war-ridden Bangladesh generation can be explored. Rehana Haque, as a mother of freedom fighters of Bangladesh and witnessing the dreadful cataclysmic situation, feels like a mental condition that suffers nightmares, deep depression, and anxiety. Thus her trouble experience of being physically and mentally tortured by Pakistani armies and witnessing the spot death of people made her a traumatized individual.

Anam's *A Golden Age* can be justified as a war trauma based on the following images like: 'curfews on the cities', 'machine guns', 'bombs', 'raped,' 'murdered,' 'mass population of refugees in India's Calcutta,' 'looted and burned houses by Pakistani armies,' 'dead bodies on the roadside,' 'spot of blood on road' and empty street. The above images from the text explicitly provide the dreadful picture as well as psychological fragmentation. As a citizen of Bangladesh, Rehana and her relative, friends bear to witness to pain and suffering of the victims. Anam represents the testimonial holocaust survivors relating to Bangladesh veterans of the independence war. She, as war victims feel affirmative towards the sufferers and realize her ethical relationship with them. And her identification with the victim leads her to traumatized person. Her life is conducted by the traumatic experience of civil conflict in Bangladesh and she still feels the panic, sudden fear by remembering the past incidents of war. As a result, she reproduces a very doomed perception of life and becomes excessively frightful. Her direct witness with the dreadful violence and returned flashbacks and nightmare horrors cause psychic fragmentation in him. Hence, his traumatic dread represents the entire traumatic Bangladesh self in general.

### Conclusion

This research tries to unravel the issue of war trauma with the relation of the testimony of victims and a holocaust survivor through in Tahmima Anam's *A Golden Age*. Traumatic elements can be explored throughout the text, and very often, characters go through pain, anguish, anxiety, fear, and frustration during the inactiveness of independence conflicts. Departing from the other critiques on the text, this research project has centralized on how Anam depicts the pathetic livings during the political conflict and traumatic dread in the Bangladesh People triggered by the civil war. In this way, this project acknowledges Anam's celebrated account of Bangladesh's independence.

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