ABJECTION, LIMINALITY, AND WARCHITECTURE: A STUDY OF MICHAEL ONDAATJE'S *THE ENGLISH PATIENT* (1992) AND CHRIS BOHJALIAN'S *THE LIGHT IN THE RUINS* (2013)

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The undersigned certify that they have read the following thesis, examined the defense, are satisfied with the overall exam performance, and recommend the thesis to the Faculty of English Studies for acceptance.

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ABSTRACT

Title: Abjection, Liminality, and Architecture: A Study of Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient* (1992) and Chris Bohjalian's *The Light in the Ruins* (2013)

The present research explores the depiction of war-ruined architecture in the selected literary texts, i.e., *The English Patient* by Michael Ondaatje (1992) and *The Light in the Ruins* (2013) by Chris Bohjalian. This research is interdisciplinary in nature and investigates the influence of wartime violence on the identity and role of architecture and its depiction in literature. By identity, this study refers to an array of dimensions, including historical, social, functional, symbolic, and cultural, since wartime destruction leaves its influence on all these interconnected layers of architecture. Based on the textual evidence from the selected literary texts, this research suggests that wartime violence transcends the physicality of architecture and influences its symbolic meaning. This results in transforming the identity of architecture from an intact and safe space of simple dwelling into a partially ruined liminal space that is unsafe to inhabit yet promotes reconciliation among the victims and perpetrators of war. Architecture is mainly studied as a victim or a site of perpetration during wars. Once destroyed, the ruins are interpreted as carriers of the memories of the past or a promise for a better future. However, this study highlights the role of literature in opening up more possibilities for interpreting war-struck architecture by creating and presenting a rather positive picture of architecture in the postwar period. Moreover, the study also builds a connection between the discipline of architecture and literature. The theoretical framework employed in the research comprises Andrew Herscher's concept of 'Warchitecture' and Julia Kristeva's conceptualizations of 'liminality' and 'abjection' as the main theoretical lenses, while Nir Eisikovits' concept of 'reconciliation after conflicts' as a secondary lens to analyze the selected texts. This qualitative research uses Catherine Belsey's textual analysis method to study and analyze the selected texts and endeavors to explore the relationship between war and architecture, as well as its portrayal in literature. This study paves the way for researchers to examine the influence of violence on architecture and its inhabitants and how the multiple genres of literature portray this influence.

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DEDICATION

To My Parents

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Violence towards architecture has always been one of the primary targets of wars. Its repercussions range from the loss of cultural heritage and destabilization of socioeconomic institutions to the destruction of the meaning and identity of demolished buildings for society. Not only does it disrupt the historical, symbolic, cultural, and social narratives associated with architecture, but it also leaves the targeted buildings functionally degraded. The present research focuses on investigating the transformations wartime violence causes in the identity and role of architecture and how this demolished architecture then leads to fostering reconciliation among the victims and perpetrators of war inhabiting or associated with the besieged architecture. The purpose here is not to glorify the destruction but to bring forward innovative ways of interpreting the relationship between wartime violence and architecture. To do so, this research highlights the role literature plays in demonstrating the impact of wartime ruination on the meaning, identity, and performative role of architecture. Moreover, the new possibilities of peace and reconciliation it creates for people, regardless of their wartime affiliations and roles.

Architecture, in relation to war, has mainly been studied as either a victim or site of perpetration of violence based on its perception and utilization by the parties involved. On the one hand, architectural structures ranging from residential places to buildings of social, political, and religious significance suffer atrocities of wars, while on the other hand, we find prisons, concentration camps, detention centers, etc., constructed to disseminate violence and destruction. Once destroyed, architecture becomes a symbol of loss and misfortune. People either tend to reserve it to keep the reminiscences of war and destruction alive or reconstruct it as an expression of rebirth and resilience. The idea of positioning architecture between the contrasting extremes of a ‘victim’ and a ‘site of perpetration’ and acknowledging the autonomy of war-ruined architecture rather than associating it either with the miseries of the past or hopes of the future has largely remained uninvestigated in the field of architecture as well as in humanities. This study fills the gap by investigating the partially ruined architecture depicted in the selected literary narratives i.e., *The English*

Patient (1992) by Michael Ondaatje and *The Light in the Ruins* (2013) by Chris Bohjalian, and therefore builds a bridge between architectural studies and literature.

Marcus Vitruvius Pollio, a Roman Architect and engineer during the 1st century BC, proposed three attributes of architecture in his book *De Architectura* (*c.* 20-30 BCE), which is translated by Morris Hicky Morgan as *Vitruvius: The Ten Books on Architecture* (1914). According to Vitruvius, architecture should possess three qualities that include: *firmitas, utilitas, and venustas*, translated as "solidity," "usefulness," and "beauty" (Morgan 70-80). Partially ruined buildings retain residential capabilities to some extent; however, their identity as useful architectural bodies remains indeterminate as they still lack firmness and exquisiteness. Nevertheless, one cannot categorize such buildings as complete ruin either because they still hold some potential to inhabit individuals. According to the argument of the present research, these partially ruined buildings exist in an in-between state amidst stable architecture and an entirely ruined one. Moreover, in this state of in-betweenness, people do not desire these buildings as places of dwelling. However, they cannot entirely overlook the fact that these buildings exist and still possess the capacity for habitation. It is the destruction and violence during wars that put partially ruined architecture in this intermediate state. Therefore, present research argues that wartime destruction transcends the physical presence of the targeted architecture and affects its symbolic meaning, resulting in a complete transformation of its identity and role. It disrupts the already prevalent meanings and identities of targeted buildings and ascribes new ones that are neither linked to the pre-war identities of the architecture nor are influenced by its expected role in the future.

After undergoing such transformation, partially destroyed architecture moves to a liminal state between stable, useful architecture and an entirely ruined one. It becomes an 'abject' (an entity that does not conform to the defined laws, orders, or definitions) space challenging the established definitions of both a stable architecture and an entirely ruined one and exists in an ambiguous state between the self and other. One cannot accept this abject architecture as standard nor expel it as a complete 'other'. Abject invokes in people both the feelings of familiarity and strangeness, discomfort and fascination, hope and horror. It allows them to transform the negative energy surrounding the abject into a constructive outlet. Therefore, people's interaction with partially ruined abject architecture

leads to the development of a sympathetic bond between them irrespective of their wartime identities as victims and perpetrators because of their affiliations with the conflicting parties. This sympathetic bond then paves the way for reconciliation among the people. The development of a sympathetic connection and reconciliation among the victims and perpetrators inhabiting the partially ruined architecture demonstrates the transformation of the negative energy neighboring the partially ruined abject architecture into something constructive and socially acceptable.

To formulate the argument of this current research, a total of three theoretical underpinnings have been employed with two as primary lenses complemented by a secondary lens. The theory of warchitecture (2010), proposed by Andrew Herscher, a visual artist and professor of Architecture at the University of Michigan, is the first primary lens this research brings in to explore the interrelation between war and architecture. This theory introduces new ways to investigate and understand violence against architecture. Herscher criticizes the power-driven narratives of studying architecture and its relationship with war and encourages architects and theorists to explore the multiple roles architecture plays during and after the war, apart from being a victim or a target of violence and a source of perpetration. The present research contributes to the theory of warchitecture (2010) by investigating the partially ruined architecture depicted in *The English Patient* (1992) and *The Light in the Ruins* (2013) and the role it plays in promoting reconciliation among people irrespective of their conflicting affiliations during the wars.

The partially ruined architecture, as described above, holds an ambivalent space between fully stable architecture and complete decay and exists in an intermediate position between ‘architecture as a victim’ and ‘architecture as a tool of perpetration’ in the current research. According to the present study, this partially ruined architecture exists in a transient space from where it casts off its inhabitants and promotes reconciliation among them despite their identities as the victims and perpetrators of war. The research further investigates this idea in the light of the theoretical underpinnings of Bulgarian French Philosopher Julia Kristeva. Kristeva expounds her theory of abjection in her book *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (1982), which is the second primary lens this research draws upon to develop the argument.

This theory explores the psychological processes that transpire when the subject encounters an entity dismantling, or challenging established boundaries, meanings, or laws. According to Kristeva, experiencing this psychological discomfort, when one encounters something that challenges the established orders and meanings, gives rise to a state of "abjection". This state of abjection is stimulated by an "abject" entity (partially ruined architecture in the context of the present research), while the person influenced by this phenomenon is referred to as "subject" (Kristeva 2). Kristeva explains abject as an entity that seems neither familiar nor completely unfamiliar. It distorts the established meanings and laws not because it is something new or intolerable but because language or structures of meanings fail to define and accommodate it so it feels uncanny and disturbing. Kristeva takes food loathing and particularly the examples of thin, harmless skin on the surface of boiled milk to explain abjection. According to Kristeva, drinking milk with the skin on top makes us experience "a gagging sensation" and "sight-clouding dizziness and nausea," and this feeling makes us want to expel the food, but since food is not "other" for us, we end up spitting, and expelling ourselves (3). In terms of Kristeva, this phenomenon is called abjection, and it pushes the subject to become something else, "other" (3). Abject disrupts the border between self and other and fetches repugnance and discomfort in us. However, what is intriguing about abject is that despite all the uncanniness and horrors it holds, subjects still find "jouissance" in it, as Kristeva proclaims, "[o]ne does not know it, one does not desire it, one joy in it. Violently and painfully" (Kristeva 9). Subjects are attracted to abject despite feeling discomfort when encountering it because abject connects subjects with a primal sense of being as well as touches the repressed elements of the human psyche.

In light of this theory, the present study argues that partially ruined architecture challenges the established definitions of stable as well as ruined architecture. The subjects want to expel it and stay away from it because of the uncanniness that surrounds it; however, they cannot disregard its presence and its capacity to inhabit them. It reminds subjects of the tortures and destructions of war, which makes it painful to be around it, but at the same time, encounter with this space allows subjects to break free from the shackles of established borders and laws and build connections with each other by reinterpreting each other's situations and well as their shared vulnerability. It is this abject architecture existing in a liminal state between stable architecture and complete ruin, between the

psychological states of abhorrence and "jouissance" (Kristeva 8), which, according to this research project, creates a possibility for reconciliation among the inhabitants.

This brings us to the last theoretical underpinning selected for the study, which is Nir Eisikovits' conceptualization of the reconciliation among people after wars and conflicts he proposes in his book *Sympathizing with the Enemy: Reconciliation, Transitional Justice, Negotiation* (2010).[1] In his theory of reconciliation after conflict, Eisikovits mainly highlights the role of sympathy in diluting the hatred between two groups. He claims that the reconciliation between two groups happens "once they begin to sympathize with each other" (MacLachlan 180). In the selected novels of the present research, inhabitants of the war-ruined buildings inquire about each other, show concern and care for each other, and hence establish a connection nurtured by sympathy. This, as a result, promotes reconciliation between them, irrespective of their identities and the roles they play in wars or conflicts.

In summation, for the theoretical framework of the present research, I use Andrew Herscher's theory of warchitecture (2010) and Julia Kristeva's theory of abjection and liminality (1982) as the primary lenses and Nir Eisikovits' theory of reconciliation after conflicts (2010) as the secondary lens.

1.1 Selected Literary Texts for the Present Research and the Underlying Rationale

To study the partially destroyed buildings and their transformed identities and roles after war, the selected texts for this research are Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient* (1992) and Chris Bohjalian's *The Light in the Ruins* (2013). Both novels belong to the literary genre of historical fiction and capture the period of World War II and the interlude that promptly followed it. *The English Patient,* though published in 1920, has not been examined for its depiction of the influence of wartime violence on the identity and role of

[1] The book was not available for purchase at the time of conducting this research. I contacted the author Nir Eisikovits via email requesting a soft copy of the book. The author responded by saying that he currently does not have the book. However, he sent his article "Forget Forgiveness: On the Benefits of Sympathy for Political Reconciliation" and a symposium on the requested book by Alice MacLachlan, both of which are focused on the exploration of Eisikovits' theory of reconciliation after conflicts. Therefore, I have used these sources to substantiate the argument.

architecture and how the partially ruined architecture then influences its inhabitants. This gap gives the opportunity to explore these themes in the current research. *The Light in the Ruins* (2013) is comparatively a recent novel addressing the similar themes and hence, further substantiates the argument of the present study. Since wartime destruction of architecture and its consequences have not been explored in both novels before, so together, these novels grant a comprehensive basis for understanding the relation between wartime violence and architecture and the role of partially ruined architecture in promoting reconciliation among the inhabitants despite their questionable histories.

Both texts are set in Italy and portray the atrocities inflicted on Italians by the Germans during the war. Therefore, in the context of these novels, victims are the Italian civilians suffering brutalities at the hands of Germans, while perpetrators are the Germans as well as the Italians supporting Germans in their atrocities. However, to ensure that the textual depiction of victims and perpetrators aligns with the actual history, it is imperative to understand the basis of the Second World War and the criteria that categorize some characters as victims and some as the perpetrators of war.

A review of the available historical data shows that during the Second World War, countries were grouped into two major alliances: Allied and Axis Powers. The first few countries that joined together to form the Allies include the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, the United States, and China. More than twenty countries joined these countries to declare war against the Axis powers, including Italy, Japan, and Germany. Germany and Italy signed the Pact of Steel in 1939 to extend their political alliance to a military alliance. However, despite signing the pact, Italy remained neutral in the war until 1940, and shortly before the defeat of France by the Germans, Italy entered the war as a German ally. However, Italy changed the alliance in 1943 when leaders of the Italian Fascist Party, led by Italian dictator Benito Mussolini, removed Mussolini from power. As a result, Germans started occupying northern Italy and formed a puppet state called the Italian Social Republic led by Mussolini. Germans started inflicting violence on Italians and destroying the communication networks, infrastructure, social institutions, industries, etc.

The atrocities committed by Germans resulted in a Civil War in Italy where Italian freedom fighters called partisans started fighting against German forces in Italy. Germans

kept on destroying Italy and perpetuating violence against civilians until Allied forces entered the country and freed it of the Germans in 1945. The plot of both the novels *The English Patient* (1992) and *The Light in the Ruins* (2013) revolve around the experiences of Italians under German occupation and brutalities. Therefore, drawing on textual claims and historical evidence, the present research categorizes Italians as the victims and Germans as well as the supporters of Germans as the perpetrators of war.

The plot of Sri Lankan Canadian writer Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient* (1992) revolves around the story of four individuals who happen to live in a Villa called Villa San Girolamo that gets partially destroyed during World War II. The four inhabitants were associated with opposing parties during the war. The villa was a nunnery before the war and was mined by Germans with explosives. It has missing walls and ceilings, and most of its rooms are impassible. This partially ruined villa is a liminal space that inhabits both perpetrators and victims, signifying the aspects of both trauma and healing. It holds both the inspiration for life and the intimation of death. The villa reminds its inhabitants of the cruelties of war as well as fascinates them to experience living in a space that allows them to reconcile with each other despite their wartime affiliations. The care and concern inhabitants show for each other and their collective celebrations while living in the partially destroyed villa validate the existence of strong interpersonal connections between them. Such instances reflect the potential of partially ruined architecture to generate new possibilities of peace and reconciliation among the former enemies of war.

Armenian American writer Chris Bohjalian's *The Light in the Ruins* (2013), the second novel selected for this study, opens in 1955 with the narrative voice of an unidentified murderer. The story of the novel is set in Italian hills south of Florence, and it revolves around an Italian family known as Rosatis struggling to stay protected during World War II. This novel is a mixture of history and mystery, and the author switches back and forth from the mid-1940s, when World War II was happening, to the mid-1950s, when an anonymous killer was assassinating the Rosatis. Rosatis is a family of noble ancestry who believes that their villa, Villa Chimera, could keep them safe from the demolitions of World War II until they are visited by German and Italian officers. Antonio Rosati, the head of the Rosati family, suggests making compromises with Germans, and hence, the Villa Chimera starts attaining the identity of an ambivalent space inhabiting both victims and

perpetrators even before its physical demolition during World War II. Later in the novel, readers learn that Villa Chimera gets partially damaged during the war and becomes a hybrid space that carries the symbols of both a home and a war prison. The act of destruction transforms the meaning of this architectural space for its inhabitants. It offers an ambivalent space where victims and perpetrators coexist, sympathize with each other, and reconcile.

1.2 Thesis Statement

Exploring the selected literary narratives, *The English Patient* (1992) and *The Light in the Ruins* (2013), this research reads these texts as a depiction of war-ruined architecture as an abject space maintaining a liminal identity and offering a space for the coexistence of victims and perpetrators and a way for reconciliation.

1.3 Research Objectives

Keeping in view the proposed argument, following are the primary objectives of the present research:

1. To understand the relationship between wartime violence and architecture using selected theoretical frameworks.
2. To study the transformations wartime violence causes in architecture's identity and performative role in the selected literary texts.
3. To explore how war-ruined architecture becomes abject, and by dismantling the borders, occupies a liminal space between the subject and the object.
4. To investigate the role of war-ruined architecture in promoting reconciliation between victims and perpetrators in Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient* (1992) and Chris Bohjalian's *The Light in the Ruins* (2013).

1.4 Research Questions

The questions addressed in the present research are as under:

1. In what ways does the wartime architectural destruction reshape the identity and the role of architecture in post-war society?

2. How does the war-ruined architecture become an "abject" entity existing in a liminal state, stimulating both familiarity and uncanniness?
3. How does the semi-destroyed architecture encourage reconciliation among victims and perpetrators in the selected novels?

1.5 Delimitation of the Study

The present research is limited to only two literary texts, *The English Patient* (1992) by Michael Ondaatje and *The Light in the Ruins* (2010) by Chris Bohjalian, to investigate the proposed argument. Selected novels can be studied from multiple perspectives employing diverse theories; however, this research focuses primarily on the study of partially ruined architecture and its role in the post-war period highlighted by the novels. The study examines the impact of war on the identity and the performative role of architecture in a society in the light of Andrew Herscher's theory of warchitecture (2010) and Julia Kristeva's theory of abjection and liminality (1982) as primary lenses and Nir Eisikovits' theory of reconciliation after conflicts (2010) as the secondary lens for the study. War-ruined architecture portrayed in the selected texts plays various roles ranging from sheltering the survivors of war to reminding them of the atrocities of the past; however, this research focuses on one role only, which is to promote peace and reconciliation among the people in the post-war period.

1.6 Significance and Rationale of the Study

This research seeks to connect architectural and literary studies by investigating the representation of war-ruined architecture in literary texts. Architecture has mainly been studied as a victim or a site of perpetration during wars and conflicts; however, by drawing on Andrew Herscher's theory of warchitecture and Nir Eisikovits' theory of reconciliation after conflicts, this study highlights the role of literature in presenting a more positive picture of architecture in the postwar period. This study proposes that the partially ruined architecture presented in the selected literary novels fosters peace and reconciliation among the survivors of war in the immediate post-war period. This not only builds a connection between the discipline of architecture and literature but also contributes to the exploration of the role of architecture during and after the wars. Moreover, ruins have mostly been

interpreted as carriers of the memories of the past or a promise for a better future, but present research highlights the significance of partially ruined architecture in promoting peace and reconciliation among the people, irrespective of their wartime affiliations.

A review of the existing research in the domain of postwar literature reflects a scarcity of studies employing Andrew Herscher's theory of warchitecture to investigate the relationship between war and architecture offered in literature. Similarly, limited attention has been given to utilizing Julia Kristeva's theory of abjection and liminality for interpreting war-ruined architecture portrayed in literary texts. Therefore, by combining Herscher's theory of warchitecture with Kristeva's conceptualization of liminality and abjection, this research offers a groundwork upon which more research in literary and architectural fields can be conducted where the role of literature in offering innovative approaches to study the relationship between war and architecture could be highlighted.

