
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Violence and War in Rawi Hage's *DeNiro's Game* and *Cockroach*

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| ABSTRACT

Violence is a complex and broad concept and phenomenon that has been present throughout history. In fact, it is almost impossible to fully grasp the real reasons or motives behind acts of violence as they are varied. Violence has been quite influential in human evolution and existence; it is prevalent not only in real life but also in different narratives. The latter could be media, cinema, or literature, as they are efficient means that could represent a variety of topics, issues, and phenomena, and the topic of violence is no exception. In this regard, this paper attempts to scrutinize the various aspects of violence and crime driven by war in Rawi Hage's two novels, *DeNiro's Game* and *Cockroach*, focusing on physical violence that is legitimized by war and psychological violence that is a result of the former, providing a textual analysis that considers thematic and character analysis. The novel's context is the Lebanese society during the cruel Lebanese Civil War that left its people struggling for their lives even after the war stopped. This paper attempts to consider the brutality of violence during wartime and its consequences in the long run, which transcend the actual physical abuse and harm to the psychological one that causes trauma and mental disturbance. The latter have driven war-witnesses, the characters, to a totally endless circle of suffering and mental struggle on a daily basis.

| KEYWORDS

Violence, war, trauma, mental struggle, physical abuse.

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1. Introduction

Violence, as intriguing and thumping as it may seem, is, in fact, quite controversial and complex. Violence is inseparable from war and crime, more or less. Whenever war and crime are mentioned or considered, violence is the first notion that comes into one's mind. It is necessarily present and associated with war. Moreover, they have a major role in the order of the world especially in the modern age and postmodern age. "War and violence have played and still play a central role in the current world order." (Kamali 2015: 18). However, the postmodern age comes as an opposing direction that questions the modern age and some of its principles as well as issues including violence; however, the latter is present in almost a daily basis. Violence and war contribute to one another, especially with the increasing number of technological powers and new methods of destruction. In fact, the modern and postmodern ages were quite well known and characterized by an increasing number of methods of destruction, especially during wars.

Throughout the twentieth century and the twenty-first century, war has become gradually and increasingly forceful. The beginning of the modern age, with its new technology, new economic order, and new territories and borderlines, constructed a set of new aspects of violence and war. "War and violence are frequently used for the reproduction of a modern global order, which creates major inequalities and global social problems for many people around the world." (Kamali, 2015, p. 10). Veritably, the more new technologies and industrial productions grow, the more violence becomes consequential, and war becomes destructive. Industrial production of destructive weapons created constant instability in the world and caused certain societies to disappear, not to

mention the dangerous illnesses and deceases that could kill thousands of people. In addition, such weapons left thousands of soldiers disabled and traumatized.

War could be a result of various reasons: colonialism, imperialism, the will to power, and to have access and control over natural resources, not to mention political and economic reasons. However, explicitly or implicitly, the horrors of war and some of its motives could be expressed through different means of expression; literature and movies are efficient forms. For instance, Joseph Conrad's masterpiece *Heart of Darkness* is a crucial piece of literature that demonstrates the horror and destruction caused by colonialism. Even though *Heart of Darkness* is viewed as a colonial novel, there are certain ambivalent perceptions towards it. In other words, it exposes the harshness of colonialism and imperialism and how the real motives behind colonialism are profits rather than civilization. However, on the other hand, it gives certain connotations that are stereotypical. That is, it falls into the same trap of most colonial discourses that represent colonized nations as primitive, uncivilized, and unorganized.

The movie *Apocalypse Now* is considered a masterpiece in the cinema industry as well, given the fact that it is a movie on the Vietnam War that took place between the years 1955 to 1975. The movie was produced in 1979, and it received a lot of attention and praise. The story line, however, was inspired by *Heart of Darkness*; the movie, in its turn, unmasked the horrors and ominous consequences of war. It displayed the greed, inhumanity, and immorality of colonial powers; it also brought into light the human aspect that was absent in war. Crimes and justifiable violence were questioned in symbolic ways throughout the movie.

In fact, even after colonialism, especially by the down of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century, new statistics, new circumstances, new data, and new testimonies were brought to the order of the world and to the history of humans at large. War is still disturbing, and its causes are still biased. For instance, in our current time, war has become a weapon that strong, dominant countries use in order to expose their power over an enemy state. Sometimes, the war happens outside the opposing countries' borders, and it basically happens in weaker, helpless countries. War is for sure destructive to the human race, the earth's resources, and the global system at large, and it could be said that war is just a reflection of the human struggle with history and violence. In fact, it has had a significant influence on human history overall; the latter revolves around war, conflicts, and human confrontations in one way or another.

