

**HAUNTING LEGACY AND CULTURAL IDENTITY CRISIS IN CARRIE
ARCOS'S *WE ARE ALL THAT'S LEFT***

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ABSTRACT

*This study aims to investigate the haunting legacy and cultural identity crisis of one of traumatic victims of Bosnian genocide who migrates to US and those impacts to the second generation in a young adult novel *We Are All That's Left* by Carrie Arcos. Deploying Schwab's haunting legacies concept, Bhabha's postcolonial concepts of mimicry, ambivalence, and hybridity and Said's orientalism, this study applies descriptive analytical method to analyze how haunting legacy from Nadja's dreadful experience of losing her loved ones and living in terror of Bosnian conflict affects her cultural identity as well as her daughter, Zara, a 17th years old Portuguese, England, Bosnian-American as the second generation who feels confuse and restive about her mother frequent nightmares and sudden emotional changes, and knows nothing about her mother's past. After encountering terrorist bombing, which is claimed as the act of ISIS that causes Zara injured and traumatized and Nadja experience a coma, Zara determines to look for traces of her mother's secret and finds old photos and letters in her mother's hidden box. The result of the study indicates that Zara, who finally understand better about her mother's life, helps her mother to overcome her trauma and ambivalence as a Muslim Bosnian (Bosniak) as well as an American. Nadja eventually holds her new cultural identity as a Bosnian-American, who still preserves and proud of her cultural roots as Bosniak. As for Zara, the disclosure of her Bosnian origin helps her to recognize herself and her mother better. Thus, it contributes to construct her missing cultural identity as a proud Bosnian-American.*

Keywords: *Bosnian-American, cultural identity, haunting legacies, postcolonial*

INTRODUCTION

Bosnian conflict (Bosnian War) from 1992 until 1995 was the worst massacre occurred since the Holocaust in the World War II where Serbia set out to “ethnically cleanse” Bosnian territory by consistently eliminated all Bosnian Muslims (Bosniaks). Serbian together with Bosnian Serbs ethnic attacked Bosniaks by using Yugoslavian military equipment and then surrounded Sarajevo, the capital city of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In consequence, many Bosniaks were driven into concentration camps, where Bosniaks women and girls were raped and other civilians were tortured, starved and murdered (Holocaust Museum Houston). This war experience gave a long-lasting traumatic effect on a large number resident of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Ringdals & Simkus, 2007). Furthermore, refugees from this war who have endured genocide, torture, atrocities, and forced resettlement are indicated to have suffered prolonged, multiple, and repeated trauma (Weine et al, 1995).

“Trauma” is derived from the Ancient Greek term which has the meaning of “wound” and “damage” (Wilson, 2004). The word trauma is often loosely defined in the literature and frequently used interchangeably with other terms such as *disaster*, *catastrophe*, *psychologically distressing event*, *extreme stress*, *stressor*, or atrocity (Green, 1990). In its third edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), American Psychiatric Association states that trauma is the disease that caused by the event that would caused distress in most people with the strong symptoms, and it acquired the official disease status as *Post Traumatic Stress Disorder* (PTSD) (American Psychiatric Association in Craps, 2013, p.24). Even though PTSD definition has been redefined in each subsequent version of DSM, it is still dissociated from the “Culture-Bound Syndromes”—mental illnesses peculiar to certain cultures, which described in a very short section far back in the DSM (L. Brown, 2008 in Craps, 2013, p.23).

On the contrary, Brown (2008) argues that the emotional distress from trauma is transferred through the lenses of cultural meaning systems, although the experience is likely universal. Furthermore, she explains how age, gender, ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, disability, displacement, health, and spirituality interact with and inform one’s experiences of and responses to trauma and places trauma in a multicultural reality informed by the survivor’s multiple identities and social contexts. In other words, trauma is placed within a multicultural reality informed by the traumatic survivor’s multiple identities and social contexts (Brown in Kahn, 2009).

In accordance to this idea, Carry Carruth (1996), one of founding figures in trauma theory claims that trauma itself may provide the very link between cultures; by forming a

bridge between different historical experiences, trauma from one that shared into another can contribute to cross-cultural solidarity and to the creation of new forms of community. In addition, Carruth also states that trauma demands help in breaking isolation inflict on both individuals and cultures resulted from traumatic experience: “history, like trauma, is never simply one’s own, history is precisely the way....we are implicated in each other’s traumas” (in Craps, 2013, p.1-2). However, Craps (2013, p.2) argues that Carruth’s work fails in fulfilling this promise of cross-cultural ethical engagement.