1.8 Chapter Division

This thesis comprises six chapters.

1st-Introduction

The first chapter of the thesis provides the background of the selected research topic and the study's rationale. To offer the context of the study, a detailed account of the relationship between war and architecture and the impact of wartime destruction on identity and, hence, the performative role of architecture is discussed in this chapter. The chapter also offers a brief overview of the selected literary texts for the study and the theoretical framework the study employs to build and validate the proposed argument.

2nd-Literature Review

The second chapter of the thesis reviews some of the existing literature related to the research topic, theoretical framework, and literary texts selected for the study. It also explains the methodology applied to conduct the present research.

3rd-Theoretical Framework

This chapter offers a detailed explanation of the theoretical framework formulated to conduct the present research. Moreover, the chapter also gives the rationale for the employed theoretical framework.

4th & 5th -Analysis

Chapter 4 and 5 consist of the analysis of the selected literary texts through the utilization of the formulated theoretical framework in order to authenticate the proposed argument of the present study.

6th-Conclusion

The sixth chapter of the thesis concludes the whole research by offering detailed answers to the research questions. Along with discussing the findings of the research, this chapter also provides recommendations for future research related to the selected field as well as the topic of the research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter intends to conduct a comprehensive review of the existing scholarly literature on the impact of wartime violence on architecture and the role war-ruined architecture plays in the period immediately following the war. The main objective of this chapter is to authenticate the need for this research by identifying the gaps in the existing body of knowledge on the topic. To make the discussion more inclusive, the chapter is divided into three sections, each aiming to review the already available literature from a different angle while also contributing to the overall trajectory of the chapter.

The first section highlights the relevance of the selected theoretical framework for this study by identifying the gaps it fills in the current discussions on the selected research topic. This section is further divided into four sub-sections:

1. Introduction to the basic concepts
2. War, violence, and architecture
3. Liminality and war ruined architecture
4. War-bombed architecture and reconciliation

II. The second section reviews the already done research on the selected literary texts to see the angles with which the texts have already been explored and how this research contributes to the scholarly debate.

This chapter does not claim to review all the available research on the topic and texts; however, the gaps it locates in the existing literature establish the validity of the present research.

2.1.1 Introduction to the Basic Concepts

Before diving into the theoretical debate revolving particularly around architectural ruination during wars/conflicts and the changes it brings in the identity and role of architectural figures, I intend to offer a basic understanding of what architecture is and what relationship it has with wars/conflicts, according to theorists. This section ends by

indicating the unique approach this research takes to explaining wartime architectural ruination and the role war-ruined architecture plays in post-war society.

The multifaceted nature of the field of architecture has captivated the attention of various cultural commentators and philosophers in a different capacity as compared to architectural theorists. The approach toward understanding and interpreting architecture has gone through multiple transitions over a period of time. Definitions of architecture vary based on the schools of thought that the theorists associate themselves with. Gray Read, in her book *Architects Without Frontiers: War, Reconstruction, and Design Responsibility* (2007), offers the simplest definition of architecture. According to Read, architecture is "the art or science of building, including plan, design, construction, and decorative treatment" (Read 18). Some theorists view architecture as an art form, while others prioritize the performative role of architecture in society over its form. However, some theorists and architects across modern and pre-modern times advocate for the interrelation between the form and function of architecture. Roman architect and engineer Marcus Vitruvius Pollio is one example. Vitruvius describes the principles of standard architecture in his famous work *De Architectura* (*c.* 20-30 BCE), translated by Morris Hicky Morgan as *Vitruvius: The Ten Books on Architecture* (1960). According to Vitruvius, well-designed architecture should have three foundational principles: *firmitas*, *utilitas*, and *venustas*, translated as *firmness, utility, and beauty/aesthetic quality* (Morgan 80). This description of architecture by Vitruvius highlights the significance of both the form as well as the function of architecture in society.

2.1.2 Review of Literature on War, Violence, and Architecture

This section reviews the works about the interplay between war and architecture and the role architecture plays in perpetuating as well as impeding violence. The section commences with a review of the works underscoring the significance of examining the role of architecture during and after the wars/conflicts. Moving forward, it further specifies the focus by delving into the exploration of works highlighting the significance and role of partially ruined architecture during and in the aftermath of wars.

In her book *Environmental Ethics: Life Narratives from Kashmir & Palestine* (2023), Rabia Aamir examines the influence of the socio-political conflicts on the people

and environment of the conflicted lands of Kashmir and Palestine. By bringing in Althusser's conceptualization of Interpellation to study the memoirs of Basharat Peer and Ghada Karmi, the author highlights the need and importance of questioning hegemonic narratives surrounding the Kashmiri and Palestinian conflict that led to the marginalization of locals. According to the author, along with other social-political systems and institutions, the architecture of these conflicted lands also contributes to strengthening the dominant narratives of power by perpetuating violence against the locals. For instance, the author refers to Basharat Peer's memoir *Curfewed Night: A Frontline Memoir of Life, Love, and War in Kashmir* (2008), which depicts a colonial mansion painted in blue and white" converted into a torture house "called Papa-2 in Srinagar Kashmir carrying the memories of "worst nightmares in history, the modern-day holocaust" (Aamir 220). This building is a manifestation of India's repression of Kashmiris. Papa-2 contributed to the perpetuation of torture against the locals as "anyone taken to this most infamous torture center by Indian forces did not return, and those who did return were wrecks" (Aamir 247). Similarly, the author refers to Ghada Karmi's memoir *Return: A Palestinian Memoir* (2015) to describe the impact of the construction of the "wall of Abu Dis" not only on the Palestinian landscape but also on the lives of people inhabiting the area (Aamir 313). This wall again serves as a power tool to subjugate Palestinians in their land. Moreover, the book also refers to the instances of the deliberate besiegement and destruction of architecture, depicting the exercise of hegemonic power by India and Israel against the local Muslim communities. For instance, the destruction of the Babri Mosque by "an extremist Hindu mob" in India (Aamir 191) and the occupation of "Ibrahimi Mosque of Hebron" by Jews in Palestine (Aamir 352) illustrate the strategic targeting of the architecture of historical and religious significance as a means of strengthening the hegemonic powers.

Andrew Herscher's conceptualization that Architecture acts both as a victim and perpetrator of violence during wars and conflicts finds support in Aamir's book *Environmental Ethics: Life Narratives from Kashmir & Palestine* (2023). The book is relevant to the current research as it explores the depiction of architecture in literary narratives and the role architecture plays during conflicts. However, present research adds to the debate by exploring architecture's role after it is ruined or taken over.

Lebbeus Woods, in his book *Radical Reconstructionism* (1997), explores the complex relationship between violence and architecture and proposes radical approaches to reconstructing destroyed architecture. Woods highlights the significance of destroyed architecture and stresses the need to interpret it with the same rigor applied to the architecture of construction. His approach towards the reconstruction of architecture after the destruction is radical in that he negates the mainstream idea of either "the prewar form" of the building or constructing an entirely new structure that carries no signs of what architecture and its inhabitants endured (Wood 13). For Woods, destroyed architecture bears signs of the brutalities of war, which must be retained while reconstructing a building. He criticizes the conventional approach to eliminate the signs of war and violence from the city spaces. Woods argues that when buildings get annihilated during wars, natural disasters, or conflicts, their "form must be respected in its integrity, embodying a history that can never be denied" (Wood 15). He suggests the retention of what has been lost during violence. Moreover, Woods also sheds light on the multiple roles of architecture in the post-war/conflict/disaster era. Reconstruction of war-torn buildings while retaining the signs of destruction addresses the emotional and psychological needs of the affected population. Similarly, the shelters built due to architectural destruction during natural disasters provide relief and foster resilience. Hence, in *Radical Reconstructionism* (1997), Woods discusses multiple spaces of crisis and, by challenging the conventional approaches towards architectural reconstruction, offers new approaches and their role in fostering resilience and inclusivity.

Woods' theory of Radical Reconstructionism overlaps with Andrew Herscher's theory of warchitecture, one of the three theoretical underpinnings that constitute the theoretical framework of present research. Woods and Herscher agree that destroyed architecture, like stable and strong architecture, needs to be studied. Similarly, both theorists highlight the significance of war-destroyed architecture in the post-war era. However, what distinguishes Herscher's theory from Woods' theory of Radical Reconstructionism is its attempt to highlight the significance and autonomy of destroyed architecture without being reconstructed yet. For Woods, architecture promotes healing, resilience, and equity once it is rebuilt, but for Herscher, architecture-of-destruction is equally important as architecture-of-construction.

An Italian architect and designer, Aldo Rossi, in his book *The Architecture of the City* (1966), also discusses the impact of violence on architecture. Like Andrew Herscher, Rossi also highlights the autonomy of architecture, whether stable or destroyed. He stresses the significance of the form of architecture that goes through multiple changes during wars but still holds meaning, while the function of the architecture, according to Rossi, is not persistent and "can be articulated through a form" (Rossi 55). This does not mean the function is insignificant; however, it is less enduring than the form. The function of the architecture depends on its affiliation with a group of people or society in a specific time period. The function of the architectural body can be lost over time, so its significance resides in its form, "which is integral to the general form of the city" (Rossi 60). Hence, Rossi prioritizes the form of the building over the role it performs in a certain period. While describing the impact of violence on architecture he observed in the World War II, Rossi writes:

> Anyone who remembers European cities after the bombings of the last war retains an image of disemboweled houses where, amid the rubble, fragments of familiar places remained standing, with their colors of faded wallpapers, laundry hanging suspended in the air, barking dogs-the untidy intimacy of places. (Rossi 22)

This implies that wartime violence alters the form of the targeted architecture; however, an element of familiarity still exists in the war-destroyed buildings. Although these buildings have lost their functions entirely, their form still prevails and carries the signs of both the pre-war era and the brutalities of war.

Although Rossi discusses the significance of war-bombed architecture in the postwar period, he does not go further into describing the role architecture plays during and after the wars. Moreover, his theory is relevant to Herscher's theory of warchitecture in that it highlights the transformations wartime violence causes in the form/shape of an architectural body. However, the theory of warchitecture extends the debate by describing the changes violence induces in the identity as well as the performative role of architecture in a society. It is the transformed identity and function of the war-bombed architecture that contributes to the formulation of the argument of the present study.

Gray Read explores the relationship between war and architectural ruination and the role architecture plays in post-conflict situations in her book *Architects Without Frontiers: War, Reconstruction, and Design Responsibility* (2007). According to Read, there exists a "parasitical" relationship between war and architecture, and architectural ruination during wars plays a defining role in "winning and losing wars" (Read 25). Countries involved in wars consider the degree of architectural destruction as one of the critical indicators signaling their triumph or conquest in the war. According to Read, an inevitable connection exists between "politics and architecture" and the role of architecture as a victim or perpetrator of destruction during wars is mainly defined by the political powers involved in wars (Read 62). Based on several case studies of wartime architectural ruination worldwide, Read proposes that one of the foremost objectives behind obliterating architecture during wars is to destroy the meanings, symbols of socio-historical significance, or the memories associated with the buildings.

Moreover, Read proposes that though the destruction of urban landscapes and architecture is inevitable during wars, war-destroyed architecture can still act as a tool to promote peace and social reconciliation in the post-war period. Extending on the subject, Read writes that social reconciliation in the post-war period can happen if the designers and architects allow the general public to participate in the process of architectural reconstruction (Read 72). According to Read, designers and architects play a significant role in making architecture capable of resisting trauma and promoting societal sustainability. They make architectural spaces safe and inclusive to promote social justice in post-war society. Hence, Read not only highlights the relationship between war and architecture but also elaborates on the role of destroyed architecture in fostering peace and resilience during its reconstruction in the post-war period.

Like Andrew Herscher, Read also highlights the inevitable connection between war and architectural destruction and the involvement of politics in defining the role of architecture in a war. Moreover, Read also explicates the role of destroyed architecture in promoting peace and reconciliation, which relates her theory to the present research. According to Read, for this reconciliation to happen, war-ruined architecture must be reconstructed. However, present research employs Herscher's theory of warchitecture and

suggests that war-bombed architecture promotes reconciliation among people even in its destroyed state.

Robert Bevan has also explored the relationship between war/conflict and architecture in his book *The Destruction of Memory: Architecture at War* (2007). According to Bevan, to dominate, eradicate, terrorize, or divide a place, enemy forces always target cultural artifacts, and hence, there is always a war going on against architecture (Baven 8). There is a systematic annihilation of the buildings of cultural and historical significance during wars because war does not merely intend to destroy the infrastructure of a country; rather, it targets history, collective memory, and cultural identity. According to Bevan, the research conducted on the topic of wartime destruction is more concerned with the oppression of people and less with how, along with people, architecture also goes through torture and subjugation. Architecture, in terms of Bevan, has become a "proxy" through which other "ideological battles" are being played (Baven 9). By exploring the case studies of architectural destruction during conflicts, such as the demolition of Bamiyan Buddhas in Afghanistan, the destruction of the city of Carthage in 146 BC, the razing of mosques and libraries in the Bosnian war, and the destruction of cultural heritage in Iraq and Syria, Bevan emphasizes the impacts of these destructions on the identity as well as the memory of architecture and the need for the preservation of cultural heritage.

This builds a connection between Bevan's work and the current research as it aims to draw attention to the influence of wartime destruction on the identity of architectural bodies using Herscher's theory of warchitecture as a primary lens for the study. However, the present research extends the discussion by indicating how this new identity of the ruined architecture is still functional and leaves a noticeable impact on the people affiliated with the buildings.

Brigitte Piquard and Mark Swenarton, in their paper "Learning from Architecture and Conflict" (2011), also discuss the transformations conflicts cause in the identity of architecture and the role architecture plays in promoting peace after conflicts. War and conflicts reshape the inhabitants' perception of places and spaces by reshaping the performative role of architecture in society. According to the researchers, the social

function of the places gets altered during crises: “schools become prisons,” or camps and mosques get turned into “dispensaries or guesthouses”; however, despite all such alterations, people are still expected to re-associate themselves with spaces (Piquard and Swenarton 2). Moreover, according to these theorists, architecture is not always the victim of the brutalities of the war but also contributes to perpetuating and promoting destruction in the form of fortifications, prisons, or army defenses. Hence, architecture plays both negative as well as positive roles during wars and conflicts.

Piquard and Swenarton’s study, like the current research, highlights the vulnerability of architecture to wars and conflicts. However, the role and identity of war-destroyed architecture in the immediate post-war period are not discussed by Piquard and Swenarton. This shows that they have also opted for the conventional approach of not interpreting the role and identity of destroyed architecture. This is what Herscher challenges in his theory of Warchitecture and the present research engages with.

In her article, “A Battle of Memory and Image: War Tourism as Reconstruction Strategy in Sarajevo” (2023), Tülay Zivali explores the connection between the war-torn landscape of Sarajevo and post-war tourism. She provides examples of a few buildings of cultural significance, illustrating their destruction during the Bosnian War and what role they played in the post-war period. For instance, according to Zivali, Careva Džamija was the first mosque built when Ottoman Sarajevo was established. The Mosque was destroyed in the war, and despite being rebuilt, “the bullet holes in walls are still visible” (Zivali 207). This is because the wartime destruction of the mosque changed its symbolic meaning from a common space of worship to an “international attraction point” that serves as evidence of the violence of the war. Similarly, Tunal Spasa in Sarajevo, also known as the Tunnel of Hope, was used to transport food and medicines to Sarajevo during the Siege but was heavily destroyed during the war. However, a small part of it led to a private house that remained intact, and the “house owners turned the existing structure into a museum” (Zivali 209). This museum not only educates the tourists about the atrocities of war but also reflects the passion locals had for preserving the history for the upcoming generations as well as visitors from around the globe.

Zivali's article is relevant to present research in a way that offers real-life examples of the influence of wartime violence on the meaning and role of architecture. However, the article is focused mainly on the buildings that have cultural and national significance and the purpose they serve for the country in the post-war period. However, the present research focuses on the influence of war-ruined buildings on common people who inhabit the buildings during or immediately after the war.

Jenan Ghazal, in her research "Architecture and Violence: Between Representation and Exchange" (2016), examines the influence of violence on architecture through examples of various war-ruined buildings from different parts of the world. Ghazal intends to substantiate Andrew Herscher's proposition that destruction is not the end of architecture; rather, it ascribes new meanings to the targeted buildings. According to Ghazal, war-destroyed buildings symbolize resistance and resilience, regardless of whether they are partially ruined or completely erased. For instance, she refers to "Freedom Graffiti," which juxtaposes Gustav Klimt's painting "The Kiss" on a war-torn building in Damascus by a Syrian Artist, Tammam. The building on which it was painted was likely a common residential building in a city. However, wartime destruction and Tammam's art on the partially ruined building turned it into a commentary on the human plight during the war. Its role changed from a simple living space to a reminder of destruction, resilience, and hope which makes us question; "can violence be both exhibited through, and exert a force on, architecture" (Ghazal 2). Similarly, Ghazal also mentions how the destruction of the architecture of Beirut and Tripoli during the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990) transformed the cities from lively neighborhoods to ruins, symbolizing resilience. Ghazal states, "violence was forced upon both the citizens and their architecture, and it strengthened the sense of community" (4-5). However, wartime violence removed architecture from the domain of culture and turned it into a "product of violence" since the focus was not to critically analyze the ruins but to completely discard them from the place (Ghazal 4). Ghazal mentions in the research that she was a first-hand witness to the violence in architecture and the attitude of people and organizations toward the destroyed architecture in Lebanon.

Ghazal's research relates to the present study since it also proposes that wartime violence shifts the identity and role of architecture in society. However, the present research

extends the debate by analyzing the influence of war-ruined architecture directly on its inhabitants in the light of the selected literary texts. The examples provided by Ghazal substantiate the proposition that wartime violence reshapes the identity as well as the performative role of architecture even in the real world. However, analyzing it in literature opens up more possibilities for interpreting the relationship between war, violence, and architecture.

Samara Levy, in her memoir *Rebuilding the Ruins: Following God's Call to Serve Syria* (2019) highlights the significance of the study of architectural ruins in the context of the real world by demonstrating the impact of wartime destruction on the people and places in Syria. Levy's memoir is divided into chapters, each explaining her experience in war-destroyed Syria. She demonstrates the horrors and challenges she faces while traveling through the ruins in Syria. Levey works with multiple healthcare professionals to provide healthcare facilities to the people of Syria, especially the financially unstable class severely impacted by the ramifications of war. While highlighting the need to rebuild the ruins in Syria, Levy also demonstrates the potential of partially ruined buildings to inhabit the people. In chapter 15 "Hope in the Rubble of Deir ez-Zor", Levy describes her astonishment upon finding life amidst ruins. She writes that there are some places in the world where the presence of life is unimaginable, and Deir ez-Zor is one of them; however, while traveling through the ruins, she was "stunned to hear a woman singing from upstairs in one of the damaged buildings" (Levy 131). According to Levy, the whole area was destroyed, yet families inhabited the destroyed buildings. Similarly, the streets and buildings around "Ar Rahmie Hospital" were completely destroyed, but she finds "an informal shop stall open for business in the rubble at the foot of a building's carcass" (Levy 131). Even the buildings on the opposite side of the hospital had missing walls, "yet people lived there" (Levy 134). Hence, even if the ruined architecture does not conform to the standard cultural and linguistic definitions for a place of dwelling, there are people in the world inhabiting such spaces with little to no help from the so-called superpowers of the world.

Levy's memoir mainly highlights the need and urgency of facilitating humanitarian aid to Syria and rebuilding the war-torn cities to bring life to the country. Levy's work is relevant to the present research as it also underscores the need to investigate war-ruined

architecture from multiple perspectives, moving beyond the notion of perceiving it as just a ramification of war. However, the memoir is written in the context of the real world, demonstrating the plight of Syrians surviving in ruins and rubble, while this research highlights the role of literature in discovering positivity, peace, and hope from the realms of despair and destruction.