Civil wars, in turn, could be more destructive, for the reasons behind them are mostly connected with issues of race, ethnicity, and religion within communities of the same society or country. The Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990) was one of the most destructive civil wars in the Middle East. It had many contributors involved in it: Lebanon, the Christian part led by the Militia men, the Muslim part, Israel, Palestine, and Syria. However, the Lebanese Civil War was primarily a war between the Lebanese Christians and Lebanese Muslims. In fact, race and ethnicity, as well as religion, played a major role in promoting the Lebanese Civil War affairs, and it caused a lot of trauma to its denizens.

This paper considers the physical and psychological aftermaths of the Lebanese Civil War, as a war motivated by violence and crime, by textually analyzing the selected novels in which the civil war is very significant and symbolic. *De Niro's Game* and *Cockroach* by Rawi Hage manifests how the civil war was very much a destructive and painful experience for the Lebanese people, which left them with traumatic excessive baggage. Each novel illustrates the painful, unforgettable memory of the Civil War. In *De Niro's Game*, war is viewed from the heart of the events; it is viewed and examined very closely. It considers citizens as war witnesses: as victims of the horrors of the actual physical war and as helpless individuals in a torn country, and at times as contributors in the war through engaging with the militia men and participating in the killings. On the other hand, *Cockroach* considers the effects of war at the psychological level, and it questions the effects on war witnesses' identity, mental stability, and sanity after the war is over. In this sense, this paper deals with these questions while addressing the presence of war and crime as opposed to morality and norms and collective violence, homicide, and legitimate violence found in the selected novels.

2. War and crime vs. morality and norms

De Niro's Game was the very first novel that Rawi Hage composed in 2006. It caught a lot of attention and earned significant prizes and awards. The novel's events and storyline are set during the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990). The war, which was substantially between Muslims and Christians in Lebanon, created much damage and horrible war aftermaths. The main characters are Bassam and George, the latter of whom is nicknamed De Niro; they get involved with the militiamen in a series of crimes. They were exposed to two choices: to stay and engage in the crimes or to go into exile. George decided to stay, yet he ended up committing suicide after he participated in the Sabra and Shatila massacre, as he couldn't handle the guilt of his actions afterward. Bassam, on the other hand, decided to leave for Paris in search of George's father's family. He got into more trouble and ended up leaving Paris.

TEN THOUSAND BOMBS HAD FALLEN, AND I WAS WAITING for death to come and scoop its daily share from a bowl of limbs and blood. I walked down the street under the falling bombs. The streets were empty. I walked above humans

hidden in shelters like colonies of rats beneath the soil. I walked past photos of dead young men posted on wooden electric poles, on entrances of buildings, framed in little shrines.

Beirut was the calmest city ever in a war. (Hage 2006: 36)

De Niro's game exposes the harsh reality of the Civil War by unveiling certain facts. It provides historical information that reveals the real face of war, such as the Sabra and Shatila Massacre. It also depicts the horrible suffering that war witnesses survived through representing symbolic images. "Ten thousand bombs had landed on Beirut, that crowded city and I was lying on a blue sofa covered with white sheets to protect it from dust and dirty feet" (Hage 2006: 11). Death, homicide, and torture are all that the Civil War created. War granted certain symbolism to Beirut; it brought death and silence as it is depicted.

2.1. The use of violence in war and the question of morality

The question of morality is very important to consider when examining war, politics, or social conflicts. In fact, morality disappears during war time. It is almost impossible to bring morality and war together. War is evil and does necessarily involve dangerous methods and crimes that are against human rights. For example, in certain cases, chemical weapons and illegal substances could be used in wars. Such destructive tools do not take into account the aftermaths of destruction that could kill people or leave them handicapped, traumatized, and, at times, insane. In many cases, the upcoming generations suffer from grave illnesses that are difficult to cure. For example, in the incident of Hiroshima in 1945, the city was targeted with a nuclear bomb. The latter's effects were disastrous, and most people who survived had developed serious health issues. In fact, this is one example that exposes the brutality of war and how it shreds from any moral principle or common sense.