Complementing Carruth’s statement, Craps (2013, p.2) criticizes some aspects of the previous trauma theory, for instance in marginalizing or ignore traumatic experiences of non-Western or minority cultures and accepting the universal validity definitions of trauma and recovery that have developed out of the history of Western modernity. He claims that trauma theory should consider on the distinct culture and region where the trauma emerges “trauma theory should take account of the specific social and historical contexts....and be open and attentive to the diverse strategies of representation and resistance which these contexts invite or necessitate” (Craps, 2013, p.43). On his conclusion, Craps (2013, p.127) believes that “rethinking trauma studies from postcolonial perspective and providing nuanced readings of a wide variety of narratives of trauma and witnessing from around the world can help in understanding that shared precariousness.”

One of the postcolonial trauma theories that particularly discuss about the first and the second generation in witnessing violent histories is Gabriele Schwab’s “Haunting Legacies.” Schwab (2010, p.1-3) defines haunting legacy as a continuous grip of memories that concerns deeply on the improbable, irresolvable, or refused mourning from loses on the unbearable violent histories. This haunting legacy will hibernate in unconscious self only to be transferred to the next generation like an undetected disease. In consequence, this haunting legacy will result in identity trouble which interconnected with cultural identity crisis.

These violent history issues as well as the traumatic victims are reflected in 2018 young adult novel entitled *We Are All That’s Left* by Carrie Arcos. This novel told the story of Zara, a 17th years old Portuguese, England, Bosnian-American girl, who had some unreasonable distant and awkward relationship with her Bosnian-American mother, Nadja. Their frequent quarrels were resulted from her unknowledgeable of her mother’s Bosnian cultural traits which had been hidden since she was a child. Meanwhile, in a different time and perspective, it also told the story of Nadja, a young 17 years old Bosniak (Bosnian Muslim) girl who lived in Bosnia, survived the dreadful Bosnian war, migrated to United States and tried to make herself as American by rejecting her past.

The author of the novel, Carrie Arcos, was a National Book Award Finalist for Young

People's Literature with her novel *Out of Reach* in 2012. Arcos comes from Albany, New York, and currently resides with her husband and her three children in Los Angeles (Carriearcos.com). In the fall of 1995 until the fall of 1996, she was working in AmeriCorps and helping large numbers of Bosnian refugees get resettled and then had a realization of the terrific Bosnian Conflict. In making this novel, she got the personal stories of Bosnian people through her research by reading books especially journalistic accounts and first-person accounts, watching a lot of movies, and getting a lot of information from YouTube as well as going to Bosnia to see the real situation (Q&A with Carrie Arcos: Publisher Weekly, 2018).

There are some studies that discussed the similar issues of trauma as the impact of genocide and cultural identity crisis. By deploying modern methodological approaches from Derrida's philosophy, Huggan and Tiffin's Ecocriticism, and Craps's Postcolonial Trauma theory, Ong (2016) examines how human-centered strategies for recovery, and related symbolic orders that forced position of the animal outside of human law, continue to cause inequality and potentially violent relationships between human, and human with other species. Meanwhile, using Bhabha's concepts, Mostafae (2016) finds out the ambivalence and the notion of hybridity, which indicates that the practices of colonial authority is intermingling other texts and discourses which results in a hybridization that facilitates colonial domination. In other study, which examining the content of online forum with two dominant narratives of identity and religion in postcolonial Nigeria from Said's Orientalism perspective, John (2018) finds that in the first narrative users represent Southern Kaduna Christians as the repressed and the one experienced genocide. Meanwhile, in the second narrative, users explicate the ambivalence from the repulsion and admiration in the ways they construct the privileges, identity, and religion of Hausa-Fulani Muslims that viewed as the oppressor.

Differing from all the previous studies, this study aims to reveal the issue of Bosnian haunting legacies and cultural identity crisis of the two main characters (the first and the second generation of Bosnian immigrants) from the postcolonial perspective, which deploying of Bhabha's concepts of mimicry, ambivalence, and hybridity as well as Said's orientalism combines with Schwab's haunting legacy in Carrie Arcos' *We Are All That's Left*.

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

In this part, three main topics would be discussed. First, Nadja's haunting legacy, which was examined from her traumatic symptoms such as flashback memories about her past in her hometown as well as her nightmares that still linger even after she became American. This haunting legacy then proved as giving impacts to her distant and awkward relation with her

daughter, Zara, and their cultural identity crisis. Second, Nadja's and Zara's cultural identity crisis in the process of mimicry, ambivalence, and hybridity. Third, the inferiority of Nadja's self background as a Muslim Bosnian (Bosniak) that played an important role both in the first and the second topics. At last, the connection of the three topics mentioned before would be elaborated at the end to figure out how haunting legacies and cultural identity crisis interconnected in both of main characters, Nadja and Zara.