2.1.3 Review of Literature on Abjection, Liminality, and War Ruined Architecture

This section intends to offer a comprehensive review of the literature produced on the concept of liminality and, more specifically, the liminality of architecture. The review begins by investigating the works of various theorists who have contributed to our understanding of liminality, as well as determining how this concept gets applied to various objects, phenomena, or situations. Additionally, this section foregrounds the relevance of Kristeva's conceptualization of liminality to the study of the selected texts. Furthermore, the review delves into research that has utilized Kristeva's conceptualization of abjection and liminality to analyze the arguments and texts more specifically in the domain of architecture and literature.

The concept of liminality was first proposed by a French Ethnographer, Arnold Van Gennep, in his book *Les Rites de Passage* (1909) translated by Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee as *The Rites of Passage* (1960). In his book, Gennep has offered a comprehensive comparison of the ceremonial rituals termed rites of passage that rejoice the transition of an individual from "one defined position to another which is equally well defined" (Vizedom and Caffee 3). The rite of passage is an event or ceremony that allows a transition from one position to another. It follows a set of actions that help individuals adjust to the new position they acquire after the transition. For a better understanding of rites of passage, Gennep has divided them into three separate categories which include "pre-liminal rites (rites of separation)" such as funeral ceremonies, "liminal rites (rites of transition)" such as re-marriages or adoption of a child, and lastly, "post-liminal rites (rites of incorporation)" such as retirement ceremonies or baptismal certificates (Vizedom and Caffee 11). According to Gennep, liminality is the second of the three phases of the rites of passage. In certain ceremonies, a liminal or transitional state gets expounded to "form an independent state," e.g., "a betrothal forms a liminal period between adolescence and

marriage" (Vizedom and Caffee 11). This liminal state helps individuals in their transition from one phase to another through the symbols or rituals it carries.

Victor Turner, a British anthropologist, further builds up on Gennep's conceptualization of liminality in his book *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (1967). Van Gennep focuses on the overall structure of the rites of passage, which consists of the three stages: separation, liminality, and aggregation. However, Turner's approach in his book is to focus mainly on the in-between state of the rites of passage, which is the liminal state. He describes the characteristic features of the liminal state as well as its cultural and symbolic significance. In the chapter "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in *Rites de Passage*", Turner describes liminality as an "interstructural situation" (Turner 234), full of possibilities where "novel configurations of ideas and relations may arise" (Turner 236). According to Turner, society is conditioned by cultural definitions and classifications and nothing that falls outside appears familiar or suitable. However, liminality, in terms of Turner, is an in-between state where the object is neither here nor there. This liminal state occupied by a "transitional being" or "transitional persona" is undefinable by "society's secular definitions" (Turner 235). This suggests that liminality challenges the set definitions and established orders. Individuals in a state of liminality are neither in their previous social roles nor have adopted the new roles yet.

Kristeva's theory of abjection and liminality proposed in her essay *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (1980) takes inspiration from the ideas of Van Gennep and Turner. However, like Van Gennep and Turner, Kristeva's approach is not confined to the cultural, communal, and ceremonial features of liminality within the rites of passage. Kristeva explores the concept of liminality as a literary and psychological phenomenon. While Van Gennep and Victor describe liminality as a transition of a person or a group within a structured communal, societal, or cultural ritual, Kristeva describes liminality as an ambiguous state where an entity called abject exists, and that challenges the established orders and proposed cultural definitions.

Karen Dalea and Gibson Burrellb, in their article "Disturbing Structure: Reading the Ruins" (2011), explore the multifaceted relationship that exists between structure and ruins or stable architecture and ruins. According to the researchers, ruins are conventionally

studied as antithesis to buildings. Once a building transforms into a ruin, all its social functions are lost because it is "out of order" (Dalea and Burrellb 112). However, Dalea and Burrellb challenge this conventional approach to interpreting ruins by highlighting their cultural and symbolic significance. Using Victor Tuner's theory of liminality, offered in his book *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (1967), researchers explicate how ruins are not the end stage of a building or structure; rather they exist in a liminal state between order and disorder, structure and dust, or organization and disorganization. Dalea and Burrellb propose that ruins do not signify absence, destruction, or disorder, but rather represent multiple forms of transformations and organizations. For instance, In Crete, Greece "there is contestation over Cretan, Venetian, Turkish and Greek 'antiquities' involving successive periods of ruination and rebuilding" (Dalea and Burrellb 115). This implies that ruins can be a sight of contest too and in such places of significance, a continuous process of ruination and rebuilding is going on. Moreover, ruins also carry the memories of the past and hold cultural and historical significance. The ruins of "Roman civilization" are still preserved to keep the memories of the past alive (Dalea and Burrellb 119). According to the researchers, the socio-historical and cultural significance of ruins is validated by the fact that in some places in the world, ruins are purposely created for multiple reasons. For instance, rubble from Roman times has been transformed into ruins to facilitate "ruin tourism" while in Berlin, Hiroshima, and Coventry, ruins have been created and maintained to preserve the memories of "aerial bombing in World War II" (Dalea and Burrellb 119). Hence, ruin is not the end point of any building or structure rather it symbolizes mobility, transformation, and dynamism. Ruin exists in an ambiguous liminal state where meaning and power are constantly presented and deferred. It is an in-between state that challenges the established hierarchies and meanings by presenting new possibilities.

This article is relevant to the present research in a way that it highlights the socio-cultural significance of ruins by positioning them in a liminal state between stability and destruction. Moreover, it also presents destruction as not the end stage of a building and highlights the meanings and roles a ruined structure possesses. However, Dalea and Burrellb do not delve into the significance of ruins for the survivors of war and not the state or organization in the immediate post-war period. The article refers to Victor Turner's idea

of liminality and discusses ruin mainly in the context of society or culture; however, current study employs Kristeva's conceptualization of liminality to define partially ruined architecture as an abject space that threatens linguistic definitions and established orders and creates possibilities of reconciliation for the survivors of war.

Christina Schwenke, in her article "Architecture and Dwelling in the 'War of Destruction' in Vietnam" (2014), discusses the state of liminality of architecture caused by the destructions of war. Christina uses Tim Ingold's conceptualization of a 'dwelling perspective' he has offered in his article "The Temporality of the Landscape" (1993) to scrutinize transformations caused by the wartime destructions in the spatial and temporal landscapes and how these landscapes hold onto the stories of past. Schwenke employs the theory to study the ruins of the buildings caused by the war in Vietnam, especially in Vinh City. According to Schwenke, ruins of war not only carry the memories of the past but also hold a potential for "reanimation" as well as "regeneration" (Schwenke 12). To validate this proposition, Schwenke offers multiple examples of the ruins being reanimated or regenerated. For instance, "the colonial Metropole Hotel" was destroyed in the war; however, its ruins were later transformed into an "upscale hotel" (Schwenke 11). This shows that the ruins of the Metropole hotel existed in a liminal state where they carried the signs of wartime devastations as well as the potential for post-war renovations. Similarly, the backside of "the sloping stone steal with Chinese script" started leaning either because of the pressure of the bombs or the "tree roots encumbering on its space" (Schwenke 24). Trees have started to grow out of the open cavities of the ruins and in terms of the researcher, "first destroyed by war, then reclaimed by nature, the ruin now conveys an aura of peace despite a history of violence" (Schwenke 24). This suggests that buildings, despite being destroyed during wars, do not lose their significance in the post-war world. Wartime destruction brings changes in the form as well as the function of architecture; however, it also inflicts new meanings and identities on the targeted architecture.

Christina highlights the significance of ruins in the post-war period as well as the transformations the war caused in the meanings and roles of the destroyed buildings. However, the study does not present ruins as abject spaces that disrupt the established laws and definitions before they promote peace and harmony in society. Moreover, the article is more focused on the role of ruins in a post-war society in general and does not describe the

impact of ruins on the survivors of war especially those who have some kind of affiliations with the ruined architecture. This is what present study attempts to examine.

James E. Young, an American scholar of Holocaust Studies in his book *At Memory's Edge: After Images of Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture* (2000) discusses the approach of critics and scholars toward re-investigating partially ruined architecture. According to Young, these partially ruined buildings enhance our understanding of the Holocaust along with offering a picture of the future that is yet to be constructed. Therefore, these partially damaged buildings are not merely a reflection of the past; rather they act as a "signpost for the present and a promise for the future" (Young 177). Young suggests that partially ruined architecture, despite having a history of destruction and violence, fosters imagination for the upcoming future. Thus, a ruined building, even after losing its residential capabilities, carries hope for a better future.

Young offers an insight into the role of semi-destroyed buildings in the post-war period in terms of carrying the memory of the past as well as a direction for the future; however, he confines his study to the roles of ruins and not their characteristic features as spaces. Moreover, Young does not explore the role of partially ruined buildings for their current or past inhabitants. Present research fills the gap by investigating partially ruined architecture as abject spaces existing in liminal states and promoting reconciliation among the inhabitants.

3.1.4 Review of Literature on War-ruined Architecture and Reconciliation

Christina Schwenke's article "Architecture and Dwelling in the 'War of Destruction' in Vietnam" (2014), reviewed in the previous section, is also relevant to this section. In her article, Schwenke discusses the role of ruins in promoting peace and hope in the postwar world. Although she does not delve into the role ruins play for the survivors of war, especially those who are affiliated with war, her research highlights the positive role of ruins in society, despite having a history of war and violence. However, current research attempts to explore the role of partially ruined architecture in promoting reconciliation among the survivors of war who are completely or occasionally inhabiting the ruined architecture. Nir Eisikovits' theory of reconciliation after conflicts proposed in his book *Sympathizing with the Enemy: Reconciliation, Transitional Justice, Negotiation*

(2010) is utilized to validate the reconciliation and harmony among the inhabitants of the partially ruined architecture depicted in the selected literary texts.

The potential of ruins in fostering reconciliation has also been explored by Amos Bar-Eli, a professor of design at the Institute of Art, Design, and Business, Portugal in his article "On (New) Ruins Reconciliation Capacity" (2015). According to Bar-Eli, the transformation of stable architecture into ruins not only changes its form but also disrupts its original role or function. He focuses on the ruins of architectural structures that had no cultural or historical significance and even after being transformed into ruins, "they have not yet attained the quality of the archaeological site or symbol of historically meaningful place" (Bar-Eli 147). However, despite having no symbolic significance, these ruins have the capacity to reconcile the viewers or experiencers with reality. Here the reconciliation does not mean to peacefully unite the people who have any relevance with the ruins, rather he intends to highlight the role ruins play in "connecting the spectators of ruins with the uncertainties of life" (Bar-Eli 150). Reconciliation with reality means making people realize that with construction exists destruction, with power exists vulnerability, and with presence exists absence. Ruins create a "binary opposition" where on one hand they are "embedded with symbolic meanings" while on the other hand, they expose the ambiguous uncertainty in life (Bar-Eli 144). Hence, instead of confining people within the boundaries of linguistic and cultural definitions and orders, ruins allow them to experience inbetweenness and uncertainties.

This research is relevant to this thesis in a way that it highlights the in-betweenness of ruins and their capacity to foster reconciliation. However, the concept of reconciliation presented in the research is entirely different from what present research seeks to explore. Here, reconciliation means connecting with reality while the current research proposes that ruins allow their inhabitants to reconcile irrespective of their affiliations during war.

A pictorial article titled "Rethinking Peace from War Ruins" posted on a website called "Google Arts and Culture" by the Hiroshima Tourism Association (HIT) presents places in Japan where war ruins still exist. According to the article, these war ruins are preserved to keep the brutal memories of the war alive and craft an appeal for peace in the world. According to HIT, "Peace Memorial Park" and the "Atomic Bomb Dome" in Japan

are two of the many examples of such places where remnants of war are present (Hiroshima Tourism Association HIT). These places despite exhibiting a history of violence also foster an appreciation and appeal for maintaining peace in the world.

This article has relevance to the present research as it highlights the role of architectural ruins in promoting peace and harmony in the postwar world. However, the article does not go into the details of the characteristic features of ruins and their impact on the lives of people who are directly associated with the ruins. This is what current research intends to explore.

2.2 Review of Literature on the Selected Texts

This section reviews a few of the already done research on the selected literary texts to highlight the major themes through which the novels have already been explored. I first offer a review of the existing research done on Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient* (1992) and then on Chris Bohjalian's *The Light in the Ruins* (2013). The purpose of offering this review is to highlight the relevance of the prevalent scholarship with the present study and the contributions it seeks to make in the field.

2.2.1 Review of Literature on *The English Patient* (1992)

Mirja Lobnik, in her article "Echoes of the Past: Nomad Memory in Michael Ondaatje's The English Patient" (2007), explores a complex interplay between memory, place, and identity in Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient* (1992). According to Lobnik, memory in *The English Patient* (1992) does not have a thematic significance only; rather, it serves as "a main narrative device; events reveal themselves mainly through acts of remembering" (Lobnik 73). Remembrance of the past allows the characters to narrate their stories to each other. Moreover, memory is not portrayed as rigid or fixed in the novel; rather, it is presented as "fluid" or "nomadic," allowing external factors to contribute in order to make sense of it (Lobnik 107). Almásy, the English patient does not have a fixed and complete memory of his past. To make sense of Almásy's past experiences in the desert during WWII, another character named Caravaggio complements what he knows about what happened in the desert during that time. Moreover, this dynamic or fluid memory is not confined to a specific place or shaped by a particular narrative; rather it "defies a

geographic or political enclosure of the past" (Lobnik 73). This implies that memories of the characters are shaped by their experiences in multiple parts of the world, which not only expose diversity in cultures but also highlight the fluidity of the memory. Characters make sense of themselves as well as each other based on their memories of the past. Moreover, the war destroyed Villa Chimera, which carries the signs of war and destructions and helps the inhabitants stay connected with the recent past that led to shaping their current identities.

This research explores *The English Patient* (1992) from an entirely different aspect. Lobnik focuses on developing a connection between memory, place, and identity in the novel. She highlights the significance of the villa as well as the characters' fluid memory in building a connection between them. However, the research does not explore the significance of the villa as a war-bombed architectural space in the novel.

The significance of war-torn Villa Chimera in *The English Patient* (1992) has also been explored by Beverley Curran in his article "Ondaatje's The English Patient and Altered States of Narrative" (2004). According to Curran, a semi-destroyed villa inhabiting the victims/survivors of World War II serves as a metaphorical space that symbolizes the emotional and psychological state of its inhabitants. War has left deep scars on the minds and bodies of the characters. The "fragmented identities", shattered memories, and scared mental and physical states of the characters are "imitated" by a war-destroyed villa (Curran 3). Moreover, apart from mirroring the psychological and physical state of the characters, the abandoned Villa Chimera is a "provisional space" serving as a space of convergence for its inhabitants (Curran 5). All four characters, Almásy, Hana, Caravaggio, and Kip, share their personal stories to understand the impacts of war on their realities.

Curran's research explores the role of war-torn buildings in helping people make sense of their current realities. It focuses on illustrating the impact of war-destroyed villa in helping people reflect on their lives before and after the war. However, the research does not go into the details of the impact of wartime destructions on the identity and role of the villa as a space. Present research extends the debate by highlighting the transformations wartime violence causes in the identity as well as the performative role of architecture and

how the partially ruined villa depicted in the novel acts as an abject space promoting reconciliation among its inhabitants.

Eleanor Ty, in his article "The Other Questioned: Exoticism and Displacement in Michael Ondaatje's The English Patient" (2000), explores how the traditional concepts of race, identity, and nation are challenged by Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient* (1992). The researcher draws upon the conceptualizations of Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, and Simone de Beauvoir to explore the themes of otherness and national identity. According to Ty, Ondaatje, in this novel, deliberately creates post-national, borderless identities and spaces to promote a sense of communion among the characters (Ty 2). Characters inhabiting the war-ruined villa are all displaced from their original homelands and are comfortable without having safe homes to live in. According to Ty, by indorsing a sense of communion between these characters and by placing them in a villa that also lacks borders/walls, Ondaatje has questioned both imperialism and nationalism in the novel. Hana, a Canadian nurse in the novel, chooses to live in the destroyed villa, which allows her to live a life free of cultural and social restrictions. She is living a liminal life where she has just survived a war but is aware of the dangers of the villa which itself is a liminal space between a "house and a landscape" (Ty 3). Thus, we can say that Ondaatje intentionally dismantled the constructed borders in the novel to free people from the shackles of social, cultural, or national laws. Almásy, the English patient, is a white man but appears as a "mutation" of a white man because of being burnt out beyond measure (Ty 3). Kip, the Indian Sapper with a dark complexion, develops a bond with the English patient and calls him uncle. All this shows that Ondaatje does not present anyone as 'other' in the novel. Characters with diverse nationalities and opposing wartime affiliations are living in the same space where they share stories of their previous life and take care of each other.

Like current research, Ty has also explored the role of war-ruined villa in bringing people closer to each other. However, Ty focuses on presenting the villa as a borderless space inhabited by four characters from both white and non-white nations, thus challenging both nationalism and imperialism. The present research has an entirely different approach as it seeks to explore the relationship between wartime violence on the villa and the influence of war-torn villa on its inhabitants.

War ruined Villa Chimera in *The English Patient* (1992) is explored as a 'spectral space' by Chia-Sui Lee in her research article "Haunting Effects of Spectral Spaces in Postcolonial Literature" (2016). Considering specter space as an actual living space with qualities of a specter such as movement across borders, liminality, and physical transformations, the researcher attempts to study the spaces portrayed in Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient* (1992), V.S. Naipaul's *A Bend in the River* (1979), and Doris Lessing's *The Grass is Singing* (1950). I mainly focus on explaining Lee's investigation of Villa Chimera in *The English Patient* (1992) as a space of uncanniness, fluidity, and heterogeneity of time. According to Lee, the war-torn villa reflects a heterogeneity of time as if it blurs the boundaries between past and present. Villa, in terms of Lee, not only marks "escape" or "transcendence" from linear clock time but also engages "interconnection" between past and present (Lee 24). Characters inhabiting the villa keep moving between present and past and find both the absence as well as the presence of the past in the destroyed villa. This shows that the space of the villa chimera has the spectral quality of fluidity and Ondaatje has created such space to "provide a critique of the essentialist notions of time, space, race, and nationality" (Lee 31). Fluidity, transcendence of geographical borders, and the heterogeneity of time reflect the author's attempt to make the space critical of dividing narratives such as nationalism and racism.

Lee centers her research on the exploration of the war-torn villa as a spectral space that dismantles the racial, national, and temporal boundaries. Research highlights the significance of the villa in bringing people from multiple nationalities and races closer to each other, however, it does not delve into the details of how war changes the identity and role of the villa and turns it into a spectral, abject space.

2.2.2 Review of Literature on *The Light in the Ruins* (2013)

There is very little substantial scholarly research available on Bohjalian's *The Light in the Ruins* (2013); therefore, this section focuses on reviewing the few articles available about the novel.

The Washington Post published an article by Eugenia Zukerman entitled "'The Light in the Ruins,' by Chris Bohjalian" (2013) offers a brief overview of the novel. According to Zukerman, Bohjalian in his novel continuously "confronts us with the moral

dilemmas of wartime" (Zukerman). Antonio Rosati, the head of the Rosati family, admits that letting Germans live within the Villa is a compromise Rosatis will regret making. Similarly, his daughter Christina Rosati also thinks with disgust that her family "is commingling with the cowardly angels. We will pay. We will all pay" (Zukerman). Therefore, Zukerman highlights the fact that Bohjalian shows the characters as unhappy with the settlements they are making with the perpetrators of violence. Moreover, this review also highlights the transformation of the Villa Chimera during the war. Villa, which before the war was a home of Rosatis, acquired the identity of a "German Encampment" during the war (Zukerman). War has deprived the villa of all its glory.