In *De Niro's Game*, the Sabra and Shatila massacre was mentioned as a violent criminal event that the Middle East witnessed. It took place in the south of Beirut in 1982, and it was marked in history as one of the most brutal crimes against humanity that targeted Palestinians and Muslim Lebanese. In fact, the Sabra and Shatila massacre is described in *De Niro's game* by George, who participated in it. Even though the novels' conflicts and the characters are fictitious, the Lebanese Civil War and the Sabra and Shatila incident are real. In fact, the Sabra and Shatila incident could be considered as 'collective violence' and an act of genocide against innocent, helpless civilians. George nicknamed De Niro in the novel, admitted his crimes and thus revealed the hideous, unbearable truth of war and the immoral consequences that could rip humanity out of people who commit these crimes.

I killed today... I killed many. Many, he said as he played with his gun... Ten thousand. Ten thousand, may be more, he mumbled. We must have killed ten thousand of them...Children, women, we even shot the donkey, he said and laughed... We killed! People were shot at random, and entire families killed at dinner tables. Cadavers in their nightclothes, throats slit, axes used, hands separated from bodies, women cut in half... De Niro drank some more. Outside, he said, bodies rolled in sand, bloated. Blood turned into dark stains; green flies were feeding, bulldozers dug and shoved cadavers in ground holes. It was all like a movie. All like a movie. Dead people everywhere. Do you still want to hear? Do you want to hear more? More? He shouted at me, Here, drink! He cranked his gun and put it in my face. Drink, I say. (Hage, 2006: 173-174-175- 176)

De Niro, Bassam's childhood best friend, participated in this massacre. He was involved with the militiamen beforehand, with the character of Abou-Nahra and his men. George's addiction to drugs, his immoral relationship with Nicole as well as his act of cheating on his friend Bassam with his lover are all signs that George has shredded his humanity. Instead, he carried out a series of crimes against innocents, neglecting all aspects of friendship, humanity, and morality. While he met with Bassam for the last time, he confessed all of his crimes before committing suicide. De Niro's speech while confessing revealed his sarcastic mode, his neglectful attitude and his regretful manner. In fact, it was quite ambivalent since he was determined to kill his friend Bassam, yet he ended up killing himself and putting a deplorable ending to his miserable life.

Listen to what happened there in that camp. Listen. Kamil had cocaine. We sniffed, and we shouted, For Al-Rayess! We rounded up more men against a wall, women and children against a wall. We shot all the men first. The women and children wailed, and we changed magazines and shot them as well. It was their cries that made me shoot them. I hate kids' cries. I never cry; have you ever seen me cry? The rest who came after, when they saw the corpses on the floor, they panicked. Some pissed in their pants. I saw three fleeing from the back; we chased them in the narrow alleys. I became separated from the others, and I lost everyone; I was alone. I broke down doors. I entered a house and found a woman on the floor surrounded by her dead daughters. She looked me in the face. I said, you want to join your family, don't you? She said, You might as well finish what you started, my son." (Hage, 2006: 177 – 178)

Innocent citizens, refugees, and civilians are essentially the victims of such conflicts. Notwithstanding the fact that war usually revolves around natural resources, money, power, glory, and profits are also reasons for war, in order to achieve that, people who

are in charge of war could resort to and use any method to reach their goal. Thus, killing, violence, rape, and homicide become trivial and unquestionable. "The houses were filled with bodies of slain women in aprons; men stretched next to their wives and their raped daughters." (Hage, 2006: 178)

It is worth mentioning that the influence of race, ethnicity, and religion were dominant in this Civil War. Hate, revenge, and one's commitment to one's origins based on race and religion are driven forces that push people in war to mercilessly kill and slay. "men from the villages of Damour, Sadiyat, and Nameh. Those men never forgot their burned villages, those men were also lions. One of them, an older fellow, looked me in the eyes and said, We have been waiting a long time for this." (*De Niro's Game* 2006: 175). The lack of tolerance and acceptance of differences were also motivators for more violence.

Hence, it could be interpreted that not only greed and money are the reasons for war and crimes, but also partiality, hate, dogmatism, and intolerance are motives behind such killings. The will to prove that one part, nation, community, religion, or political party is better, purer, or has the right of precedence over the other are the reasons that lead individuals to believe in their brutal extremist acts and blindly engage with them. Such beliefs sprout only hate, animosity, and hostility. They rather consider other opposing or different groups in their beliefs, traditions, or rituals, especially the minorities, as enemies and a source of threat. In fact, many times, hostility and animosity delude individuals of a specific community to mix fidelity and patriotism to one's community or nation with violence and crimes as ways to defend their community and to show their fidelity.