Nadja and Zara's Haunting Legacies Effects

The traumatic victims on the violent history, resulted from some risk factors such as feeling horror, helplessness, extreme fear, living through dangerous events, getting hurt, seeing people hurt or killed, and dealing with extra stress after the event, such as loss of a loved one, pain, injury, or loss of a job or home, will experience some symptoms of getting flashback, bad dreams and frightening thoughts (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services). Specifically, hand in hand with the traumatic symptoms, these traumatic victims would develop haunting legacies. This haunting legacy plays a significant role in affecting identity crises of both Nadja, as the victim of violent history of Bosnian conflict and war, and her daughter, Zara.

Nadja's Haunting Legacies

Surviving from Bosnian War in Sarajevo with her father's colleague family, Nadja's haunting legacy of her hometown, Višegrad, kept coming to her in every direction and in every time she saw, heard, or smelled the fragments that remind her of her family, her best friend, Uma, and even her boyfriend, Marko. Her beautiful memories before the conflict or her terrible memories of witnessing her family's death and separating herself from Marko who sacrificed himself in helping Nadja's escape to Sarajevo were constant nightmares in haunting her. As a result, Nadja rejected all these memories away to avoid grieving for her loved ones.

Thinking of school made her think of her old teachers and friends, which made her think of home and her family and . . . She gripped the sides of the sink. The wave of emotion came on suddenly, like a mortar attack. The memory itself like bombs dropping from the sky. But there was nowhere for her to run and hide. She closed her eyes and breathed deeply, pushing away the feelings. Driving them back with the numbness she wore like a *potkošulja* underneath her clothes. It didn't last long, maybe a minute, but she was afraid if she indulged the feelings any longer, she would go mad from them (Arcos, 2018, p.96).

The victim of violent history cannot mourn properly and forever remain bonded to a loss which never becomes real where there is no concrete grave that can be look at (Schwab, 2010, p.3). Nadja had never had time and privileges to mourn properly, as she kept running for her life in Sarajevo. This had an impact on her inability to let the remain bonded with her past, as it kept coming now and then like “bombs dropping from the sky” and there was nowhere for her to run and hide.” She was not able to seek an escape from this torture and there were no real graves to look at for her mourning, only horrible and scary memories. On one hand, she always struggled to believe her loss and grieve, but on the other hand, she refused to believe the reality of her past life. This internal conflict, in the end, resulted in her numbness that was symbolized as “*potkošulja*” underneath her clothes. This “*Potkošulja*” or “undershirt” signified how important, close, and attached her numbness in saving her from her inner conflict that driving her mad.

To add, her remaining act to shut her proper mourning led Nadja to fall into a melancholia that embraced “death-in-life” situation that Freud (1920) depicted as a condition of inability to mourn. Freud noted that victim of the traumatic events hold an unconscious desire to die but it is muffled largely by the life instinct.

Nadja shook her head free of such thoughts. She looked at her green eyes in the mirror. She was not dead. No, she was not dead. But the dead clung to her. They lived inside of her (Arcos, 2018, p.97)

This condition enabled Nadja to keep on surviving the war, but she felt deplored by the fact that she was alive while everyone she loved was already dead. The repetition of “she was not dead” emphasized Nadja’s urged to keep living, yet “the dead” that clung and lived inside her reflected her regret of being alive. On that account, the continual conflict on her mind, in fact made her haunting legacy even stronger. As Schwab (2010, p.46) states that people have always silenced violent histories. Some histories, collective and personal, are so violent we would not be able to live our daily lives if we did not at least temporarily silence them. A certain amount of splitting is conducive to survival. Too much silence, however, becomes haunting. Nadja had silenced her memories to maintain her sanity, but she pressed them too far. Therefore, even it had been over a year passed since Nadja left her hometown in Višegrad and had already lived together with her father’s colleague family, her haunting legacy kept lingering inside her.

Although she was treated very well by her father’s colleague family—Amir, Ramiza, and their daughter Dalila—and even considered as a part of the family, Nadja never considered herself as one of them. On one hand, Nadja buried her memories of Višegrad, but

on the other hand she could not accept to call Sarajevo where she spent her two years surviving from Bosnian conflict as her home.

“I know all I talk about is leaving, but now that it’s really here . . .” Dalila stared ahead. “Where will we go? Sarajevo is home.”

Nadja had left home years ago. Her real family long gone. Now as she stood on the precipice of another departure, she felt like this would be how her life always was. That she would always leave and never find. The wound of her displacement so deep, home was now unknowable to her.

“Sarajevo has never been home,” she said (Arcos, 2018, p.239).

Nadja’s forced displacement from her hometown not only made her lost her home and family, but also made her lost her sense of belonging. This depicted by her sense of feeling unattached to Sarajevo, which indicated that she no longer felt attached to her country, since Bosnia had left Nadja nothing but pain of losing anything she had. In consequence, she had trouble in her cultural identity, as cultural identity is the *sense of belonging* to a certain cultural groups including ethnicity, nationality, race, gender, and religion (Chen, 2014).