Zukerman highlights the coexistence of Germans and Italians in a war-targeted architecture. However, it does not delve into the role this destroyed architecture plays in bringing people closer to each other in the post-war era. This is what current study attempts to highlight.

Sheila Moeschen's review of Bohjalian's *The Light in the Ruins* (2013) was published on the website "New York Journal of Books". According to Moeschen, Bohjalian, in his novel, offers an innovative perspective "on reimagining the lives and impossible choices of the people caught up in a devastating global conflict" (Moeschen). She stresses the fact that the choices and actions people make during wars may not conform to their values and narratives, but they still go for them in the hope of protecting themselves or avoiding atrocities inflicted by war. Moreover, instead of interpreting and presenting the wartime situations and destructions from the conventional roles of soldiers, or medical staff, Bohjalian in this novel unfolds the story through the lens of professionals such as "engineer, historian and archeologist" (Moeschen). This allows the readers to understand war from an intellectual lens, considering the multilayered dimensions of war and destruction.

Moeschen's review highlights the unconventional approach of presenting wartime atrocities through the lens of intellectuals that Bohjalian opts for in the novel. However, the review does not focus on the impact of war on the architecture depicted in the novel. Present research fills the gap by exploring the impact of wartime violence on the identity and role of architecture and how it leads to reconciliation among inhabitants.

2.3 Conclusion

The above literature review offers a comprehensive understanding of the existing scholarly works related to the relationship between wartime violence and architecture and the role partially ruined architecture plays in post-war society. This literature review shows a relative scarcity of research conducted to explore the impact of wartime violence on the identity and role of architecture and how partially ruined architecture as a result of war promotes sympathy and reconciliation among the victims and perpetrators. These gaps highlighted within the literature review validate the significance of the present research. This chapter highlights the need for a well-structured theoretical framework that allows a substantive contribution to the current scholarship pertaining to the role of partially destroyed architecture in society by addressing and filling these research gaps.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter describes the theories that underpin the present research and the rationale for selecting these theories to build and authenticate the argument. It not only establishes the boundaries of the scholarly exploration of the selected area but also highlights the contributions and interventions the present study attempts to make in the field and in the selected theories. Moreover, the research methodology chosen to investigate the selected literary texts is also discussed in the later part of this chapter.

3.2. Selected Theoretical Framework

Present research draws upon a set of three distinct theories, each playing an independent role in building and shaping the argument of the study. To begin with, this research employs Andrew Herscher's theory of "warchitecture" (2010) which challenges the conventional approaches toward the understanding and examination of the relationship between war and architecture. Moreover, it seeks to discover the role of wartime destruction in transforming the identity as well as the performative role of architecture in society. Secondly, Julia Kristeva's conceptualization of abjection and liminality proposed in her essay *Powers of Horror: An Essay in Abjection* (1980) is invoked to study the partially ruined architecture depicted in the selected novels that have gone through transformations in its identity and role after being struck by destruction in the World War II. Lastly, Nir Eisikovits' theory of the reconciliation after conflicts offered in his book *Sympathizing with the Enemy: Reconciliation, Transitional Justice, Negotiation* (2010) is brought in to investigate the role of war-ruined architecture depicted in the selected texts in promoting reconciliation among people irrespective of their wartime affiliations and identities.

This chapter is divided into two sections: 1) theoretical framework and 2) research methodology, with their respective sub-sections given below.

1- Theoretical Framework

i Rationale for the Theoretical Framework

ii Andrew Herscher's theory of "warchitecture" (2010)

iii Julia Kristeva's theory of abjection (1980)

iv Nir Eisikovits' theory of reconciliation after conflicts (2010).

v Contextual basis for the selected theories.

2- Research Methodology

i) Textual Analysis

3- Conclusion

3.2.1 Rationale for Theoretical Framework

The intent to conduct a comprehensive study of the relationship between war and architectural destruction in the context of the partially ruined architecture depicted in Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient* (1992) and Chris Bohjalian's *The Light in the Ruins* (2013) informs the choice of the above-described theoretical framework. The objective of the present research is to discover the impact of wartime architectural destruction on the identity of architecture and how this war-bombed architecture promotes reconciliation among people in the post-war period. The upcoming paragraphs offer the rationale for selecting Andrew Herscher's theory of Warchitecture (2010), Kristeva's theory of abjection and liminality (1980), and Eisikovits' theory of reconciliation after conflicts (2010) to conduct the present research.

Andrew Herscher's theory of Warchitecture (2010) questions the conventional approaches to inspecting the relationship between war and architecture. Warchitecture introduces new debates in the field of architecture by offering innovative ways of examining wartime violence against architecture. According to Herscher, architecture does not lose its significance after being collided with war, but rather wartime violence, by ascribing new meanings and symbols to the targeted architecture, sources an alteration in its identity and hence the performative role in society. Architecture-as-destruction still holds autonomy, just like architecture-as-construction. This new approach to interpreting

the relationship between wartime violence and architecture establishes a perfect alignment between the theory of Warchitecture and the present research. This is because the very focus of the present study is to highlight the transformation that occurs in the identity and role of architecture after encountering wartime violence and what significance this war-wedged architecture holds in society. Herscher's aim with his theory of warchitecture is to introduce new ways of interpreting the connection between war, architecture, and violence. The present research caters to his objective by proposing a new approach, in the context of selected novels, of seeing architecture that gets partially destroyed during wars as a source of reconciliation among victims and perpetrators.

Kristeva's theory of abjection and liminality deals with the study of unsettling experiences caused by the interaction with an entity that does not conform to established orders, definitions, and meanings. Kristeva has termed such an entity as 'abject' and the process of encountering an abject, something that is cast out, as 'abjection'. Abject exists in an ambiguous, liminal state where established definitions, social norms, and orders are suspended. Encounter with an abject entity allows the subjects to transform the negativity surrounding it into a positive and creative outlet. Therefore, according to Kristeva, abject enables new possibilities to emerge. The partially ruined architecture depicted in the selected texts is identified as an abject space in the present research. This abject space neither falls under the category of standard architecture, which is perfect to reside in nor does it appear as a total ruin because it still has the potential to inhabit individuals. Hence, Kristeva's theory of abjection and liminality is employed to study the partially ruined architecture as an abject space creating a possibility of peace and reconciliation among the inhabitants.

Lastly, I have selected Nir Eisikovits' theory of reconciliation after conflicts, which describes the principles as well as the processes involved in promoting reconciliation between victims and perpetrators after conflicts. This research claims that the partially ruined architecture portrayed in the selected novels acts as a catalyst for promoting reconciliation among its inhabitants despite their identities as victims and perpetrators. Eisikovits' theory offers criteria for the reconciliation between people after the conflicts, and the current study applies this theory to validate the proposed argument. By using this

theory, present research explains the subtle dynamic forces that are at play when people inhabit partially ruined abject spaces in the post-war period.

3.2.2 Andrew Herscher's Theory of Warchitecture

About the theorist

Andrew Herscher (1961) is an American historian and architect who did a Ph.D. in Architecture, Urban Planning, and Landscape Architecture from Harvard University and is currently an associate professor of Architecture at the University of Michigan. Moreover, he also serves in the departments of literature and art history at Taubman College Architecture and Urban Planning. In his works, Herscher explores the issues of migration, displacement, cultural identity, collective memory, and, mainly, the connection between war and architecture. He investigates the role of architecture in wars and the involvement of politics in violence against cities and architecture during wars. Herscher has introduced new perspectives of interpreting the relation between wartime violence and architecture which he has proposed in his article "Warchitecture" (2010). Some of the famous works of Andrew Herscher include *Violence Taking Place: The Architecture of the Kosovo Conflict* (2010), *The Unreal State Guide to Detroit* (2012), *Spatial Violence* (2016), and *Displacement: Architecture and Refugee* (2017). In the present research, I have employed Herscher's theory of warchitecture to study the war-ruined architecture depicted in the selected novels.

His theory of warchitecture, which I have employed to conduct this research, draws a relationship between architecture and its destruction during wars. The theory of warchitecture is proposed especially in the context of the Bosnian war that lasted from 1992 to 1995, in which Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina, remained one of the major targets of violence and destruction. Herscher's argument is centered on the architectural destruction in Sarajevo during its siege from 1992 to 1996. According to Herscher, the term 'warchitecture' materialized in Sarajevo during the time of the city's blockade and it allows the critical analysis of the dominant narratives associated with architectural destruction during conflicts. In the upcoming paragraphs, I discuss the major debates around architectural destruction during wars raised by Herscher, as well as the usefulness of this theory for present research.

***Theory of Warchitecture* (2010)**

The formulation of the theory of warchitecture is influenced by the architectural destruction caused by the Bosnian army in Sarajevo during the 1992 to 1996 siege of the city. According to Herscher, the Bosnian Serb army attempted to legitimize the architectural destruction in Sarajevo by calling it either a "military necessity" or "collateral damage" (Herscher 36). However, these assertions were contradicted by the civilians of Sarajevo, who were directly impacted by the violence. The shelling by the Bosnian Serb army targeted the entire range of architectural structures and urban spaces in Sarajevo. Along with the administrative and public institutions, homes of civilians, markets, and religious buildings also faced demolitions, which demonstrates that the destruction by the Bosnian army was beyond the scope of military necessity (Herscher 36-37). Moreover, the deliberate violence against the buildings also defied the perpetrators' claim that destruction was incidental or collateral rather than a premeditated or planned one. According to Herscher, this violence against architecture, which was interpreted as a "reality of war," killed over ten thousand civilians in Sarajevo while over sixty thousand were left injured (Herscher 35). Images and postcards of Sarajevo's architectural obliteration elicited a range of reactions and were used to understand and interpret the relationship between war and architecture. According to Herscher, at some points, these graphic representations served as catalysts to urge an end to the violence, while at other times, their role was confined to mere incitements. The representation of war-ruined architectural bodies through images and postcards depends on who is behind the representation and what is the motive that is being served through this representation. Hence, according to Herscher, it's clear that there is always some kind of political intervention in the wartime destruction of architecture and its representation through various mediums during and after the war.

Herscher, through his theory of warchitecture, challenges the discriminations attached to besieged or destroyed architecture. Destroyed architecture is denied of any autonomy and significance because once the violence hits architecture, the "ontological status" of the architecture also gets destroyed which results in shifting the architectural bodies from the discourse of architecture to the domain of violence (Herscher 38). And violence, being contrary to culture, is not given the right to be read and interpreted.

Therefore, “architecture-as-destruction” is denied “autonomy,” which is considered an intrinsic property of “architecture-as-construction” (Herscher 38). However, the theory of warchitecture negates this claim by calling it faulty and unauthentic. According to Herscher, this assertion that violence is contrary to culture and the architecture subjected to violence lacks autonomy “rests upon a problematic understanding of violence as exterior to culture” while culture is and has always been deeply rooted in destructions and violence prompted by political powers (Herscher 38-39). Mainstream scholarship studies architecture, cities, and heritage as concretizations of culture, while violence seeks to destroy these cultural concretizations as a rival of culture. However, according to Herscher, we should not assume that architecture, cities, and heritage “normally exist without violence” and that there is no “historical enmeshment of culture in all modes of social repression and domination” (Herscher 39). Thus, culture and violence do not stand in disagreement with each other; rather, violence is a form of culture. If violence is aimed at destroying culture, culture is also involved in endorsing violence. Therefore, like all the cultural phenomena and productions, war-ruined architecture also holds the autonomy, significance, and the right to be interpreted. The autonomy and significance of cultural forms and productions stem from their ability to hold symbolic significance and cultural values. For instance, a stable building, being a cultural form, stands as an embodiment of the culture it exists in, tells the story of evolution in architecture, and often reflects the norms and values of its inhabitants or owners. Likewise, according to the theory of warchitecture, war-ruined architecture also holds significance and must be studied as a cultural form having symbolic significance in the context of history, culture, or religion.

The significance of destroyed architecture is also evidenced by the fact that, like all the other socio-cultural and ideological factors, violence also plays a role in reshaping the identities and roles of the subjects impacted by it. According to Herscher, “Violence against architecture, like violence against the body, often involves …, the same attempt to define another in the midst of destroying it” (Herscher 41). This implies that once hit by violence, the prevalent identity of the architecture gets demolished, and a new identity is formed. By inflicting new meanings and symbols, “violence against architecture transforms, often fundamentally, the values, meanings, and identities of architecture” (Herscher 42).

Therefore, the identity and role of architecture before destruction are entirely different from what they are after the destruction. Moreover, the transformations that violence causes in the identity and role of architecture are not similar for everyone. According to Herscher, the transformations in the identity, values, and role of architecture are "conditioned not only by these interpretations but also by the experience of destruction by its victims, witnesses, and audiences" (Herscher 42). Therefore, examination of war-ruined architecture is crucial in order to discover and analyze the transformative effects of wartime destruction on the identity as well as the performative role of architecture.

Lastly, Herscher claims that the purpose of his theory of warchitecture is to challenge the discourses on wartime architectural destruction posed by the hegemonic powers. According to Herscher, along with engaging in war and destruction, countries also attempt to offer the definitions of war, violence, and peace that serve their narrative. "What counts as ''war'' and what counts as ''peace,'' what counts as legitimate ''preventative war,'' ''peacekeeping,'' or ''self-defense,'' and what counts as illegitimate, indiscriminate, or extreme violence "is always defined by the states involved in wars (Herscher 42). The purpose is to strengthen the narratives disseminated by hegemonic powers. For instance, refugee camps in Palestine needed to be defined as terrorist infrastructures and neighborhoods in Baghdad had to be presented as breeding grounds of rebellion for them to be demolished (Herscher 42). This was the only way for perpetrator states to validate their perpetration against the targeted countries and their architecture. However, the urban renewal of Paris, despite holding the qualities of war, was legitimized by the use of terms like "modernization, development, and globalization" (Herscher 42). The theory of warchitecture not only questions these politicized narratives of presenting architectural destruction but also encourages researchers to interpret the multiple roles architecture plays during wars. Herscher challenges the mainstream approach of interpreting architecture as a victim in wars. He highlights architecture's role as a perpetrator of violence and destruction. According to the theory of warchitecture, "architecture, in its most neutral and discrete versions, can be enmeshed with war" and plays a significant role in advancing war and violence (Herscher 42). States often attempt to "defamiliarize what accounts as war," which is why the violence perpetuated through architecture or for architectural

development such as Paris renewal is "normalized by terms such as modernization, development, or globalization" (Herscher 42). Therefore, Thus, the theory of warchitecture, by escaping conformity and conventionalism, reflects on how both "war and architecture are components in a highly mediated globalization of insecurity and safety, risk and protection, and profiteering and exploitation" (Herscher 42). It expands beyond the "limited conception of architecture as constructive and as construction" and attempts to study the multiple factors and processes associated with architecture and war (Herscher 42). Hence, Herscher, in his warchitectural theory, claims that architecture is not always the target or victim in wars; rather, it is also used as a tool in advancing the agendas of war.

Application of the theory of Warchitecture in the present research

I have drawn two salient concepts from Andrew Herscher's theory of warchitecture (2010), which is one of the foundational pillars of the present research. Firstly, I have invoked the idea that architecture, after going through destruction during wars, still holds its autonomy. Wartime destruction transforms the identity of the architecture as well as the role it plays in the post-war period. Current research argues that wartime violence has inflicted new meanings and symbols on the architecture depicted in the selected literary texts for the research. Violence has transformed the identity of the architecture into a partially ruined abject space. Unlike the pre-war era, this partially ruined architecture now inhabits both victims and perpetrators and promotes reconciliation among them despite their affiliation with conflicting parties during the war.

Moreover, Herscher challenges the conventional notion of always interpreting architecture as a victim or target of destruction and brings to attention the role architecture plays in promoting war and violence. The current study caters to his idea of investigating the diverse roles architecture plays during and after the wars. It extends the theory of warchitecture by suggesting that architecture, apart from being a victim or perpetrator during the war, also acts as the catalyst for promoting reconciliation among victims and perpetrators. Hence, the present research caters to the overall intent of the theory of warchitecture to highlight the unconventional ways of studying the relationship between war, violence, and architecture.

3.2.3 Julia Kristeva's Theory of Abjection

About the Author

Bulgarian-French philosopher, semiotician, and literary critic, Julia Kristeva (1941) is best known for her contributions in the fields of literary criticism, psychoanalysis, and linguistics. She has served at Columbia University and now teaches at Universite Paris Cite, France. Kristeva has lived in France since the mid-1960s and has been an advocate of French Feminism. She has authored more than 30 books and has mainly focused on exploring the relationship between the unconscious mind and language as well as the role the human unconscious plays in culture and literature. One of the most famous works of Kristeva is her book *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (1980), in which she proposes her theory of abjection: an instinctive human reaction to something that disrupts the border between self and other, something that threatens defined orders or meanings. Kristeva draws inspiration from Sigmund Freud's ideas about uncanniness, unconscious mind, and repression, while Jacques Lacan's works related to self, others, and especially language. Her book explores the portrayal of disturbing, threatening, uncanny, and unsettling experiences in literary works and the human responses such experiences induce.

Theory of Abjection and Liminality

Abject and Abjection are the two terms that form the basis of Kristeva's theory and also vastly contribute to building up the argument of present research. Abject, according to Kristeva, is an entity that challenges predefined meanings and exists in an ambiguous liminal state between self and other. It's an entity expelled beyond the scope of "the possible, the tolerable, the thinkable; however, its existence is inevitable (Kristeva 1). This means that abject contests the prevailing orders, definitions, or laws and pushes the subjects into a state of discomfort and revulsion. According to Kristeva, an Abject is neither an "object" that I name, neither recognize nor imagine nor is it an "ab-jest" that can be delineated as other; rather, it's a "jettisoned object…, that draws me towards the place where meaning collapses" (Kristeva 2-3). Hence, the abject is something that is defined as something unacceptable or uncanny by society and culture. Encounter with the abject persuades horror, disgust, and perhaps fascination in humans and causes abjection, which, according to Kristeva, is a noun that refers to the state of being cast off or separated from

the societal and moral norms and rules (Kristeva 3). Therefore, abject is not something contained within our socio-cultural definitions and laws, but it never ceases to exist and challenge subjects.

Kristeva presents food loathing as one of the basic forms of abjection. When we see or touch the thin layer on the surface of boiled milk, we feel nausea, disgust, and dizziness despite knowing that the food is harmless. This thin layer not only makes us uncomfortable to the point where we abject it but also separates us from our parents, who offered this milk (food) to us. To explain the feeling, Kristeva writes, I want to expel it, get away with it, "but since food is not another for me… I abject myself" when I am also trying to establish myself (Kristeva 3). This means that abject disrupts the border between self and others and fetches repugnance and discomfort in us. It is something that is neither here with a subject nor there as completely other. It is not entirely unfamiliar but we also do not want to categorize it as something familiar and anticipated. Abject is something that disrupts the sense of identity and order. Decaying matter and bodily fluids are examples since they expose the subject to a fine line between death and life and his vulnerability. Subject wants to get away from them but cannot since these realities are impossible to be denied.