In this regard, when morality, common sense, and principles disperse, the questions of fidelity to one's country, to one's nation, and to one's patriotism are questioned. Treachery appears to be the most transparent feature that war could involve people in. It is true that revenge could be one reason, but treachery is another reason. Money and greed could drive people to cheat even their communities, let alone their opposed ones.

2.2 Fidelity and treachery

George did not only participate in the brutal massacre of Sabra and Shatila but also betrayed his country and his community by working secretly as an agent for Israel, considering that they were at war at the time. So, Bassam knew the truth about George when he went to France to meet the family of George's French father. Bassam discovered George's real identity too late after he was already dead. However, his discovery made him perceptive and cautious towards friendship, personal profits, and inner passions for power and money.

In fact, the question of fidelity is very symbolic in war and in conflicts between communities and societies at large. Sometimes, it could be blind engagement with one's community or nation. As René Girard expresses in his notion of the 'Sacrifice.' During war, soldiers or even ordinary individuals from one community can sacrifice themselves or give a specific type of sacrifice in order to save the common interest and good of the community. However, sometimes the opposite happens; an individual could sacrifice not only his own principles and morals but also his community for the sake of personal passions and greed.

On the other hand, it could be said that 'structural violence', the term by Johan Galtung, is also affective in such conflicts through media and other components of the state. 'Structural violence' advocates for other types of violence, such as the physical one. It gives a certain legitimacy and acceptance to violence. In fact, it made people consent and approve of it since it is presented as serving the common good of citizens. 'Structural violence,' in fact, makes use of 'cultural violence' and 'direct violence' when needed. The latter could justify and simplify violence and make it approvable in society. Thus, violence could happen smoothly and without any disapproval as far as people believe that it is culturally accepted or for the common good. Religious discourse could also be a sufficient way to convince people to accept certain things, including the legitimacy of war.

To resume, George used war circumstances in his favor; however, he got himself in trouble, and he condemned his life to crimes, drugs, and immoral behavior. In fact, his choices and own decisions led him to his tragic death. He cheated his friend Bassam who is supposed to be his childhood friend; they had such a strong bond that was brotherly as Bassam believed, yet George did not care about any of those principles. George took advantage of the absence and isolation of Bassam after the death of his mother, and he stole his lover, Rana. However, it could be said that regardless of all those acts of crimes, treachery, and conspiracy, George felt regretful and shameful, more or less. This is probably why he committed suicide as a way to liberate himself and to atone for his sins.

'Collective violence', personal profits, treachery and, blind engagements with one's community, and dogmatism are contributors to violence and civil wars. They are determining to adopt immoral actions towards all that is different and opposed. However, such acts are questioned when considering the psyche of individuals who participate, who witness, and who experience them. The following section will reflect on the psychic effects caused by war and violence on war witnesses and immigrants who fled after the war stopped. It specifically considers the case of the narrator, who is the protagonist in *Cockroach*.

3. The psychological effects of war on immigrants and war witnesses

The Lebanese Civil War in *De Niro's game* was physical. The incidents and the effects took place in the same setting, in war-torn Beirut. All the crimes, all the violence, and the killings took place on the Lebanese ground. Characters witnessed it, participated in it, and were affected by it. Death was very symbolic; it was the feature that characterized the atmosphere. Surviving such circumstances is influential on people who lived and experienced it as in *De Niro's game*. However, in *Cockroach*, the effects of war and the experience of war took place at the psychic level. That is to say, war lives and remains in the memory of characters who witnessed it as an unhealed scar that torture their psyche, their consciousness, and their lives in all its aspects. Thus, this second section considers the effects of war, crimes, and violence on the psyche and identity of war witnesses who survived wars and violence.

3.1 Memories of a war-torn country and the psychological struggle to forget

Cockroach, the second novel by Rawi Hage, was quite striking owing to its wit rendering of the human psyche. More specifically, this novel looks profoundly at the human psyche of the main character, an unnamed Lebanese immigrant living in Montreal, Canada. The narrator survived an attempt of suicide and is now forced to attend sessions with a psychiatrist. This sub-section considers his psyche in relation to his memory of war and its violence. The narrator recalls his life as a child in a war-torn city back in Lebanon; he survived The Lebanese Civil War and held its memory with him as an immigrant currently living in an immigrant, intercultural community in Montreal.