Furthermore, when Nadja came alone to Boston, left Amir’s family in Chicago and met Zara’s father, Paul, she decided to overcome her crisis by hiding her Bosnian identity and developing a new identity as an American.

...She wanted to assimilate as fast as she could. She didn’t want to leave any trace of her being from Višegrad. As far as she was concerned, she was a girl without a country no longer. She would be American. Embrace all of it. It was too painful to look back, so she kept her gaze on the horizon (Arcos, 2018, p.276).

Nadja had an enormous desire to be seen as a true American and tried to live a new different life in Boston. Like being reborn, she embraced every aspect of American culture since she felt unoccupied in any cultural identity after leaving her country. “Her gaze on the horizon” indicated her determination of moving on from the past and starting her new life. Despite that, her determination could not be complete because Nadja’s had not overcome her haunting legacy.

Schwab states that unspeakable secrets, unfelt or denied pain, covert shame, hidden crimes, or violent histories continue to give impact and interfere in the lives of those involved in them and often their descendants as well (Schwab, 2010, p.49). By bringing back her memories of her violent history, Nadja’s haunting legacy interfered and hindered her process

of developing her American identity.

But this particular memory she had forgotten. It had lodged itself somewhere between *never forget* and *never remember*. And now it assaulted her like memory often does. Without consent. Without regard for feelings. But today, maybe because her guard was down, because she was happy, or because she was on the cusp of another change, she allowed herself to indulge in it (Arcos, 2018, p.277).

Even though Nadja had dedicated to not looking back for the past, her haunting legacy, which was depicted as “particular memory” still had not been overcome and embedded itself in between “never forget” and “never remember.” It created difficulty to complete her cultural identity because it “unconsciously” attacked on her mind and bounded her to her origin. Moreover, these suppressed memories, which contained the fragments of her past identity, resulted as her identity trouble. Consequently, as haunting legacy from the traumatic victims of violent histories will pass unto the next generation unconsciously like undetected disease (Schwab, 2010, p.3), Nadja’s unfinished haunting legacy hand in hand with her identity trouble unwittingly affected Zara’s cultural identity, as the second generation.

Haunting Legacy in the Second Generation

Haunting legacy in the victims from violent history will affect their way of thinking, acting, even speaking as they will be disturbed by every fragment that remind them of their past, hence the children from these victims will be confused by the uncertainty changes of their attitudes. As Schwab (2010, p.14) defines:

Children of a traumatized parental generation, I argue, become avid readers of silences and memory traces hidden in a face that is frozen in grief, a forced smile that does not feel quite right, an apparently unmotivated flare-up of rage, or chronic depression. Like photography, traumatized bodies reveal their own optical unconscious. It is this unconscious that second-generation children absorb. Without being fully aware of it, they become skilled readers of the optical unconscious revealed in their parents’ body language.

Zara was became a reader of Nadja’s haunting legacy effect since she was a child. She felt that there was something wrong with her mother, though she could not define what it was. She absorbed Nadja unconscious attitudes resulted of her trauma, which made her realized that these unknown problems gave her unexplainable distance with her mother.

There’s music coming from inside the house. And I’m cold, so I snuggle into Mom’s side. I can tell she’s crying, and this makes me feel scared, like I’ve upset her somehow. I want to comfort her, but I don’t know how. I try to get

as close to her as I possibly can.

I tell her, “Mom, I love you as big as the sky.” I point to the stars. This is something a teacher has read to us, I think—a story about a mother and daughter, and it stayed with me because that’s how I wanted to be with her. But even then, I kind of knew that something was wrong; there was this distance between us. We weren’t like the mothers and daughters I saw in picture books. There was a part of herself she kept from me (Arcos, 2018, p.133).

Her mother’s unexplainable problem was leaving Zara in confusion. On one hand, Zara wanted to comfort her mother and became close to her, but on the other hand she was not understand her mother’s inner conflict, because the children of the victims from violent histories will be cast out by the secret their parents carried (Schwab, 2010, p.43). Therefore, even though Zara already knew from her father where her mother’s origin was, she never knew in detail about her mother’s past life, since Nadja used silence in every time they got into arguments or conversations that linked her to her past.

In fact, Zara’s desire to know Nadja’s origin was not only for having a close relation with her but also from her longing to know her own origin, her missing identity from her mother’s side.

When I was little, I used to follow Mom around, a little duckling, just to be near her. Part of it was instinctive; she was my mom and I wanted to be close to her. Just like any kid. But the other part was bigger—I wanted to know her so I could understand where I came from. With Dad, it was easy. I could tell that I got my love of trying different foods from him, my eye for clean lines, my insistence on doing something over and over again until I got it right. But with Mom, I could never find an opening. She only gave so much of herself; most of it she kept somewhere else. Somewhere boxed up, out of my reach (Arcos, 2018, p.20-21).