When the subject interacts with an entity that challenges his learned definitions and appears as something inevitable despite being loathsome and uncanny, the subject enters a state of abjection. According to Kristeva, "It is thus not lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection but what disturbs identity, system, order" (Kristeva 4). This is because lack of cleanliness or health falls under set definitions and does not appear unfamiliar. Abject, on the other hand, poses a threat to the standard definitions or laws. Abjection occurs when we encounter something that disrupts meaning, system, or identity. Something that is neither acceptable for us nor does it permit us to entirely expel it; hence, it exists in an ambiguous and ambivalent space between here and there. Kristeva defines the corpse as an example of abject. A dead body is neither "here" with the subject like a living being as it no longer possesses life nor can we entirely expel it because it is still there in front of our eyes. Hence, in terms of Kristeva, "it is death infecting life. …, Imaginary uncanniness and real threat, it beckons to us and ends up engulfing us" (Kristeva 4). Thus, it is the destruction of the border between life and death that makes the corpse an abject. Encounter with the

corpse pushes us to a state of abjection because we want to call it "other," but it arbitrates in our reality and thus makes us feel sickened and deserted (Kristeva 5). Similarly, "a criminal with a good conscience", a killer who happens to save a life, a treacherous friend, a science that causes devastations when it's essentially supposed to save lives, and a "debtor who sells you up" are all examples of abject entities that challenge the mainstream definitions and understanding of criminal, killer, friend, science and a debtor (Kristeva 5). Hence, we can say that abject by disrupting the linguistically and culturally defined meanings, laws, and borders, dismantles our preconceived notions about the world and presents us with new realities and possibilities.

What is interesting about abject is that it elicits not only fear, disgust, and distress in humans but also fascination. People do not understand or desire abject, but they find it joyful. This is why most of the victims of the abject are "its fascinated victims, if not submissive and willing ones" (Kristeva 9). Before humans start making sense of themselves and the world around them, before forming the ego, they get informed and conditioned by society and culture on the difference between what is acceptable and what needs to be expelled. This is defined as the primal repression prompted by the external factors, and later on, based on this primary repression, a secondary repression happens that further solidifies the conditioning of the humans by the external factors.

Due to these repressions, humans feel horror and distress when they encounter an entity that was initially defined by external forces, including language and societal or moral laws, as something to stay away from. However, despite these repressions and the upsetting feelings abject brings on, humans still get attracted to it and find joy in it "violently and painfully" (Kristeva 9). This implies that abject exists in an ambiguous, liminal state from where it induces both repugnance and unanticipated fascination. Moreover, it also holds the potential to transform the negativity surrounding it into something positive and creative. Literature, according to Kristeva, is an example of this transformation of the negativity surrounding the abject into a creative outlet (Kristeva 18). Thus, encounter with the abject is characterized by both devastation and sublimation, with sublimation as a psychological process that allows subjects to convert the negativity associated with the abject into an expression that is socially and culturally acceptable. Hence, encounter with an abject entity

creates new possibilities that, to some extent, align with the social and cultural meanings and definitions.

Application of the Theory of Abjection in the Present Research

This study invokes Kristeva's conceptualization of abjection and liminality in order to study the war-bombed, partially ruined architecture depicted in the selected texts. Present research argues that this partially ruined architecture that is neither stable nor completely ruined is an abject space challenging the standard definitions of architecture and rubble. This abject architecture exists in an ambiguous liminal state between stable architecture that is desired and appreciated by subjects and completely ruined architecture that is projected as 'other'. It appears uncanny and discomforting while at the same time holding the potential to inhabit people and connect them with their past. Inhabitants find the partially ruined abject architecture both distressing and painfully fascinating. Moreover, inhabitants' encounters with the abject space allow them to understand their susceptibility to pain and destruction, which leads to their psychological shifts, allowing them to sympathize and reconcile with each other. Thus, the abject architecture that cannot be labeled as a safe place to reside in but still offers shelter to the inhabitants creates the possibility of transforming the feelings of horror, uncanniness, and discomfort into peace and reconciliation.

Current research only employs the first essay, "Approaching Abjection" from Kristeva's book. This essay provides an in-depth understanding of the concepts of abject, abjection, and liminality and, hence, offers sufficient sustenance for the argument of this research.

3.2.4 Nir Eisikovits' Theory of Reconciliation after Conflicts

About the theorist

Nir Eisikovits is a professor of political and legal philosophy and has served at reputed universities in the US, including UMass Boston and Suffolk University. He is also a director of the Applied Ethics Center at the University of Massachusetts. Professor

Eisikovits' works focus on the political and ethical dilemmas that arise in the post-war period. His books and articles deal with the subjects of transitional justice, reconciliation after conflicts, political reconciliations war ethics, etc.

His famous works include *Sympathizing with the Enemy: Reconciliation, Transitional Justice, Negotiation (*2010), and *The Theory of Truces* (2014). Present research employs the concept of reconciliation after conflicts, Professor Eisikovits has proposed in his books *Sympathizing with the Enemy: Reconciliation, Transitional Justice, Negotiation (*2010). Due to the unavailability of the book at the time of writing this research, I have referred to the symposium and an article recommended and sent personally by the theorist that offers a comprehensive understanding of the arguments proposed in the book.

Theory of Reconciliation after Conflicts

Eisikovits, in his theory of reconciliation after conflicts, highlights the significance of "sympathy" in encouraging reconciliation amongst opposing parties in the post-conflict/war period. He offers examples of wars and conflicts that transpired around the world during different time periods, such as World Wars, the Cold War, the War on Terror, the Iraq Wars, the War between Palestine and Israel, etc., and stresses the significance of understanding each other's circumstances in promoting peacekeeping in the world. His book *Sympathizing with the Enemy: Reconciliation, Transitional Justice, Negotiation (*2010) stresses the political and moral benefits of "choosing to look" and persuades the readers to prioritize reconciliation over retaliation (qtd in MacLachlan 178). Eisikovits' approach towards stressing the role of sympathy in promoting reconciliation between two groups is unique. He defends sympathy against other attributes like forgiveness, recognition, or forgetting, which are commonly observed as contributors to building a peaceful relationship between two parties. However, according to Eisikovits, it's only the "imaginative effort of sympathy" that allows people to see the commonalities between them and the people they initially opposed, and the only way of reconciling with the formal rival is to find what you both have in common (MacLachlan 181). Finding common motives, needs, aims, or necessities would assist you in understanding the reasons for performing the way they did when war or conflict occurred. According to Eisikovits, "sympathy

requires specific, detailed knowledge about the lives of others" (qtd in MacLachlan 181). Moreover, this concrete knowledge about each other must be "actively obtained rather than passively encountered" (qtd in MacLachlan 181). Effects of sympathy, in Eisikovits' assessment, mitigate the chances of conflict to re-emerge by establishing socio-economic and community bonds as well as by extinguishing the "[destructive] temptations of absolute justice" (qtd in MacLachlan 181). Hence, to sympathize and then reconcile, you have to consciously put your interests aside and attempt to see the circumstances from the standpoint of the opponent party.

According to Eisikovits, both formal and informal motivational factors partake in endorsing reconciliation between people or groups in the post-war/conflict period. The formal factors include the resolution of the disputes as well as the establishment of laws and policies that would enable a peaceful existence of the two groups that were previously in conflict with each other. The informal motivational factor, on the other hand, which Eisikovits has regarded as more effective than the formal factors, is the act of "sympathizing with each other" (qtd in MacLachlan 180). Being sympathetic with each other requires both parties to actively attempt to acquire thorough and concrete and "firsthand knowledge" about the lives of each other, the knowledge that concerns the individuals and not just the general features of the groups they belong to (qtd in MacLachlan 181). Hence, to sympathize with each other, people or groups have to know each other in detail, and once they have concrete knowledge about each other, it becomes easier for them to reconcile and exist in harmony.

Eisikovits mentions in his article "Forget Forgiveness: On the Benefits of Sympathy for Political Reconciliation" (2004) that imagination plays a significant part in encouraging sympathy among people, but this imagination also requires "concrete knowledge" and data of the concerned people or group (Eisikovits 8-9). For example, according to Eisikovits, Israelis are supporting their government in building a wall in the West Bank even if they have never seen it. They have used their imaginations to create a reality in their heads that a suicide bomber from Palestine is standing next to the wall and is ready to harm Israelis. However, they never tried to know the reality. They do not know how this wall is causing harm to Palestinians, and hence, Israelis have never accepted the idea of being sympathetic

toward Palestinians (Eisikovits 9). Therefore, the two parties must know each other well to develop a sympathetic relationship that leads to reconciliation between them.

Application of the theory of reconciliation in the present research

Eisikovits' theory of reconciliation is the secondary theory this present research employs to substantiate the claim that partially ruined architecture depicted in the selected novels promotes reconciliation between victims and perpetrators. Inhabitants of the partially destroyed buildings develop sympathetic relationships with each other despite serving opposing parties in World War II. This is because the encounter with the abject space allows the subject to undergo a psychological shift that allows him to see their shared susceptibility to pain and destruction. This act of knowing each other, according to Eisikovits indorses sympathy and, hence, reconciliation between people or groups that were previously in conflict. I draw upon Eisikovits' conceptualizations to authenticate the existence of a sympathetic relationship among the inhabitants of the partially ruined buildings in both novels, which then leads to their reconciliation.

In the first part of the chapter, I have offered a detailed account of the theoretical framework I have applied in the present research to build up the suggested argument. In the next section, I discuss the research methodology selected to conduct the present research.

3.2.5 Contextual basis for the selected theories

Each selected theory addresses a different aspect of the argument of the present research, and together, they offer a comprehensive framework for its validation. Triangulation of the theories creates an interdisciplinary framework that offers an innovative approach to examining the relationship between war and architecture and its representation in literary texts. Herscher's theory of Warchitecture interprets war and architecture with a special focus on the architectural destruction that happened in Sarajevo during the Bosnian war. By transcending the mainstream approaches to understanding the interrelation between war and architecture, the theory of Warchitecture provides new insights that are instrumental in addressing the first question of the present research, which examines how wartime destruction reshapes the identity and role of architecture in post-war society.

Building on this, Kristeva's theory of Abjection and Liminality offers insights into understanding the positionality of the war-ruined buildings portrayed in the selected texts and the resultant socio-psychological impacts on the inhabitants. The concepts of abject, abjection, and liminality proposed by Kristeva in her theory assist in addressing the second research question that examines the liminality of partially ruined architecture and the resultant ambivalence that leads to the co-existence of victims and perpetrators in the selected texts. Lastly, Nir Eisikovits' theory of reconciliation after conflicts offers a lens through which the shared existence of victims and perpetrators in the partially ruined buildings and their connection with each other can be interpreted as their reconciliation. The coexistence of victims and perpetrators and their shared sympathy is the concern of the third research question, for which Eisikovits' theory offers essential insights.

Thus, the three selected theories set the basis for a profound exploration and understanding of the transformations wartime destruction causes in the identity and role of architecture, and its socio-psychological ramifications for the individuals inhabiting the partially destroyed structures in the post-war period.

3.3 Research Methodology

This research is qualitative in nature. The primary sources for the data are the two selected literary texts for the study: *The English Patient* (1992) by Michael Ondaatje and *The Light in the Ruins* (2013) by Chris Bohjalian. The secondary sources of the data include reviews of the novels, journal articles, research reports, books, websites, etc., that are written on or about the selected texts and the theories for this research. The primary sources of the data are used for analysis, whereas the secondary sources of data provide well-informed arguments to support the argument for the study.

Catherine Belsey's textual analysis method proposed in her article *Textual Analysis as a Research Method* (2013) is applied to conduct the present research. According to Belsey, while using textual analysis to conduct research, the researcher is "engaged in a dialogue with the text" and makes sure to retain "a certain independence" of the text (Belsey 186). Active engagement with the text implies that the researcher must develop a deeper understanding of the text by exploring its nuances. However, by retaining the text's independence, Belsey suggests that the researcher must allow it to express its meanings

instead of imposing preconceived or biased notions. The researcher must treat the text as open-ended and its language as a system of signs and not as a medium communicating absolute meanings. Belsey puts emphasis on language, intertextuality, and narrative techniques, which according to her, help in uncovering the multilayered meanings and interpretations the text offers.

Present research applies Belsey's textual analysis method to study the relationship between war and architecture depicted in the selected novels and what transformation wartime destruction causes in the identity as well as the performative role of architecture. Following Belsey's approach, this study inspects the multiplicity of meanings within the texts, highlighting their fluid nature and their connection with the broader historical, cultural, and ideological discourses. The argument of the research is substantiated through a comprehensive analysis of the textual language, imagery, narrative techniques, and other nuanced elements of the selected novels. This study also considers the intertextual connection between novels and historical narratives, as Belsey's approach to textual analysis highlights the importance of historical frameworks and cultural contexts in uncovering the meaning of the texts instead of seeing them as an independent identity.

The reasoning behind selecting textual analysis as a methodology for research is offered by Belsey herself in her essay. According to Belsey, "textual analysis is indispensable to research in cultural criticism… as well as any other discipline that focuses on the text" (182). This is because textual analysis demands the researcher to closely examine the textual details by keeping the examination as objective as possible. Present research does involve texts and intends to keep the textual examination as free of presuppositions as possible. Moreover, Belsey emphasizes maintaining the originality of the research. However, according to Belsey, original does not mean that there are no references to the previous works. Rather, research should "involve assembling ideas that have not been brought together in quite that way before" (186). The current study triangulates three theories that have never been brought together to examine the war-ruined architecture portrayed in the selected texts. Therefore, Catherine Belsey's textual analysis is suitable to use as a methodology for the present research.

3.4 Conclusion

The theoretical framework and the research methodology explained in the chapter suggest a clear direction for carrying out the analysis of the selected texts in the next chapter. The discussion offers clarity on how the selected novels should be approached utilizing the selected theoretical framework in order to validate the argument of the present study. The next two chapters proceed with the analysis of the selected texts, *The English Patient* (1992) and *The Light in the Ruins* (2013), to validate the suggested argument by leveraging the theoretical framework as well as the research methodology elucidated in this chapter. Each chapter is dedicated to the exploration and analysis of one novel.

CHAPTER 4
PARTIALLY RUINED ARCHITECTURE AND RECONCILIATION: ANALYSIS OF MICHAEL ONDAATJE'S *THE ENGLISH PATIENT* (1992)

This section delves into Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient* (1992) to analyze the transformation caused by wartime violence in the identity and role of the partially ruined architecture depicted in the novel. Based on the textual evidence, I highlight the liminality of the partially ruined architecture portrayed in the novel and the role it plays in promoting reconciliation among the inhabitants despite their conflicting alliances during the war. This section is further divided into three sub-sections:

4.1 Introduction of the Author

4.2 Overview of the novel under analysis

4.3 Analysis of the novel

4.1 A Brief Introduction of Michael Ondaatje, Author of *The English Patient* (1992)

Michael Ondaatje is a Canadian novelist, poet, essayist, and filmmaker who was born in Sri Lanka in September 1943. He has published seven novels and more than thirteen poetry collections. Over the past few decades, he has won multiple awards, and for *The English Patient* (1992) alone, he received the Canada Australia Prize, the Booker Prize, and the Governor General's Award. Along with Margret Atwood, Ondaatje is one of the most influential contemporary writers in Canada.

4.2 A Brief Overview of Ondaatje's *The English Patient* (1992)

The English Patient (1992) by Michael Ondaatje was published in the year 1992 and falls under the genre of historical fiction. The plot unfolds primarily in two distinct settings: a partially ruined villa called Villa San Girolamo, located in Florence, Italy, and Gilf Kebir, a desert in southwest Egypt. The story moves between the 1930s, when the protagonist of the novel, Laszlo Almásy, who is assumed to be an English patient in the novel, is in Gilf Kebir, and the early 1940s when World War II is drawing to its end. The

narrative structure of the novel moves back and forth between the past and present, with the past navigating the English patient's memories of his desert life before his accident and the present as a demonstration of the stay of four individuals at the Villa San Girolamo in the closing year of the World War II. The villa was a nunnery before the war, which first gets converted into a defense post by the German army and later into a war hospital by the Allies. The four individuals who live in the villa are 1) Hana, a 20-year-old Canadian nurse whose father died in the war, and she decides to stay at the villa to take care of the burnt patient, 2) a burnt patient named Laszlo Almásy, a Hungarian cartographer and desert explorer who is assumed to be English by Hana, 3) Caravaggio, a Canadian thief who is also an old friend of Hana's father, and 4) Kirpal Sing, an Indian sapper (a soldier whose main duty is to diffuse bombs), who serves British in the war under the laws set by British colonial powers in India. Almásy gets severely burnt in a plane crash and loses his memory. He was brought to the British Camp in 1944 by a nomadic Bedouin tribe from the desert of North Africa.

In 1945, when the war ends and everyone, including the hospital staff, leaves the villa for a safer place, Hana decides to stay and take care of Almásy (the English patient), who is unable to move from this war hospital. Hana and this burnt patient spend a few days alone in the villa before David Caravaggio and Kirpal Sing join them. Hana reads to the patient from the books in the villa's library and also *The Histories* by Herodotus which the patient brings with him and has written notes in it also. Caravaggio originally belongs to Italy, but he migrates to Canada and serves the British in war; however, at the end of the war, Germans find him and cut off his thumbs. In a hospital near Florence, Caravaggio overhears about a woman living alone in a destroyed villa with a burnt patient. He suspects that she might be his late friend's daughter, Hana. He comes to the villa with bandaged hands and decides to prolong his stay at the villa with Hana and the patient. Kirpal Sing (also called Kip as the story progresses), the Indian sapper who also serves English in the war, is the last one to visit the villa. He hears a Piano playing at a distance and follows it driven by a thought that the piano may conceal explosives. Kip comes to the villa and decides to stay. During the stay, Hana and Kip fall in love with each other. Moreover, the four characters forge a strong connection with each other characterized by sympathy and understanding, despite being aware of the fact that, unlike the other three, Almásy served

the Germans in the war, Hana, Caravaggio, and Kip show kindness and immense care towards him. During their stay at the partially destroyed villa, the four individuals take care of each other as a family and do whatever they can to make their survival possible. Despite all the destruction, they find reasons to enjoy their stay at the partially ruined villa. They celebrate Hana's twenty-first birthday in the villa and arrange a makeshift party when Caravaggio finds a gramophone. The four characters live in villa San Girolamo until August of 1945 when they hear the news of Atomic Bombs being dropped on Japan by the United States. Later in the novel, the four characters are shown as living in different parts of the world and still thinking about each other. Kip is married and serves as a doctor in India. He often thinks of Hana and his days in the partially ruined Villa San Girolamo.

The English Patient (1992) is not based on a true story; however, a few elements of reality are incorporated into the novel. Ondaatje drives the character of Laszlo Almásy, the burnt patient, from the real world László Ede Almásy, a Hungarian who served Germans in World War II and spied for Russia. According to a *The Time*'s article now published in *The New York Times,* "The Real Hungarian Count Was No 'English Patient'" (1996) by Jane Perlez, "the real Almásy was a far cry from the character portrayed" in the novel as well as the movie based on the novel. Real Almásy was a "monarchist" who strategically collaborated with Germans and Russians and even tried to serve the British for his personal benefit (Perlez). According to Perlez, Ondaatje mentions in "a telephone interview from Oklahoma" that he focused on Almásy "as an explorer, a man transfixed by the desert" and kept his political and social life irrelevant. Similarly, the Villa San Girolamo in Florence, Italy (see Fig. 1), a plateau in the southwest corner of Egypt, Gilf Kebir (see Fig. 2), and Wadi Sura, also known as The Cave of Swimmers (see Fig. 3) or The Cave of Beasts in the southwest of Gilf Kebir, the fundamental settings where the story unfolds are also taken from the real world. The real László Almásy discovered the Cave of Swimmers. However, Ondaatje mentions in his acknowledgment that the events that happen in these places are all fictional. For instance, Villa San Girolamo is still intact and was never ruined in the Second World War (see Fig. 1). It was built in the 14th century in Tuscany, Italy, and is also known as the Church of San Girolamo. Nuns who used it as a nursing house as well as a boarding space for tourists, students, etc. have mostly inhabited the villa.