Through his flashbacks and inner monologues, many details about his childhood, his family's relationships, and his theft and deeds as a child are revealed. The narrator imagines himself to be a cockroach while invading people's private lives and breaking into their houses. In fact, the narrator, as an adult and a war witness who survived the harsh circumstances of war, is quite disturbed and lost. His identity, in its turn, is completely disoriented and displaced. Consequently, he carries a disturbed psyche torn between memory and his constant failed attempts to forget.

Memory is an intriguing, complex notion that swings between the past and the present. Memory of the past has a psychological dimension that could determine one's life. The memory could either bring about the glories in a person's life, or it could only remind them of their horrific experiences, which could be violence, war, rape, death of loved ones, or any other painful incident. However, war incidents are the most terrible memories that one could possibly survive and keep as a memory, especially outside the home land. In other words, memory becomes more striking and affective if the person is an immigrant or refugee. Immigrants and refugees are more likely to feel alienated and disturbed by their memories of war and all the losses that they have undergone.

The narrator in *Cockroach* suffered from the memory of a war-torn homeland. Even though he is now an immigrant, his current life is a result of what he had lived throughout his life back in his homeland. In fact, the narrator suffered from painful memories and flashbacks to the war atmosphere back then. What made him more desperate and melancholic is the fact that he was the reason for his sister's death, even though he never intended it. Thus, he thought that leaving the country would heal him, yet memory is stronger than his will to forget. Thus, he had to struggle with war memories and his sister's death.

Suddenly, I remembered how, after my sister's death, I had avoided windows. I remembered sitting in the dark for days, stretching and measuring the length of my beard, inviting fleas and other little creatures to invade my hair and feed on my dirty skin. I found darkness in my bathroom and a cradle in my bathtub. I wept until I heard echoes in the drain, like the fluttering of sails, telling me to leave. I shaved, and then I sailed away from that room, that house, that land, thinking that all was past, all was buried, all would come to an end. (Hage, 2008: 300)

His attempt at suicide was a prevalent consequence of the difficulty to forget. Suicide is an act of liberation and relief for him. It was possibly the only way that could release him from his painful memories of the past. Through his flashbacks, the narrator reveals how harsh life was under war circumstances and how it could reshape individuals' identities. As a child, the narrator used to steal all that he could get hold of since there was shortages of supplies, and after he grew up, he became a thief more or less. An innocent child surviving war, growing up in an unhealthy family situation, going through domestic violence, a violent father, and a cruel mother, was no longer innocent. He rather becomes disturbed, violent, and ultimately an adult immigrant with a torn identity and unhinged psyche.

I was out of toilet paper, but who cared? I always washed after defecating. Though I must admit, during the water shortages in wartime in that place where I come from, there were periods when I did not wash for a long time. You could hardly brush your teeth. Oh, how I once gave priority to that which was most visible – I would wash my face and deprive everything else with the little water I had. Every drop of water that ran through the drain inspired me to follow it, gather it, and use it again. As a kid, I was fascinated by drains. I'm not sure if it was the smell or the noises and echoes that were unexpectedly released after the water was gobbled or if it was simply the possibility of escape to a place where the refuse

of stained faces, infamous hands, dirty feet, and deep purple gums gathered in a large pool for slum kids to swim, splash, and play in. (Hage, 2008: 22)

Memory becomes intense when the narrator looks back to his failing suicide attempt. The war-torn memories, as well as the hardships of life as an immigrant, gave him a sense of carelessness and void. In fact, he claims to be non-religious throughout the novel. The violence he had gone through made religion so trivial and unimportant in his life. He witnessed domestic violence, the suffering of his sister, and her murder, yet he was completely unable to react. God becomes unimportant, rather "dead" as far as the narrator is concerned.