Zara’s effort to get answers of her questions from her mother was useless as Nadja was “boxed up” her memories—her buried legacies as Schwab states that these legacies of transgenerational haunting often operate in family secrets and other forms of silencing (2010, p.13). Nadja was keeping her past memories as a secret for it was only bring her pain, but Paul with a distinct background openly shared his identities for their daughter. For that reason, Zara crisis in her sense of belonging from her mother was also on the account of Nadja’s significant differences from Paul.

In contrast to the victim of violent history that lives with memory scars, which develop symptoms of gasp, amnesia, distortion, revision, fugue states, or intrusive flashback, the recipient of transgenerational trauma (the second generation) lives with what is called as

“postmemory” that comes to them in former way. The fragmentary and shot through holes and gaps are almost the same with haunting legacy of the parental generation, yet in a different ways, because these second generation children have to patch together the fragment of the history they have never lived before. These children use everything they can find, for instance like photographs, letters, or stories, and even despair, rage, silences, grief, or sudden unexplainable shifts in moods which handed down to them (Schwab, 2010, p.14). This “postmemory” effect resulted from Zara condition as her mother’s “peculiar attitude” reader was the main issue that led Zara into her cultural identity crisis.

When Zara was in seventh grade and was assigned a project of parent’s profile, she asked Nadja to tell about her past but Nadja did not want to do it and the more Zara pressed the question the angrier she became. After the incident, her father told Zara of her mother’s reason “Dad told me it was painful for Mom to talk about her past because she lost her whole family in the war in Bosnia. I hadn’t even known she’d been in a war. If I had been in a war, I wouldn’t keep it a secret. But for Mom, it was like her life was divided—before the war, and after.” At first Zara could not understand the reason of why her mother hid her experience on the war. By then, Zara’s postmemory effect affected her to search on her own about Bosnian war which resulted on her shock and questioned more to her mother about it. Although later Zara’s questions in understanding her origin—her complete identity was blocked by Nadja’s way of hiding, waving away, changing subject, switching focus, even worse by keeping herself silence and leaving her.

“Silencing these violent histories casts...the continuity of psychic life but, unintegrated and unassimilated, they eat away at this continuity from within...In this way, the buried ghosts of the past come...always threatening to destroy its communicative and expressive function” (Schwab, 2010, p.49). One of Nadja’s buried ghosts was her memory of her past boyfriend, Marko, a photographer. This ghost suddenly haunted her when she found out of Zara’s new passion in photography. It destroyed further her emotional psychic, which eventually worsened her relation with Zara by showing unpleasant reactions, toward Zara and her photography activities, as photography was a fragment of her memory that reminded Nadja of Marko.

Subsequently, after both encountering terrorist bombing, Zara’s haunting legacy’s postmemory effect was getting higher as Nadja was in a coma. The possibility of losing her mother frightened her, since her quest of finding out her origin had not finished yet. There were lots of unanswered questions, and yet the chance to get the answers were about to disappear. It led her to face a tremendous crisis in finding and constructing her cultural identity as well as in building mutual understanding between her and her mother.

She could really not wake up. She could be gone forever. Even though I have wished her horrible fates both under my breath and in my own head, suddenly, the reality of my mom dying chokes me. I would never have the chance to know her. I'd never know where I came from.

And she wouldn't know me.

She doesn't know me (Arcos, 2018, p.38).

In consequence, even though the silence that bordering between her and her mother was similar to the silence before her mother in a coma, this silence of waiting her mother roused from coma developed her postmemory effect and encouraged Zara to search everything that could give her significant information about her mother's identity.

She started her quest in her mother's bedroom in their house. Without her mother's presence, Zara could search for her mother's fractional part of identity without restraint. Eventually, Zara was able to find her mother secret box that was deeply buried on the highest self of the closet. Inside the box, she saw dozens of old photographs, some letters in Bosnian, her prayer beads, and other things that connected with Nadja's past (Arcos, 2018, p.51-53). From these old things, Zara's was finally able to get some fragments of her mother's legacies.

Later, as her postmemory effect reached its peak, Zara tried to recount the string of her mother's story—of her suffering, fear and broken heart, which are implied in every picture. She then decided to translate her mother's letters into English by using translator Service Company to comprehend the real story of her mother's past.

I've always known my mother survived a war, but her words give me a glimpse into her heart and the suffering she's had to endure. I see now that because of what she went through, she is broken and scarred in ways that I am not. But I also know that I carry my own scars, my own brokenness. And if we continue to live and act from this place of hurt, there will never be healing.

I read her words again. Absorb all their pain and longing.