Fig. 1. Photograph of Villa San Girolamo. Source: Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, 8 Dec. 2023, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Villa_San_Girolamo. Accessed 10 Jan. 2024.

Fig. 2. Map of Gilf Kebir. Source: Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, 30 Oct. 2023, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gilf_Kebir. Accessed 10 Jan. 2024.

Fig. 3. A view of the entrance to the 'Cave of Swimmers'. On a promontory at the entrance to an inlet in Wadi Sura, Gilf Kebir, Egypt. 2013, 2034.186 © David Coulson / TARA. Source: British Museum African Rock Art Image Project, africanrockart.britishmuseum.org/country/egypt/cave-of-swimmers/.

4.3 Ruins and Reconciliation: Analysis of Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient* (1992)

This section analyzes Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient* (1992) in the light of the formulated theoretical framework. The chapter is divided into three sections following the structure of the thesis statement of the present research.

4.3.1 War, Violence, and the Transformation in the Identity and Role of Architecture

Andrew Herscher, while renouncing the conventional approaches towards the study of the relationship between war and architecture in his warchitectural theory (2010), states that "architecture-as-destruction" has always been denied the autonomy that "architecture-as-construction" holds as its "intrinsic character" (Herscher 38). Architecture-as-construction is considered a part of culture and hence possesses its unique identity as well as autonomy. However, once hit by destruction, architecture gets shifted from the "domain of culture" to the "domain of violence" (Herscher 38), while violence stands in opposition

to culture because it aims to destroy the cities, heritage, and architecture which are understood as the "cultural formations" (Herscher 39). Hence, construction lies within the culture, while destruction lies outside of it.

Herscher, however, disregards this idea of placing culture and violence at two opposite poles because, according to him, this approach "ignores the historical enmeshment of culture in all modes of social repression and domination" (39). Therefore, the theory of "warchitecture" (Herscher 35) suggests that violence and, hence, the destroyed architecture belong to the culture and has its autonomy and significance. War-bombed architecture cannot be looked at or studied as merely a passive victim of war but as an entity that plays a significant role in society during as well as after the war. As Lebbeus Woods suggests in his book *Radical Reconstructionism* (1997), architecture does not lose its significance after being destroyed in wars or disasters; rather, its form must be "respected in its integrity" as it holds history that cannot be denied (Wood 15). According to Woods, bringing life to ruins does not imply the celebration or endorsement of destruction; "rather they accept with a certain pride what has been suffered and lost, but also what has been gained" (Wood 15). Therefore, the partially bombed villa called Villa San Girolamo in *The English Patient* (1992) is studied as an autonomous and significant architectural body in this chapter. In the upcoming paragraphs, I attempt to substantiate the theoretical aspects suggested in this research regarding the war-bombed architecture and the role it plays in the novel under analysis.

Villa San Girolamo in *The English Patient* (1992) is located about twenty miles from Florence, Italy, and the destructions in World War II leaves it partially destroyed (Ondaatje 24). Before the war, the villa was a nunnery, which gets converted into an army defense post after getting occupied by German soldiers. Later on, it is converted into a war hospital by the Allies (Ondaatje 24). After the war ends in the year 1945, everyone except Hana and the English Patient leave the Villa for a safe place; however, Hana refuses to leave despite being aware of the dangers of the villa. She decides to stay at the villa and take care of the English patient, who is burnt beyond measure and is unable to move. Later on, Caravaggio, a Canadian thief who is also a friend of Hana's father, and Kip, a Sikh sapper who belongs to India, also join Hana and the patient at the villa.

In the first two chapters of the novel titled, “The Villa” and “In Near Ruins” Ondaatje extensively explicates the physical condition of the villa during the closing days of World War II. The Villa was initially “built to protect the inhabitants from the flesh of the devil” and goes through multiple changes until war (Ondaatje 35). Shelling during the war inflicts serious destruction on it and leaves it partially destroyed. In front of the villa is a gorge and behind it is a rock wall higher than the villa itself. All the rooms of the villa are painted and appear as gardens, with each room representing a different season (Ondaatje 24). The burnt English patient lays straight in one of the rooms of the villa where the paintings of flowers and trees on the roof and the walls remind him of his past, of the picnics he enjoyed and a woman he fell in love with (Ondaatje 7). Most of the walls and roofs of the rooms are destroyed during the war, which directly links nature with the internal spaces of the villa. The moon and rain find their way into the library after its wall gets destroyed by the bomb (Ondaatje 10). Hana, without any complaints, adjusts to the condition of the villa. She lives like a nomad and keeps moving between the rooms depending on “temperature, or wind, or light” (Ondaatje 14). For twenty-year-old Hana, Villa San Girolamo is a safe space where she is free to make her own rules and live on her own terms. She cleans the villa, grows vegetables, plays piano, reads, cooks for Caravaggio and Kip, and takes care of the Almásy. She is living like a half-adult and half-child in the bombed villa, which is safe only because it looks devastated from the outside (Ondaatje 14). Hana does everything she can, including growing vegetables and cleaning the rooms to make survival at the villa possible, and she manages this well.

From the very beginning of the novel, the villa is referred to as a house and not just a destroyed building that may not have significance or identity of its own.

> She turns and moves uphill towards the house climbing over a low wall, feeling the first drops of rain on her bare arms. She crosses the loggia and quickly enters the house…., She turns into the room which is another garden, this one made up of trees and bowers painted over its walls and ceiling. The man lies on the bed. (Ondaatje 6).

These first few lines of the novel describe the war-bombed villa as a beautiful and comforting residence in the hills where a woman named Hana lives and takes care of her

English patient. Later on, readers come to know that this villa, which is referred to as a house, is partially destroyed, does not belong to anyone, and has served a role during the war. The three inhabitants of the villa consider it Hana's house since she is the first one who chooses to stay at the villa when everyone else leaves it after the end of the war. Describing Caravaggio's presence in the villa, Ondaatje writes, "It was Hana's house, and he moved carefully, rearranging nothing" (46). This reflects the author's choice to associate the ownership of the villa with one person, i.e., Hana, and present others as her guests. Such hospitability, supervisory responsibilities, and reverence towards a building are conventionally reserved for a stable architecture and not for a war-bombed one. However, the attribution of these qualities with the partially bombed Villa San Girolamo suggests Ondaatje's attempt to highlight the agency as well as the significance of the building despite being touched by violence. This is further reflected in his choice to entitle the first chapter of the novel "The Villa" and offer intricate descriptions of the physical condition of the building. Therefore, drawing on Belsey's suggestion of examining the textual language and the resultant imagery it generates, it is reasonable to say that the novel does not portray war-bombed architecture as insignificant. Rather, it highlights its importance by describing it as a home while also acknowledging its ruination. This validates Herscher's assertion that violence is a part of culture, and the architecture subjected to the destruction by war and violence still holds significance and autonomy. Violence, instead of extinguishing the identity and the performative role of architecture, stimulates a transformative process that assigns new identities and roles to the destroyed architecture.

Villa San Girolamo goes through multiple transformations during the war. It was a nunnery when Germans got hold of it and converted it into a German fortification (Ondaatje 41). Later on, the Allies turn the semi-destroyed villa into a "war hospital" (Ondaatje 9), a new identity that gets associated with the building because of the war and violence. However, after the war ends, the villa acquires the new identity of a house that is inhabited by four individuals from different countries who were even affiliated with opposing sides in World War II. For more than 50 times, Ondaatje calls the villa a house and demonstrates inhabitants treating it as their house; a place that protects them and gives them the chance to recover from the war and connect with each other despite all their differences. This is a new identity and the performative role that war and destruction associate with the villa

because destruction, in terms of Herscher, has an "exploratory nature" and a potential to assign new meanings to the targeted object (Ondaatje 41). The pre-war meanings and symbols associated with the Villa San Girolamo are dismantled by destruction because destruction transcends the physical presence and influences its symbolic meaning. As Herscher claims, "violence against architecture transforms, often fundamentally, the values, meanings, and identities of architecture" (42). However, this destruction also results in associating new meanings and identities to the building.

Lucia Sciandro, in her article "Architecture and War in Post-Yugoslavia: Two Buildings Caught in Conflict: Sarajevo's National and University Library and Belgrade's Generalstab" (2018), offers real-world examples to reinforce the idea that wars transform the perceptions and connotations surrounding the targeted buildings. She studies the impact of war and destruction on two buildings, Sarajevo's National and University Library, and Belgrade's Generalstab, and suggests that even after rebuilding the ruins of these buildings, their original meanings could not be restored (Sciandro 14). National and the University Library "became a site of division", and Belgrade's Generalstab became the target of violence "in the context of NATO's campaign of 'bombing for peace' in Serbia" (Sciandro 14). Therefore, these conceptualizations reject the idea that violence somehow is less imperative in creating new identities and meanings than the social, ideological, and political contexts that destruction is believed to have a connection with.

Moreover, violence not only targets the physical structure of the building but also impacts its space. This requires a more nuanced examination of the descriptions of the building as well as people in the text as, according to Belsey, it is in the "unlikely places" such as "the incidental observations, denial, jokes, and slips of the tongue" that we find some of the deeper meanings the text offers (198). The close analysis of some of the intricate details reveals that everything and every person inside the space of Villa San Girolamo experiences a transformation. For instance, in order to cater to the needs of the hospital, nurses remove the high flap of the piano and use it as a hospital table" (Ondaatje 50). Similarly, books from the library are used by Hana to build the last two steps of the staircase that was destroyed during the war (Ondaatje 14). Not only the objects, but the inhabitants of the partially destroyed Villa San Girolamo also go through a shift in their personalities and perspectives. Hana, Almásy, Caravaggio, and Kip live under the same

roof and do not judge each other based on their previous identities and affiliations. Even after they find out that Almásy was affiliated with Germans during the war, they do not hate him or treat him as an enemy. Catherine Belsey encourages the researchers to put the text into its historical context for better comprehension, and doing so makes it look rather astonishing that the former adversaries of World War II are now maintaining an amicable relationship while living in the war-bombed villa. They see each other as the survivors of war, trying their best to be happy, content, and, above all, sympathetic towards each other. Living in a war-bombed building disassociates the inhabitants from the systems and the ideological frameworks that define them as enemies. It leads to the emergence of an awareness among the inhabitants that they all are the victims of war bound together by collective suffering. This validates the claim that destruction penetrates the space of Villa San Girolamo and assigns new meanings and identities to the objects, inhabitants, and the villa itself while destroying the old ones.

Villa San Girolamo does not get completely obliterated during the war. It is not an intact building like it used to be before the war, but it is also not a complete ruin. It is a partially destroyed villa where people of diverse identities are living in complete harmony with each other. Herscher disproves the mainstream approach of always construing architecture as a victim in wars and highlights architecture's contributions to the promotion of violence, too. According to Herscher, "Both war and architecture are components in a highly mediated globalization of insecurity and safety, risk and protection, and profiteering and exploitation" (42). In other words, just like war, architecture also plays a part in advancing or perpetuating violence. Through his theory of warchitecture, Herscher encourages theorists, architects, and researchers to explore architecture beyond its "limited conception …, as constructive and as construction" (Herscher 42). States often attempt to "defamiliarize what accounts as war", and as a result, projects such as the renewal of Paris, which may be initiated on account of "many of the qualities of war" on its architecture, are "normalized by terms such as modernization, development, or globalization" (Herscher 42). Warchitectural theory questions the narratives that present architecture as just a target in wars and claims that "architecture, in its most neutral and discrete versions, can be enmeshed with war" (Herscher 42). This entails that architecture is not only a victim but it

may aid in advancing the war by, either simply being there or made to be used as spaces of war like ammunition depots or concentration camps.

This research follows Herscher's proposition of exploring the complexity of the relationship between war and architecture by highlighting the role of partially ruined architecture during and after the war. It suggests that the partially ruined Villa San Girolamo plays the role of promoting reconciliation among the inhabitants despite their identities as victims and perpetrators during the war. The villa exists in a liminal state between the stable architecture and a complete ruin and offers an ambivalent space for the co-existence of victims and perpetrators in complete harmony. The villa is too destroyed to be considered a stable, aesthetically pleasing, and protective building and stable enough to be interpreted as a complete ruin. It exists in an ambiguous liminal space where it cannot be defined as an object of desire for the inhabitants but is still inhabited. The remnants of destruction remind the inhabitants of the war, and the villa's capacity for inhabitation provokes a sense of nostalgia and human desire for tranquility and peace.

This partially ruined Villa San Girolamo can also be seen as a manifestation of Kristeva's theory of Abjection and Liminality, which is the other focus of the current research. Villa is an 'abject' that exists in a liminal state between stable architecture and a completely ruined one. As an abject space, its architecture challenges the established linguistic and cultural definitions of stable architecture, but at the same time, it also defies an entirely ruined architecture. In this partially ruined state, it is an abject space that invokes feelings of horror, discomfort, and uncanniness. According to present research, war, and violence lead to the abjection of the Villa San Girolamo in the novel. Moreover, this abject space brings its inhabitants closer to each other and creates a possibility for founding a sympathetic bond between them. This sympathy then paves the way for reconciliation among inhabitants irrespective of their conflicting identities and affiliations during the war.

4.3.2 Liminality and Abjection of Partially Destroyed Villa San Girolamo in *The English Patient* (1992)

The partially ruined Villa San Girolamo in *The English Patient* (1992) challenges the linguistic and cultural definitions of a safe architectural body as well as of a completely

ruined one. The villa encompasses the features of both a safe, homelike building as well as ruins, thus existing in an ambiguous state between the two.

> From outside, the place seemed devastated. An outdoor staircase disappeared in midair, its railing hanging off…, they used only essential candlelight at night because of the brigands who annihilated everything they came across…, but she felt safe here, half-adult and half child (Ondaatje 14).

Characters inhabiting the villa do realize the potential dangers of inhabiting such a space that has remained a German defense post in the past and holds memories of war and violence. However, they cannot disregard its presence and usefulness in the post-war period not only as a shelter but also as a source of healing from the atrocities they suffered in war. The villa is neither an 'object of desire' for the subjects nor a complete 'other' that can be overlooked. According to Belsey, the text poses questions and compels the reader to find answers in the existing scholarship (197). By positioning the war-ruined architecture in an in-between state, the text poses questions that seek to explore the nature of the portrayed architecture: what exactly is it, and how can we describe it? Julia Kristeva's theory of abjection and liminality offers a lens to answer the questions.

In the light of Kristeva's theory, Villa San Girolamo is an 'abject' entity, as, according to Kristeva, abject is something that challenges the predefined meanings and borders and exists in a liminal state between self and other. She considers abject as an entity that is familiar but not something desired or anticipated, something that "lies there, quite close, but cannot be assimilated" (Kristeva 1). At some places in the novel, Villa San Girolamo is described as a safe and beautiful house in the hills; however, this description gets counterbalanced by the author's emphasis on the annihilated state of the building. To demonstrate the characters' awareness of both the underlying hope as well as the inherent dangers of the partially ruined villa, Ondaatje writes that Hana, while working in the garden, is always aware

> of unexploded mines.…, she began to garden with a furious passion that could come only to someone who had grown up in a city. In spite of the burned earth, in spite of the lack of water. Someday there would be a bower of limes, rooms of green light. (Ondaatje 35)

Therefore, we see that the villa as an abject space stimulates both feelings of horror and hope, of safety and vulnerability, and uncanniness and familiarity. Wartime violence has caused this abjection of the Villa San Girolamo and made it a warchitectured partially ruined space by transforming it into a state where it neither falls under the definitions of stable architecture nor conforms to the identity of an entirely ruined and abandoned space that lacks the potential to inhabit people. Destruction changes the villa into something that disrupts the established orders and becomes a source of both discomfort and attraction for the abjected subjects.

On one hand, the inhabitants of the villa are dedicated to making the best out of their circumstances and work hard to bring life to the villa; however, on the other hand, they show indifference and a lack of concern towards the building. Hana grows vegetables in the garden, organizes everything in the villa, and cleans its sections to make survival possible, however, she also holds a realization that "all this she could burn down if she wished" (Ondaatje 15). This reflects that characters hold a vague sense of belonging to the abject villa despite inhabiting it out of their free will. Villa reminds Hana of both the normal, peaceful, pre-war life as well as the devastations of war. It is an abject space that is there, available for habitation, but not as a desired and beneficial space that conforms to the pre-learned definitions and established socio-cultural orders. In Kristeva's words, this abject space is "a mourning for an 'object' that has always already been lost" (Kristeva 15). Thus, wartime violence transforms the identity of the villa from an object, i.e., a beneficial strong building, to an abject, i.e., a partially destroyed building existing in an ambiguous liminal state challenging the constructed orders and definitions.

Inhabitants of the villa were affiliated with conflicting sides during World War II. Almásy, the English patient was serving Germany while Hana, Caravaggio, and Kip served the Allies. However, after the war ends, Hana decides to stay in the semi-destroyed villa to take care of Almásy, who she believes is an English. Later on in the novel, Caravaggio and Hana come to know that Almásy served Germany in the war; however, this does not stop them from being considerate and sympathetic towards him. Irrespective of their wartime affiliation, inhabitants choose to take care of each other while living in an abject space. Following Belsey's proposition of contextualizing the textual details in the light of previous knowledge and historical background, we can certainly claim that the sympathetic

relationship between the inhabitants who remained enemies in a world war is rather astonishing. However, a close reading of the text confirms that there does exist a sympathetic bond between the inhabitants of the partially ruined villa. This partially ruined abject space transforms the identities as well as the worldviews of the inhabitants.

Inhabitants of the villa are not holding onto their identities as the victims and perpetrators of the war, rather, they appear as the survivors of the war. According to Kristeva, an abject entity is something that not only challenges the demarcated borders and identities but also compels the subject to go through a change, just like the inhabitants of Villa San Girolamo. The subject does not want abject, does conform to it, but since 'abject' is a reality that cannot be avoided or expelled, it causes the subject to "expel" or "spit" itself, to get abjected, to become another, something it originally was not (Kristeva 3). Inhabitants of the partially ruined abject villa cannot dismiss the existence of the villa as it offers them both shelter and a space for healing. However, the paradoxical state of the villa leads to the abjection of the inhabitants, which causes a transformation in their identity. While living in this ambiguous space, they start seeing each other as the victims of the same destruction and shift their focus from former antagonism to shared resilience and survival. Hence, the transformations caused in the identities and perspectives of the inhabitants can be linked with the space they are living in and the feelings this abject space induces in them.

It is not the obliterations that make the villa an abject space but its potential to challenge the defined order, definitions, or laws. According to Kristeva, "it is thus not lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection but what disturbs identity, system, order" (4). This implies that it is not just a destroyed building being regarded as abject but also a building that is destroyed but still holds the potential to inhabit people. A building that does not conform to the standard definition of a stable, useful building, just like a "criminal with a good conscience …, the killer who claims he is a savior" (Kristeva 4). Villa San Girolamo is such a building: an abject space, half-stable, half-destroyed, existing in an in-between and ambiguous state from where it challenges the subjects and pushes them away while also appealing to them. Hence, what disturbs or challenges the conventional definitions, laws, or rules is defined as an abject. In its liminal state, the villa seems both familiar and unfamiliar, uncanny and fascinating, treacherous but inevitable.

The reason why abject is unavoidable and existent is because it fascinates subjects. However, this attraction is not motivated by pleasure but by agony and pain. It is driven by the circumstances the subjects find themselves in. According to Kristeva, "jouissance alone causes the abject to exist as such," which means that subjects might not know the abject and might not desire it but "find joy in it. Violently and painfully" (9). This implies that despite realizing the dangers and uncanniness of the abject, subjects become their victims. Inhabitants of Villa San Girolamo are also attracted to the semi-destroyed building and are its willing victims. Wartime destruction is their reality, and a building that holds both the potential to harm them and the capacity to protect them fascinates them. Hana chooses to live in the villa despite realizing all the dangers. She takes a hammock from a dead man and lives like a nomad in the villa, protecting herself from all the filth on the floors and the rats coming down from the third story (Ondaatje 37). However, "when moonlight slides onto the ceiling it wakes her, and she lies in the hammock, her mind skating," and she thinks to herself that if she were a writer, she would take her pens and books to bed and write (Ondaatje 15). Hence, the abject space Hana lives in fascinates her with all its dangers and amenities.