The last time I thought about religion was when I chose the tree to hang myself on. I was pissed with the gods or whoever is responsible for sprouting the trees around here and making them either thin and short or massive and high. I didn't think about religion too hard, but I did not take my decision lightly either. It was not deceit, depression, or a large tragedy that pushed me to go shopping for a rope that suited my neck. And it wasn't voices. I've never heard any voices in my head... Nothing made sense to me anymore. It was not that I was looking for a purpose and had been deceived... (Hage, 2008: 32)

In fact, the narrator has absolutely no aim or purpose, even though he claims the opposite. The memory of war had made him unable and non-religious. Nothing could fix his relationship with religion, for he believes it did not help him when he was in serious need of it. The narrator was undergoing a struggle to forget his memory of war, death, and suffering; thus, he unconsciously resorted to suicide. The latter, however, failed him, and then he was forced to face his life. He had to face war memories, his losses, and his failing attempt at suicide. Thus, the narrator's life has become one failure and disappointment after another.

3.2 Helplessness and Revenge

"I wanted to kill him, but I was young, and he was older and stronger." (Hage, 2008: 62). This statement summarizes why the narrator in *Cockroach* is filled with hatred, anger, disappointment, and outrage. It is his helplessness and the feeling of being unable to fight back or to protect one's family and to prove oneself in a society where power and crime, beating the weak, and violence are the ground rules of manhood. The narrator was weak, unable, and taunted by his brother in law. He humiliated and sneered at his pride and young age. That alone left a whole in his dignity as a child and now as an adult.

The power granted by war is uncontrollable and unquestionable, as the one that was granted to Tony, the narrator's sister's husband. Since he was in the militiamen, he has unlimited powers. His actions, violence, and his crime against the narrator's sister were tolerated because there were no laws. War eliminated laws and rules. The powerful has legitimacy, and the weak has nothing to protect himself or herself with apart from being violent to fight back if they made it that far. This brings to the surface the question of the ruler or the governor; it is quite similar to John Locke "social contract," in which he warned of the chaos and disorder that could be a result of a society without law. Civil wars are mere examples of what could happen once war and disorder overtake the community. Everyone can rule, and everyone can possess power through violence and crime once the state is out of control. The narrator was exposed to such a situation of disability and helplessness.

In the end, he even ordered me to stay. He cursed God and swore at the angels. We poured whisky while my sister cooked in the kitchen. Then, after many drinks, he pulled out his gun and started shooting in the air. None of the neighbours complained or stuck their heads out their windows or went into the street in their slippers and cotton pyjamas to look for cadavers or moaning men. There, everyone is used to gunshots. Shooting in the air is a public statement, a celebration of birth, a farewell to the dead, and private words with the gods."(Hage, 2008: 64)

The narrator is helpless and completely in a position of weakness. He was still young back then and could not defend his sister, nor could he stop her husband from killing her. Moreover, his greed and his unskilled methods of conspiring against Tony were also reasons that his sister was killed. Average people in war and political conflicts are in the position of the weak, and they cannot act against any order from the powerful. Thus, all they are left with is feelings of profound helplessness, guilt, bitterness, and fear.

4. Conclusion

To sum it up, this paper explored how violence and crime are gradually advocated and used by war in the selected novels, drawing on textual and thematic analysis. The first part of this paper examined how the physical effects of war could create a state of horror and a deadly milieu. The presence of power and political dominance is overwhelming over the weak or marginalized groups in society. Morality is viewed as opposed to immorality, violence, and criminal actions towards citizens. The physical consequences and aftermaths of war are taken into account in *De Niro's game* since it provides the incidents and storyline of a war-torn country. "Collective violence," as well as the question of fidelity and treachery, is viewed in relation to war. Morality and norms become unimportant, and instead, violence took the lead as an efficient tool to control, dominate, and have access to money and resources

as well as people. Race, religion, and ethnicity are also strong reasons why the Civil War can take place. In fact, they could create seditions and ultimately cause violence and crimes. The belief that one race or group of individuals is better than the other leads to disastrous conflicts. On the other hand, the second part of this paper attempts to view how violence and crime in war affect the psyche and the life of war witnesses, immigrants, and exiles who manage to survive the war and live with it as a present absent memory lingering on and on in their consciousness and inner mind. In *Cockroach*, we are made aware of the aftermaths of surviving war and being alienated in an immigrant community. Thus, memory is an interesting notion that considers the psychic effects of war over time. It reflects how difficult it is to deal with and tolerate the aftermath of war in the human psyche. In fact, it remained as an unhealed scar throughout life. Helplessness, in its turn, subsidizes the painful memories since war is controlled by power and money. Once individuals do not have access to these, they suffer their weakness and their disability to escape or resist the oppression and the tortures of war.

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