How would I feel if I'd been through what she has? Would I be able to come back from such things? (Arcos, 2018, p.248)

Reading the translated letters, Zara's questions about her mother's past had finally been answered, and it led her to her awareness and understanding about the heavy and painful burdens of her mother past memories.

Furthermore, as her mother in the process of recovery from her coma, Zara brought her mother's box that full of her previous memories and helped Nadja in recognizing her photos, letters, and things to overcome her haunting legacy. Sharing and discussing those

memorable items between mother and daughter did not only useful for Nadja, but also useful for Zara in overcoming her postmemory effect. “I continue to ask Mom questions, prodding her along. She doesn’t need much. It’s like a dam has been broken....” (Arcos, 2018, p.255). After long and painful silence, Nadja finally was able to tell all about her and her family, the good and the bad times. This became her catalyst that released all the miseries, which were repressed for so many years. “Dam” symbolized her repressed past memories, which turned into her own haunting legacies. By listening and absorbing all her mother stories, Zara could cope with the postmemory effect. She was able to gather all fragments of her mother memories, and then recollected and reconstructed pieces of her mother’s cultural identity into her own.

Mimicry, Ambivalence, and Hybridity

As cultural identity is the process of becoming as well as being (Hall, 1994), Nadja wanted to develop her new cultural identity as an American and tried to reject every trace that linked her to her hometown for her self-hatred towards her ethnicity as a Bosniak from Višegrad that made her lost everything she loved. Likewise, the reason why she came alone to Boston and left her father’s family colleague in Chicago was because they always reminded her of her terrible memories in Bosnia. This, however, grew into a crisis as she wanted to be an American, yet she had not overcome her legacies, which was her previous cultural identity as Bosniak that already rooted inside her for 19 years. Nadja’s cultural identity crisis was tied in with her daughter’s cultural identity crisis, as it influenced Zara in constructing her cultural identity.

Adapting the American way of life in Boston, Nadja tried to mimic the American appearances, habits, customs, attitudes, and lifestyles, as well as improved her English skill (Arcos, 2018, p.276). Bhabha defines this way of ‘mimicking’ as the complex strategy of reforming correspondingly as the other culture that visualized power (1994, p.86). This ‘mimicking’ was based on Nadja’s views that United States was more ‘advanced’ compared to Višegrad, her hometown. Even before she migrated to United States, she already aspired to start her new life in America.

One day she planned to go to America. Maybe study music there. She hoped Marko would go with her. They would travel to New York and walk all around the city. She imagined the photos he’d take of her there. How she would take the subway and live in an apartment and have an exciting life compared to the one in Višegrad (Arcos, 2018, p.33).

The menace of mimicry emerges when the colonized has continually repeated the colonizer cultures and started to perceive them as superior while looked at themselves as inferior (Bhabha, 1994, p.86). Hence, after the war started, her desire to go to America was getting bigger as Nadja's felt her condition of being a helpless Bosniak as an inferior, while she knew that became an American could help her to be more powerful and superior. These American powerful and superiority are represented by McDonald's and Madonna, two of most well-known American popular culture icons. These two icons became the symbol of how America had conquered the world, as you could find McDonald's restaurants almost everywhere around the globe, and Madonna was one of the American singers recognized by all generations.

"I'm going to America," Nadja said. She hadn't told anyone this except for Marko, back in another time and another place. Until this moment, Nadja had forgotten that had been the plan. It took everything she had not to think about the past, just to focus on surviving. But now she decided. She would go too. She would get out of here, never look back. "With my friend." Dalila wanted out too.

McDonald's and Madonna," Jela said.

Nadja nodded. "I'll become an American and forget this place" (Arcos, 2018, p.146).

This mimicry process, however, was difficult to maintain. Although Bosnian has borrowed words from other European languages such as English, Turkish, Arabic, and Persian, the pronouncing and some of English verbs are hard to be understood (Miller, 2000). Even after Nadja learned the base of English and the accent, she still had not come to be familiar with the rhythm and the feature that can only be known when living deep in the culture (Arcos, 2018, p.276). Furthermore, Nadja's way in assimilating with the American culture, however, disturbed by her haunting legacy, her previous identity, as this idea to suppress their own cultural identity may leaves them in an ambivalent and a confuse state (Bhabha, 1994, p.86). In turn, Nadja's efforts in forcing to embrace a complete new identity as an American took her to the ambivalence state.

Nadja's ambivalence could be found from the language difficulty, her way of thinking, her foods, and her habits as well. Bhabha (1994) defines this as the perpetual self disorder that wanting one thing and wanting its opposite, additionally it is asserted when the context cannot be mimetically interpreted from the content (Bhabha, 1994, p.36).