Similarly, when Caravaggio decides to visit the villa in search of Hana, he overhears a group of people referring to the villa and its surroundings as an extremely unsafe and unpleasant space. To describe such a state of the villa, they say, "[T]he sappers haven't gone in there yet to clear it. The Germans retreated burying and installing mines as they went. A terrible place for a hospital" (Ondaatje 25). However, this does not change Caravaggio's decision to go to the villa. He visits Villa San Girolamo, meets Hana, who is the daughter of his old friend, and without announcing his intention to stay at the villa, chooses to extend his stay. Similarly, Karpal Singh, who is a sapper and is frequently referred to by his nickname Kip, comes to the villa to clear it of any bombs and mines but decides to stay with Hana, Caravaggio, and Almásy.

Partially destroyed Villa San Girolamo, being an abject space, offers experiences that were never familiar to the inhabitants. Before the war, they never knew they could survive in a place that was safe and dangerous at the same time. This abject space makes them realize their potential to be sympathetic towards people who were even affiliated with the enemies' side during the war. They never knew that the socially and culturally

constructed realities they were living in could be demolished at any time. As Kristeva proposes in her theory of abjection and liminality, the reason why we get impacted by abject is because we are conditioned and governed by "laws, connections and even structures of meaning" (10). When we encounter situations or entities that challenge those laws or abolish the boundaries between self and the other, we as subjects get cast off or abjected. Villa San Girolamo does so and exists in a liminal, ambiguous state oscillating between subject and object.

However, Kristeva does not focus only on the revulsions and discomfort an abject entity invokes in subjects. Humans possess the potential to encounter the abject and transform feelings of discomfort and disgust into creative and constructive outputs. In terms of Kristeva, "It is a brutish suffering that 'I' puts up with, sublime and devastated" (2). This implies that interaction with an abject entity is characterized by both constructiveness and destructiveness because, on the one hand, abject challenges the prevailing borders/definitions while, on the other hand, this disruption leads to the creation of new possibilities for the subjects. In *The English Patient* (1992), characters encounter an abject space, i.e., partially ruined Villa San Girolamo, and this encounter disrupts the psychological, social, and cultural borders that have always been presenting damaged buildings as uncanny and useless and people fighting from the opposite side as perpetrators. However, the disruption of these constructed borders as a result of war-driven abjection allows the characters of the novel to realize the susceptibility of architecture to destruction and imagine themselves in the position of those who are presented as perpetrators. This leads to the characters developing a sympathetic bond and, thus, reconciling with each other in the post-war period. Hence, Villa San Girolamo is an abject space existing in a liminal state and offering an ambivalent space for the co-existence of victims and perpetrators in complete harmony. The potential of ruins to endorse reconciliation is also discussed by Amos Bar-Eli, a professor of design at the Institute of Art, Design and Business, Portugal, in his article "On (New) Ruins Reconciliation Capacity" (2015). According to Bar-Eli, ruins reconcile people with the "realities of war" and by making them realize "the uncertainties of life" and their shared susceptibility to destruction, that eventually, helps them connect with each other (Bar-Eli 150). He suggests that even the ruined architecture of no symbolic significance or which has "not yet attained the quality of the archaeological

site or symbol of historically meaningful place" (Bar-Eli 147) has the potential to connect the "spectators of ruins with the uncertainties of life" (Bar-Eli 150). Thus, architecture does not lose its significance or the potential to impact people even after being destroyed.

4.3.3 Reconciliation among the Inhabitants of the Partially Ruined Villa San Girolamo in *The English Patient* (1992)

The theme that prevails throughout *The English Patient* (1992) is the inhabitants' active endeavors to obtain knowledge about each other. They inquire each other about their stories of their past, where they came from, and how war affected them. According to Nir Eisikovits' theory of reconciliation after conflicts, acquiring concrete knowledge about each other promotes sympathy and reconciliation between people. Upon closely examining the text, we find this happening among the inhabitants of the partially destroyed Villa San Girolamo. Encountering an abject space allows them to look beyond the constructed boundaries and accept their shared vulnerability to violence, pain, and suffering. They attempt to understand each other to forge a connection characterized by sympathy and care.

The four inhabitants of the villa never met each other before or during the war. However, they show a keen interest in learning about each other, which, as a result, endorses reconciliation among them. According to Eisikovits, the knowledge acquired about each other that promotes sympathy must concern the individuals and not the group they belong to. Moreover, this knowledge should be actively acquired and not just "passively encountered" (qtd. in MacLachlan 181). This suggests that in order to develop a sympathetic bond with each other in the post-conflict period, people need to know each other as individuals and not based on their affiliations with particular groups or parties. Inhabitants of the Villa San Girolamo engage in active conversations to know each other and for this, they do not depend on any external source.

Caravaggio tells Hana that the English patient is not English because he served the Germans during the war. According to Caravaggio, "Almásy had English friends. Great explorers. But when war broke out, he went with the Germans" (Ondaatje 121). However, Hana resists accepting it and communicates her skepticism and disbelief by saying, "I still don't believe it, David…., I think we should leave him be. It doesn't matter what side he was on, does it?" (Ondaatje 122). Moreover, this information about Almásy does not evoke

any hatred or hostility in Hana towards the patient. Analysis of the language she uses when talking to Almásy and the care she shows towards him proves that she sees Almásy as a victim and survivor of war just like herself. Therefore, she chooses not to judge him based on his wartime affiliations. She tells Caravaggio that it no longer matters who Almásy is; "the war is over" (Ondaatje 122). However, she remains curious to know the truth about Almásy, and instead of seeking help from any outside sources, she chooses to ask the English patient directly. In her attempt to inquire Almásy about the truth, she says, "Caravaggio thinks he knows who you are... he says you are not English" (Ondaatje 125). Hana does not receive a swift response, but she avoids hastening it. For Hana, Almásy is her patient, and she does not allow Caravaggio to judge him based on his wartime identity and affiliations.

While living in the villa, even before the arrival of Caravaggio and Kip, Hana and Almásy try to know each other by asking questions. Almásy is burned beyond measure and has lost his memory; however, Hana still asks him questions like "Who are you?" (Ondaatje 8) and "How were you burned?" (Ondaatje 6). Almásy asks Hana about her age and keeps observing her activities in the room. Without even knowing about his past, Hana takes care of him, and to demonstrate this, Ondaatje writes, "She would read to him and bathe him and give him his doses of morphine. Her only communication was with him" (15). This shows that the present identity of the English patient as a burned patient who has survived the war but has lost his memory is enough for Hana to become sympathetic towards him. However, she continues her efforts to know this man. Apart from directly asking him questions about his past, Hana also reads the book Almásy brings with him. Almásy gets burned down in the war, but his book survives; "a copy of *The Histories* by Herodotus that he has added to, cutting and gluing in pages from other books or writing in his own observations, so they all are cradled within the text of Herodotus" (16). It is from this book that Hana comes to know that Almásy is a desert explorer who was in Gilf Kebir, a desert in the Southwest of Egypt, during the time of war. All these details only make Hana more sympathetic towards Almásy. In the beginning, Caravaggio wants Hana to leave the patient and live her life, but she refuses. For her, the English patient is like a "despairing saint" (Ondaatje 36), and she wants to save "this nameless, almost faceless man" (Ondaatje 41).

Hence, Hana's sympathies with the patient only grow with time and actively acquiring knowledge about him plays a significant role in it.

Not only Hana but Caravaggio, who had never been a family-centric man before the war, also exhibits a keen interest in knowing Almásy and Kip. In the beginning, he does not show serious concerns about the patient and does not like Kip either. However, after living in the partially ruined villa for some time, Caravaggio starts to care for both Kip and Almásy, along with Hana. Caravaggio claims to know Almásy from the time of war, but he still sits with him for hours and listens to his story. "There is more to discover, to divine out of this body on the bed", Caravaggio thinks to himself (Ondaatje 180). To learn his story from himself, Caravaggio travels with him to the past, and whenever they feel tired, Caravaggio loads morphine into both the body of himself and Almásy. Almásy tells him about his past, about a woman named Katherine, whom he fell in love with in a desert, and how she died. Caravaggio praises him for his smartness during the war and tells him how the English were spying on him. He tells Almásy that when you helped a German spy get into Cairo, "We watched you all the way. All through the desert. And because Intelligence had your name, knew you were involved" (Ondaatje 186). The conversation with Almásy reflects Caravaggio's keen interest in knowing his story and helping him know the missing parts. This develops a strong sympathetic bond between the two. Later on, when Hana inquires Caravaggio about whether Almásy was affiliated with Germans during the war or not in order to comprehend Caravaggio's sentiments about the patient, he avoids telling the truth and says, "He's fine. We can let him be" (194). Knowing Almásy's story himself only promotes reconciliation between two inhabitants of the villa who were affiliated with opposing parties during the war. Thus, staying in an abject space creates the possibility of reconciliation among people who are supposed to hate each other based on their socio-culturally constructed identities as rivals of war.

Instead of shaping their actions and perspectives towards each other in the light of social, cultural, or political narratives, the four characters living in the villa accept each other and indulge in activities that promote positivity and reconciliation. For instance, they arrange a party in the English patient's room when Caravaggio finds a gramophone. When they enter the room, Caravaggio tells Almásy, "Before you begin on your histories… I will present you with "My Romance" (Ondaatje 181). Caravaggio and Hana also dance while

Kip pours wine for the English patient, to which he replies, “This is my first drink in a year” (Ondaatje 181). This is indicative of the development of a strong bond among the characters. On Hana’s birthday, Kip arranges a dinner party at the terrace which Caravaggio also attends. Kip decorates the border of the terrace with dead shells which appear as ringed lights to Caravaggio. They eat corn, meat, and potatoes and make toasts to Kip, “the great forager”, and to the English patient” (Ondaatje 196). Moreover, while living in the villa, we find Hana and Kip falling in love with each other and Caravaggio wanting them to be married. He even “longed to force them verbally towards it” (Ondaatje 196). Marriage, being a foundation of familial structure, is normally anticipated during times of peace. However, reconciliation among the characters allows Caravaggio to contemplate Hana and Kip’s marriage amidst all the destruction and despair.

According to Eisikovits, the reason why sympathy endorses reconciliation among people in post-conflict society is that it helps them make sense of each other’s positions in conflicts and wars. Sympathy is driven by an imaginative power to visualize and understand the reasons behind the actions people take in conflicts and the worldviews they develop. Sympathy abolishes apathy, dehumanization, and moral blindness in people, which encourages them to restart the conflict instead of resolving the persistent issues (qtd in MacLachlan 181). The compassion and care residents of the partially destroyed Villa San Girolamo express is the outcome of their sympathy for each other. Caravaggio does not question Almásy for his affiliations with Germans during the war. Similarly, Kip and Caravaggio help Hana in taking care of Almásy instead of expressing animosity towards someone who supported perpetrators in war. They understand each other’s positions and try to reconcile. According to the theory of reconciliation after conflicts, it’s only sympathy that promotes reconciliation in the post-war period, and other attributes like forgiveness, recognition, or forgetfulness cannot replace sympathy here (qtd in MacLachlan 185). This further reinforces the assertions made by the present research that the inhabitants of the partially ruined villa in *The English Patient* (1992) reconcile because they prioritize building an understanding among themselves with sympathy over questioning each other to validate their wartime actions and affiliations so they could be forgiven.

4.4 Conclusion

Analysis of *The English Patient* (1992) following Belsey's methodology of textual analysis substantiates the argument that the partially destroyed villa called Villa San Girolamo depicted in the novel is an abject space. The villa exists in a liminal state between complete stability and complete ruination and offers an ambivalent space for the co-existence of victims and perpetrators of war and, hence, creates a possibility of reconciliation among them. Inhabitants of the villa engage in activities that are unusual to be carried out in a destroyed building, which has the danger of exploding at any moment because of the German mining during the war. However, despite realizing the dangers, they prefer to make the best out of their situation. They arrange parties where they dance, drink, and talk about romance. All this may sound strange in a building where every corner reminds the inhabitants of the war. But this same abject building brings them closer to each other and creates reasons to understand each other and reconcile. Four individuals from entirely different backgrounds with entirely different worldviews live in complete harmony with each other in the partially damaged villa and develop such a connection with each other that years later, they still think of each other and their stay at the villa. Their experiences at the villa change their personalities and introduce them to a side of them they never knew existed.

At times, Ondaatje gives subtle hints about the future of the characters to show that the connection between these four inhabitants of the villa transcends time as well as the boundaries of the villa. Years later, Caravaggio drives a taxi in Toronto, and one day, he holds the door of the taxi for an East Indian who reminds him of Kip", a sapper who used to call him uncle (Ondaatje 152). Kip goes back to India, and years after, when he is married and has 2 kids, he remembers his time at the villa with Hana, Caravaggio, and Almásy. Hana writes him letters for a year, which he does not respond to, but he thinks of her and feels the urge to "talk with her during a meal and return to that stage they were most intimate at in the tent or the English patient's room" (Ondaatje 221). Years after the war, Kip is serving as a doctor and even has a family; however, he still wishes to return to the time he was living with Hana in a destroyed villa surrounded by explosives. Hana was 20 when she lived at the villa, and at the age of 34, she still recalls the "lines of poems the Englishman

read out loud to her from his commonplace book" (Ondaatje 222). All this demonstrates the connection the four survivors of World War II developed with each other when encountered an abject space i.e., a partially ruined villa San Girolamo in Florence, Italy in the year 1945.

CHAPTER 5

ABJECT ARCHITECTURE AND RECONCILIATION IN BOHJALIAN'S *THE LIGHT IN THE RUINS* (2013)

This section analyzes Chris Bohjalian's *The Light in the Ruins* (2013) to investigate the transformations wartime violence causes in the identity and role of the architecture depicted in the novel. Moreover, the existence of partially ruined architecture in a liminal state and the role it plays in promoting reconciliation among its inhabitants despite their conflicting affiliations during the war is also explored. This section is further divided into three sub-sections:

5.1 Introduction of the Author.

5.2 Overview of the novel under analysis.

5.3 Analysis of the novel.

5.1 An Introduction of Chris Bohjalian, Author of *The Light in the Ruins* (2013)

Chris Bohjalian is a 61-year-old Armenian-American novelist who was born in New York in August 1962. His paternal grandparents were the survivors of the Armenian genocide. Bohjalian's first novel, *A Killing in the Real World*, was published in 1988, and to date, he has written more than twenty novels. His famous works include *Midwives* (1997), *The Guest Room* (2016), and *The Sandcastle Girls* (2012). Bohjalian has received multiple awards; the most recent one is the New England Book Award in 2022.

5.2 Brief Summary of *The Light in the Ruins* (2013) by Chris Bohjalian

The Light in the Ruins (2013) is a historical novel that also includes the conventions of mystery fiction. The novel is centered on the experiences of Rosatis during and after World War II. Rosatis are wealthy landowners in Florence, Italy, and are depicted as the victims enduring atrocities by Germans after Italy changed alliance in 1943 and joined the Allies in the war (as described in section 1.1 of the first chapter). At the time of war, they are a family of eight members, including Antonio Rosati, the head of the family, his wife

Beatrice Rosati, and their three children: Marco Rosati, Vittore Rosati, and Christina Rosati. Moreover, Marco's wife, Francesca Rosati, and their two kids are also part of the family and are living in Villa Chimera along with all the family members. During and before WWII, Rosatis were residing in an ancient villa called Villa Chimera located in the Italian hills.

The story moves between the experiences of Rosatis during and after the war and the perspectives of a killer targeting Rosatis a decade after the war in the year 1955. In the year 1943, Rosatis are living in Villa Chimera believing that their noble lineage will save them from the atrocities of war. Soon they get visited by Germans who first express interest in the ancient artifacts owned by the Rosatis and later on start to commandeer the villa and move Rosatis first to the children's room and then to the kitchen of the villa. Hence, Rosatis become prisoners in their own house. When the Allied Forces enter the city, Germans start mining and bombing the villa leaving it partially destroyed with missing walls and roofs. Rosatis provide shelter to the partisans, who are the resistance fighters against Germans inflicting violence on civilians. These partisans are not only fighting against the Germans exacting atrocities on Italians but also those Italians who support these Germans. Germans find out that Rosatis are sheltering their enemies in the villa, and they not only exterminate the partisans but also kill Antonio Rosati, the head of the Rosati family, and his son, Marco Rosati. Later on, Marco's kids also get killed in an explosion while playing in the villa.

In the year 1955, a decade after the war, a serial killer targets Rosatis and brutally murders Francesca and Beatrice, two women of the Rosati family. The killer is Enrico, who blames Rosatis for the death of his wife, brother, and other comrades at the hands of Germans as he believes that Rosatis first offered them shelter in the villa and then betrayed them by informing Germans about their presence. Enrico is one of the two Partisans who survive the violence perpetrated by Germans in Villa Chimera. He is seeking revenge for what happened to him and his comrades in Villa Chimera during the closing year of WWII. However, he is unaware of the fact that all this happened because of the gun Enrico leaves in the kitchen, which, when discovered by Germans, leads to the death of Partisans and also two members of the Rosati family.

Serafina Bettini, a detective who is allied with Partisans during WWII and, while she is also residing in the Villa at the time of the attack, survives the killings committed by Germans in Villa Chimera, leads the inquiry into the murders of Francesca and Beatrice. Serafina bears physical scars on her back because of the atrocities she suffered during World War II. Much later in the novel, Serafina realizes that she was hiding in Villa Chimera with her Comrades, including Enrico, when they were rescued by the military of the Allied forces, including the United Kingdom, the United States, China, and the Soviet Union, entered Italy. However, she sympathizes with Rosatis and does not blame them for what happened to Partisans in Villa Chimera.

Detective Serafina, along with her team, accompanies Rosatis to Monte Volta, the village where the partially ruined Villa Chimera is located, for the funeral of Francesca and Beatrice Rosati. In the Villa Chimera, Serafina catches Enrico who was chasing Rosatis to kill them. While she decisively engages Enrico in conversation about how he survived the war and why he waited for years to take his retaliation, Christina, the youngest surviving member of the Rosati family, shoots him from the back.

The Light in the Ruins (2013) is a work of fiction; however, it includes references to real-world happenings, such as World War II, and real-world buildings, such as Villa Chimera in Tuscany, Italy. The real Villa Chimera bears no resemblance to its fictional counterpart as today it is offering accommodation to tourists with a mountain view and a private pool (see Fig. 4).

Fig. 4. Photograph of Villa Chimera in Tuscany, Italy. Source: Chimera Tuscany Resort, www.chimeratuscanyresort.com.

5.3 Harmonizing Space: Analyzing Partially Ruined Architecture in Chris Bohjalian's *The Light in the Ruins* (2013)

In the light of the proposed theoretical framework, this section analyzes the second selected literary text i.e., Chris Bohjalian's *The Light in the Ruins* (2013) to substantiate the argument of this research. Following the structure of the thesis statement of the research, this analysis section is further divided into three sub-sections with each subsection focusing on validating one part of the argument by providing textual evidence.