I know how sensitive Mom is about her English. On the surface, Mom seems American enough, but it's the small things that betray her. Like how she

drops her articles. Or how she still hasn't mastered the hard g sound of English. Sometimes she fudges idioms, like "it's raining cats and dogs" becomes "it's raining the dogs and cats" (Arcos, 2018, p.7).

Although Nadja had profound determination to be an American, her Bosnian self unconsciously appeared occasionally. In fact, it became the issue that always stands in between her and her daughter, Zara that also involves in Zara's incomplete cultural identity as Zara had already known her complete root identity from her father, Paul, as Portuguese-England American because of her closeness with his family, yet she only knew one thing from her mother that she was a Bosnian.

Zara's American teenage open-minded self of seeing things always got into collision with Nadja's closed different perspective, which actually resulted from Zara unknowledgeable of her Bosnian origin. Even though Zara had tried to reach her mother's culture by 'mimic' her Bosnian habit in drinking *Turkish coffee* as her desire to learn about her missed cultural identity (Arcos, 2018, p.14), she could not construct her complete identity as long as her mother still in her ambivalence state.

After the bombing incident, Nadja got into *vegetative stage*, which is caused by traumatic brain injury and a coma. This is a condition when a person awake but showing no signs of awareness; doesn't show any meaningful responses, and no signs of experiencing emotions. One of the treatments to overcome this stage are from sensory stimulation in an attempt to increase responsiveness which can include showing photos, talking, or singing, and holding hands as well (National Health Service,2018). With Zara assistance, Nadja slowly regained back her former cultural identity and overcame her ambivalence of rejecting her Bosnian traits to another process of hybridity which stated by Bhabha (1994, p.1) as a process creating a new culture that is located in between two cultures resulted as a sign of new identity. As hybridity is a process of creating from assimilation of the minority into the powerful culture (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, 1995, p.118), Nadja had created her new identity by accepting and assimilating both American culture and her Bosnian culture. By doing this, she embraced not only her American identity, but also her Bosnian identity and became Bosnian-American. In Zara's case, her mother complete cultural identities had become a strong foundation for her to reconstruct her cultural identity as Bosnian-American teenager, and eventually accepted her whole lineages with proud and honor (Arcos, 2018, p.284).

Muslim Inferiority

The main issue of Bosnian conflict that Nadja had experienced in her teenage which resulted

in her haunting legacies as well as her cultural identity crisis came from the state of her origin and religion, Bosnian and Islam which has been categorized and seen as a lower state, or in the other word, the state of them as the *orient*. The “orient” associated with the East culture that dominated and restructured by the “occident” which associated with the West (European) culture (Said, 1978, p.2-3), as Said claims that “The Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience” (Said, 1978, p.1). It was apparent that the “orient” is related on the odd, underdeveloped, inferior, and unchanging traits, while the “occident” is more rational, developed, humane, and superior (Kaul in Kumar Das, 2005, p.218).

On the contrary, Bosnia is located inside the Europe but it is considered to be the part of the orient. This mainly because Bosnia was conquered for almost 400 years by the Ottoman Empire and was made into a buffer area between the Islamic East and the Christian West (Phillips & Gritzner, 2004, p.36). In addition, the origin of Bosnian conflict which made 70% of the territory in Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) ethnically cleansed from Bosniak (Flögel and Lauc, 1998) was because of the fear that this “orient” will reverse their situation, as orientalism may lead to various kinds of racism and discrimination to the East people because the West has identified themselves as superior race (Said, 1978, p. 8, 79). The Serb was triggered and frightened on the account of Bosniak as the majority people in Bosnia as well the victory of Muslim president and Muslim party on the election when Bosnia and Herzegovina declared its independence on 1990 (Phillips & Gritzner, 2004, p.53, 43-45).

“You think Karadžić and his animals will stop?” Nadja’s dad said. “They call us *balije*.” He waved his arm. “No one would say such a derogatory remark to me before. You will see. Only Serbs will be allowed to remain. It is fascism all over again. No more Tito. No more Yugoslavia. Nothing to stand in the way of old hate” (Arcos, 2018, p.41).

This conflict that traumatized Nadja for many years was explained by her father a day before he and her little brother got taken by the Serbs. Nadja was rejecting this issue at first, but when Marko said to her that the Serbs including his father wanted all Muslims left, she finally realized her dangerous situation because of her identity as Bosniak (Arcos, 2018, p.43). Furthermore, “The old hate” that her father said referred to the Ottoman conquer, as *balije* was the vulgar term to call the descendants of Ottoman Empire. As Said states:

Not for nothing did Islam come to symbolize terror, devastation, the demonic, hordes of hated barbarians. For Europe, Islam was a lasting trauma. Until the end of the seventeenth century the "Ottoman peril" lurked alongside Europe to represent for the whole of Christian civilization a constant danger, and in time European civilization incorporated that peril and

its lore, its great events, figures, virtues, and vices, as something woven into the fabric of life (Said, 1978, p.59-60).

This fear toward Muslims and Islam in general was known as *Islamophobia*. CAIR (2009/2010)—Council on American-Islamic Relations as the America’s largest Muslim civil liberties and advocacy organization defines *Islamophobia* as a close-minded prejudice against or hatred of Islam and Muslims, while an Islamophobe is an individual who holds a closed-minded view of Islam and promotes prejudice against or hatred of Muslims. In accordance with CAIR, Runnymede Trust’s—an independent research and social policy agency, established the Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia (1997) and produced a consultation paper entitled *Islamophobia* and states eight statements characteristic of Islamophobia mindsets; these characteristics are 1) Islam seen static and unresponsive to new realities 2) Islam is seen as different from other 3) Islam is seen as inferior to the West 4) Islam is seen as vicious, threatening, violent, espouse terrorism 5) Islam is seen as a political ideology 6) Criticisms made by Islam about ‘the West’ rejected beyond control 7) Hatred towards Islam used to justify discriminatory practices towards Muslims and isolate Muslims from mainstream society. 8) Anti-Muslim resentment accepted as natural and ‘normal’.

From these 8 characteristics, Nadja had experienced some, starting from her hometown, Višegrad, up until her survival in Sarajevo. The worst hatred, violent, resentment, and discriminatory practices were pestered into her on her escape to Sarajevo when she met Serbian soldier by accident.

“Name?”

“Nadja,” she said. Her voice cracked like the old forest floor underfoot as she realized her mistake too late. She’d shaved her head for nothing. She’d given her real name by accident.

“A girl?” He pulled tighter. “Surname.”

She gave him a fake name, hoping that hearing a Croat one would appease him.

“Croats, Muslims, you all smell the same.” He kneed her in the gut. She doubled over in pain. He punched her in the face, and she fell to the ground. Her body contracted into a fetal position without her even telling it to. He kicked her. The taste of blood came into her mouth. This time it was her own (Arcos, 2018, 262).

Owing to the fact that her Muslim identity was implied in her name, Nadja was abused and violated by the soldier. Her fake Croats name did nothing to help her as the Serbs

soldier only care to destroy anyone with Muslim identity, ergo this act of discrimination toward Muslim was considered natural. Furthermore, it followed her, even, right into her living as American. Even though, her appearance was ‘American enough,’ she was remain suspected by the police officer that she had a connection with ISIS, who had been accused as the one responsible for the attack across US just because she was a Muslim.

I stare hard at Mona. “Are you trying to imply that my mom had something to do with this?”

“No, of course not. We’re simply trying to get as much information as possible.” She leans forward, invading my space, but I don’t back away from her. “People died. Good people. Innocent people. Many others were wounded. Some will never walk again. It’s our job to get to the truth of how this happened, who orchestrated it.”

“My mom isn’t even religious. But the last I heard, America is a free country and we’re all free to practice any religion.”

“Zara, I think you might have misunderst—”

“No!” I don’t let her finish. “You’re suggesting that because my mom is Muslim, she might have ties to terrorists? That she could be one herself? Do you think I’m a terrorist too?” (Arcos, 2018, p.89).

Said (1978, p.102) defines that even though some of the Orient could go beyond ‘the boxing’ made by the Occident around them, they would still be considered as oriental first, and human being second: “No matter how deep the specific exception, no matter how much a single Oriental can escape the fences placed around him, he is first an Oriental, second a human being, and last again an Oriental.” Despite the fact that Nadja’s appearance was like another American, her name indicated her identity as a Muslim. In conclusion, Nadja’s effort in becoming the part of the powerful culture was failed as her Muslim identity connected her with her cultural inferiority and with her identity as Bosnian origin.

CONCLUSION

Nadja’s inferiority, her haunting legacies effects, and her process in cultural identity crisis are interconnected in developing hers as well as her daughter’s Zara’s complete cultural identities as well as related on affecting their relation. Nadja’s inferiority as a Bosniak (Muslim Bosnian) became the source of her misfortune in losing everything she had and caused her trauma—her haunting legacy. On her process in developing a new identity, these comeback memories of her 19 years in Bosnia triggered her unstable emotions as well as her unusual habits which resulted in her ambivalence on her cultural identity.

Nadja haunting legacy and her ambivalences on her attitudes caused confusion in Zara's cultural identity and created the postmemory effect in searching the hidden memories of her mother. In conclusion, after Zara helped Nadja accepted her past life, her haunting legacy effect reduced and she accepted herself in a hybrid notion to be a true Bosnian-American. Nadja state in peace with both parts of her cultural identities also helps Zara in her identity development, in which made Zara acknowledged all of her whole cultural identity as a Portuguese, England, Bosnian-American and overcome her postmemory effect.

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