5.3.1 Reconfiguration of the Architectural Identity and Performative Role in Response to Wartime Violence

Andrew Herscher's theory of warchitecture suggests that wartime destruction inscribes new meanings and symbols to the targeted architectural bodies and demolishes the pre-war identity and the role of architecture in society. According to Herscher, "violence against architecture, just like violence against the body, often involves the same forensic investigation" because this violence against any architecture redefines its constitution in the process "of destroying it" (41). Hence, the newly defined meanings and symbols for the targeted architecture substitute the ones already prevailing. Brigitte Piquard & Mark Swenarton, in their paper "Learning from Architecture and Conflict" (2011), discuss how wartime destruction changes the form as well as the function of targeted architecture. For instance, "schools are turned into prisons," religious buildings into medical centers, or "guesthouses," etc. (Piquard and Swenarton 2). Moreover, the nature of these new meanings and identities associated with the besieged architecture depends on the interests of the perpetrators of violence as well as the experience of the victims of violence.

According to Herscher, States involved in wars "attempt to define what "accounts as war and what accounts as 'peace', what counts as legitimate 'preventative war,' 'peacekeeping,' or 'self-defense,' and what counts as illegitimate, indiscriminate, or extreme violence" (42). Therefore, what looks like annihilation to one party might appear as self-defense to the other. However, whatever symbols war and destruction inflict on the destroyed architecture, it always results in the complete transformation of the associated

"values, meanings, and identities of architecture" (Herscher 41). Pre-war identity and the role of architecture cannot be recovered or re-claimed once destruction hits architecture. In light of these propositions, this chapter of the research explains the transformation caused by destructions during World War II in the identity and performative role of the partially ruined Villa Chimera depicted in *The Light in the Ruins* (2013) and the consequences of these transformations.

Villa Chimera is located in a small village called Monte Volta in Florence, Italy, and is inhabited by Rosatis, an Italian noble family, when World War II starts. Rosatis are in a delusion that their noble lineage and grand villa embellished with ancient art and material richness will protect them from the ravages of war. However, the villa is portrayed as an abandoned, half-stable, half-ruined place in the year 1955, a decade after the war ends. Even before the physical destruction of the villa begins during WWII, Germans who claim alliance with Italy in the early 1940s start visiting the villa. Colonel Decher, a German soldier, and Major Lorenzetti, an Italian soldier are the first ones to come to the villa to take Etruscan artifacts to move them to Germany for protection until the war ends. However, Cristina, the youngest Rosatis' daughter who receives the soldiers at the villa, understands that this claim to safeguard the artifacts is actually "a euphemism for theft" (Bohjalian 15). This first visit by the soldiers makes the villa susceptible to upcoming intrusions, mainly by the Germans.

The villa goes from a safe haven for Rosatis to a spoil of war for the Germans, indicating a transition in its identity and as well as its function. When the Allies invade Rome, Germans start commandeering the Villa Chimera. Officers inhabit the main house while almost "five or six dozen soldiers" live in "tents on the grounds," and the whole family is given a children's room where they are "squeezed like olives" (Bohjalian 76-77). This shows that war turns Rosatis' home into a German fortification post, and they are living like prisoners in their own house. Antonio Rosati, the head of the Rosati family, admits the same to his wife, Beatrice Rosati, saying that Germans "have made us prisoners in our home" (Bohjalian 174). Following Catherine Belsey's emphasis on textual language and the narrative style, the choice of words and the imagery used to describe the situation of the Rosatis in their own home reveals that war and violence have not only transformed

the identity of the villa but also of its inhabitants. Rosatis have gone from enjoying a life of privilege and luxury to experiencing torture and oppression in their very own house.

Germans leave the Villa when they realize that they are losing the war to the British. However, when the Allies enter the village of Monte Volta, Germans come back to the villa and start to destroy it while Rosatis are restrained in the kitchen of the villa. At this time, Rosatis are hiding partisans (freedom fighters against Germans and supporters of Germans) in the tombs because one of the girls among them is severely injured and cannot be taken outside to the hospital. However, when Germans come to know about the partisans hiding in the villa, they kill Antonio Rosati and his son Marco Rosati, and then the partisans too (Bohjalian 234-235). Hence, the place that first interests Germans as a spoil of war becomes a contested facility that they destroy with bombs and mines as soon as the Allied Forces arrive.

Moreover, a closer examination of the textual description of the consequences of war and violence for the inhabitants of the villas reveals that the new meanings violence attributes to the partially ruined Villa Chimera are not the same for everyone. For Germans, the partially ruined villa is a contested zone where Rosatis are hiding the partisans. For partisans, the Villa Chimera is initially a safe space where Rosatis offer them care and shelter. However, the same Villa becomes a treacherous sanctuary for the partisans after the Germans find out about their presence, which results in their execution. Similarly, for Rosatis, the meaning of Villa Chimera shifts from a safe beautiful home to a prison where they are tortured and killed. As Herscher proposes in his theory of warchitecture, the transformation in the identity, values, and meanings of the targeted architecture "is conditioned not only by these interpretations but also by the experience of destruction by its victims, witnesses, and audiences" (Herscher 42). This implies that the symbols and meanings violence ascribes to the targeted architecture vary among experiencers.

Violence inflicted on Villa Chimera during World War II only partially destroys it, and therefore, the villa exists in an in-between position amid the stable architecture and completely ruined one. Before the war, the villa is a stable, aesthetically pleasing building with the potential to protect its inhabitants. The pre-war state of the villa manifests only peace and vitality. During the war, the identity of Villa Chimera goes through multiple

transformations based on the meanings and symbols perpetrators, victims, and witnesses of the violence ascribe to it. However, the annihilation of the villa leaves it in an ambiguous state where it is neither safe to be inhabited nor entirely un-residential. In this ambiguous state, the villa signifies both life and death, peace and war, stability and destruction.

This liminality of the ruins is also explored by Karen Dalea and Gibson Burrellb in their article "Disturbing Structure: Reading the Ruins" (2011). According to the researchers, ruins should not be seen as "out of order" because despite being hit by destruction, they still play the role of connecting the spectators with the memories of war and induce in them hope for rebuilding a better future (Dalea and Burrellb 112). According to Dalea and Burrellb, ruins of "Roman Civilization" are still preserved to promote "ruin tourism" to depict the once illustrious heritage and history (119). However, ruins have been artificially created in Berlin, Hiroshima, and Coventry to preserve the memories of "aerial bombing in World War II" (Dalea and Burrellb 112). Hence, ruination is not the end point of architecture because ruins symbolize mobility and transformation. They exist in a liminal state where they challenge the prevailing orders and meanings and build a connection between both the past and the future.

In the text under analysis, this intermediary state of the war-destroyed architecture then facilitates reconciliation among victims and perpetrators by fostering a sympathetic connection between them. This existence of partially ruined architecture is an ambiguous liminal state, and its consequences are further discussed in the upcoming sections by invoking Kristeva's theory of abjection and liminality and Eisikovits' theory of reconciliation after conflicts.

5.3.2 War-Endorsed Liminality and the Partially Ruined Villa Chimera in Bohjalian's *The Light in the Ruins* (2013)

Partially ruined Villa Chimera existing in an ambiguous state between stable and completely ruined architecture challenges the socially and culturally constructed definition of an architectural body. The villa is not stable enough to be seen as a normal building; however, it is not a complete ruin either because people can still go inside and walk around it with relative safety. Thus, it exists in a liminal space where it dismantles the established definitions and disrupts the defined laws and boundaries. Julia Kristeva uses the term

'abject' to refer to such entities in her essay *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (1980). Abject, according to Kristeva, is something that is "ejected beyond the scope of the possible, the tolerable, the thinkable. It lies there, quite close, but it cannot be assimilated" (1). This suggests that abject is something that neither seems fully familiar nor something entirely unknown. The state of being cast off or rejected that the subject experiences after encountering the abject is defined by Kristeva as "abjection" (4). Villa Chimera unequivocally meets the established criteria for an abject entity as it oscillates between a state of familiarity and unfamiliarity for its inhabitants or owners and pushes its inhabitants into a state of abjection characterized by revulsion and discomfort. For Rosatis, Villa Chimera is no longer a safe home they had before the war but they also cannot deny its existence and the memories it carries. It is an abject space, and in terms of Kristeva, abject is not an "ob-ject facing me, which I name or imagine. Nor is it an ob-jest, an otherness ceaselessly fleeing in a systematic quest of desire (1). It exists in an ambiguous state where it oscillates between self and other, between familiarity and strangeness.

Villa Chimera is no longer an object of desire for its inhabitants but also not something, that can be presented as 'other' or entirely unknown. It is an abject space that has lost its original identity but does not cease to exist despite all the societal and cultural aversions. A decade after the war, in the year 1955, Cristina Rosati tells the detective Serafina about the Villa Chimera, and her description verifies the proposition that the partially destroyed villa is an abject building existing in an ambiguous space between actuality and elusiveness. Christina says, "my family used to have a villa there. Technically, we still do. …, it was a farm. Not huge: we had no tenant farmers. But we had an olive grove, a small vineyard. We had sheep and cattle and a couple of horses. We called it the Villa Chimera" (Bohjalian 23). Drawing on Belsey's attention to language in textual analysis, the employment of the past tense in Cristina's description of the villas gives the impression that it no longer exists when it actually does.

Serafina further questions about the villa and asks Christina if the villa is rubble, to which Christina replies: "Not all of it. But it's certainly not livable. Whole walls are gone. Big holes in the roof" (Bohjalian 24). Thus, the villa is present but on the threshold of nonexistence, where it challenges the proposed definitions for a stable habitable building and a complete ruin with no signs of stability and firmness, which are the inherent qualities

of a building. Abject exists in an ambiguous liminal state, which, according to Kristeva, is characterized by "meaninglessness" and is not recognizable as a "thing" or object (2). It is this negation of the established borders that makes the villa an abject space because, according to Kristeva, abjection is not caused by a lack of cleanliness, stability, or beauty "but what disturbs identity, system, order" (4). Hence, the defilement of established orders creates repulsion between the abject and the subject.

According to Kristeva, such an entity, which we define as abject, induces a sense of uncanniness in us and appears dispersed and loathsome (Kristeva 2). The partially ruined Villa Chimera, which is an abject space, invokes this sense of discomfort and unease in the characters who are somehow affiliated with the villa. However, they do not stop visiting or talking about the villa because, despite all the revulsions, an abject entity still appeals to its subjects "violently and painfully" (Kristeva 9). This implies that there exists a complex relationship between the abject and its subjects because, on one hand, subjects are being cast off and abjected after encountering the abject, while on the other hand, they remain riveted by the abject.

While describing the Villa Chimera to Detective Serafina, Christina mentions, "you can't live in the villa these days. Not that my family ever would. It would be too painful" (Bohjalian 23). This shows that memories associated with the villa, an abject space are too painful to be disregarded. However, this does not mean that Rosatis have entirely lost interest in the space and want to stay away from it forever. For Francesca and Beatrice's funeral, they go back to their village and Christina visits the villa too. While wandering "among the moldering ruins of her childhood home,… Christina recalls those "thousands of hours she had spent beside the swimming pool" (Bohjalian 240). Hence, Christina reconnects with both the happy as well as the painful memories the villa holds. This reflects the complexity of the relationship between the partially ruined villa and its inhabitants. The partially ruined abject villa also puts the people associated with it in a liminal position and exposes them to both death and life, hope and misery at the same time.

Christina mentions to Serafina that the villa is not rubble; however, "it needs more work than my mother and I can afford to put into it, or Vittore would be willing to put into it" (Bohjalian 24). This again implies that Rosatis are still interested in the villa and they

consider working on it, but they cannot afford it. Hence, all this validates that the Villa Chimera as an abject space neither falls under the definition of a safe and happy space nor does it appear as an abandoned, unwanted space with no symbolic significance and autonomy. It carries the painful memories of war as well as of hope for a better future. In the context of the real world, people's intentional choice to take an interest in ruins is demonstrated by Samara Levy in her memoir *Rebuilding the Ruins: Following God's Call to Serve Syria* (2019). Levy describes her experiences of traveling through the ruins of Syria in 2018-19 and expresses her astonishment to find people living in ruined cities such as Deir ez-Zor (Levy 131-133). According to her, all the roads and buildings of the cities were destroyed beyond measure, "yet people lived there" waiting for aid from their state and the world (Levy 134). Hence, there are examples of abject architectural spaces in the real world that people do not like or desire, but they have no choice but to accept them and bring life to them.

Moreover, the encounter with the abject is not the end point; rather it acts as a catalyst for creating more possibilities for subjects. According to Kristeva, an interaction with something "phobic", unsettling, loathsome, or uncanny allows the subject to grow both emotionally and "psychologically" (7). Coming across an abject produces a range of psychological responses and allows subjects to re-evaluate their emotions, fears, and psyche. Kristeva believes that this understanding of the hidden fears and human psyche after encountering the abject leads to the sublimation of the abject, which is the transformation of the negative, unsettling experiences with the abject into constructive and creative expressions (Kristeva 3-4). Kristeva avers that when subject (I) encounters an abject, it experiences complex emotions and is equally "sublime and devastated" (2). Hence, encountering an abject entity dismantles the socially and culturally established borders and definitions and invokes a sense of abjection characterized by both uncanniness and allure.

Moreover, the encounter also allows subjects to transform the negativity invoked by the abject into something socially acceptable. Partially ruined Villa Chimera in *The Light in the Ruins* (2013) invokes feelings of uncanniness and discomfort in the inhabitants, including Rosatis, Partisans, and Germans. However, this abject space allows some of them to understand each other outside of the constructed socio-cultural orders and definitions

that categorize them as victims and perpetrators of war. This understanding thus fosters the development of a sympathetic bond among them that leads to their reconciliation irrespective of their wartime choices and identities. The next section discusses this in detail.

5.3.3 Abject Architecture and the Reconciliation among Victims and Perpetrators in *The Light in the Ruins* (2013)

Wartime violence transforms the Villa Chimera into an abject space, evoking in subjects a sense of unease, horror, and enticement. Inhabitants trace the signs of both a safe home and a war prison in the partially ruined villa. The encounter with this abject space created as a result of destruction allows the characters to dive deep into the complexities of war and its impacts on the human psyche as well as people's decisions and actions during the war. According to Kristeva, interaction with an abject entity challenges the established boundaries and pushes the subjects to reevaluate themselves, the world they are living in, and the reasons that make them fearful of the abject (15). Subjects move free of the constructed boundaries of society and culture and reinterpret everything. Thus, abjection, a state of being cast off after meeting an abject, "is a resurrection that has gone through death (of the ego). It is an alchemy that transforms death drive into a start of life, of new significance" (Kristeva 15). Therefore, an encounter with the abject entity not only invokes repulsions but also creates a possibility for the subjects to transform the negativity surrounding this experience into creative and constructive outputs.

In *The Light in the Ruins* (2013), the experience of the characters in the partially ruined Villa Chimera allows them to face their fears and mortality and leads them to a psychological transformation. They break through the socio-cultural restraints and seek to understand each other as victims of war and not as adversaries. In the year 1944, after the Allies take over Italy, Germans start mining the places including the Villa Chimera. Rosatis are pushed into the kitchen of the villa which has been their home for years but is now converted into a prison for them and a disputed space for Germans. Partisans, the freedom fighters against Germans and their Italian supporters come to the villa for help and shelter, and Rosatis allow them to hide in the tombs (Bohjalian 208). Throughout the initial years of war, partisans categorized Rosatis as enemies because of their affiliation with Germans, and Rosatis resented partisans due to the constant threat they posed against Rosatis.

However, when partisans visit the partially ruined abject villa and observe the miserable condition of both the building and its inhabitants, and Rosatis witnesses the helplessness of partisans, they realize their shared vulnerability to the brutalities inflicted by Germans. It makes both parties realize that Germans who claimed to support Italy during the war are now destroying as many spaces and killing as many people as they can. These realizations as a result of encountering and inhabiting an abject architectural space make Rosatis and partisans sympathetic towards each other. Although the text under analysis would commonly be read as the depiction of the devastating impacts of World War II on people and places, a closer examination reveals hidden and deeper implications. It suggests a diverse interpretation that the text also shows how war and its violence against architecture can act as a catalyst for sympathy and reconciliation among people who were former enemies. This substantiates Belsey's claim that "a text is made up of multiple writings" and definite truth does not exist (201). An in-depth and closer interpretation of the textual details is needed to uncover the diversity and multiplicity of the text under analysis.

Nir Eisikovits suggests in his theory of reconciliation after conflicts that it is the sympathy towards each other that helps individuals "fight the moral blindness, apathy, and dehumanization endemic to group conflict" (qtd in MacLachlan 178). One of the girls among the Partisans is badly injured, and Rosatis, especially Beatrice Rosati, shows great concern for the girl. She sits on the tile before the girl and pats her "forehead gently with a rag of cold water" (Bohjalian 205). Germans take everything useful from the villa but Beatrice does not resist offering help to the partisans from the little that is left in the villa. She says to the partisans: "[M]y daughter-in-law might have a little face cream the Nazis didn't bother to steal, …, I might, too. And there might still be a little olive oil. But this girl needs a hospital, Enrico" (Bohjalian 207). Similarly, partisans also show care and affection for the Rosatis. They ask Beatrice about the blisters on her hands and try to appear friendly to Francesca's kids (Bohjalian 206-207). This shows that the encounter with an abject space makes Rosatis and partisans dismantle all the notions that conditioned them to see each other as opponents and allows them to develop a sympathetic connection with each other that leads to reconciliation between them.

Moreover, according to Eisikovits, for the reconciliation to happen, the parties involved must engage in obtaining "detailed knowledge" about each other which should be "actively acquired and not passively encountered" (qtd in MacLachlan 181). In the novel, we find partisans directly questioning the Rosatis of their choice to help Germans during the initial days of the war. Enrico, the leader of the group of partisans asks Antonio Rosati: "The villagers told me you were a very good friend to Captain Muller" a German, to which Antonio replies, "I had no choice. And the last few weeks? My family have been prisoners here" (Bohjalian 207). To make his position even clearer to Enrico, Antonio adds, "I was no Blackshirt," in response to which Enrico replies, "No. Of course not. No one was" (Bohjalian 207). By the phrase Blackshirt, Antonio is referring to the Puppet State/ National Fascist Party that the Germans supported and fueled in Italy. Hence, the partially ruined villa promotes reconciliation between partisans and Rosatis by forging a bond between them characterized by understanding, trust, and, above all, sympathy.

Reconciliation between the victims and the perpetrators manifests at a new level when Germans first start visiting the villa in 1943, and Christina Rosati falls in love with one of the German soldiers, Friedrich Strekker, who had lost his foot in war with Russia in Voronezh (Bohjalian 207). Both Christina and Friedrich share their painful memories and fears with each other, which fosters sympathy among them. Friedrich tells Christina about how much he misses his mother and how deeply he resents violence. He mentions to Christina that he does not want Italy to endure what Russia and Poland have, but he also admits that Germans are inclined towards violence, as his mother used to tell his father "that if there was a peaceful way to an end or a violent one, people, especially Germans, would always choose the violent route" (Bohjalian 86). Thus, acquiring knowledge about each other paves the way for Christina and Friedrich to know each other better. Moreover, Christina's parents, Antonio and Beatrice, also recognize Christina's love for the German soldier, and despite hating the Germans who have destroyed the villa, they admit that Friedrich is innocent. Beatrice even mentions to her husband Antonio that Friedrich is "not the reason the barbarians took over our home. He's not the reason the whole house smells like a stable" (Bohjalian 173). Hence, Beatrice and Antonio sympathize with the German soldier who is supposed to be perceived as a rival in the light of the socio-cultural

definitions and commands. Rosatis knows that just like them, Friedrich is also compelled by Germans to participate in the advancing war and violence.

According to Eisikovits, it's only the "imaginative effort of sympathy" that allows people to see the commonalities between them and the people they initially opposed and the only way of reconciling with the formal rival is to find what you both have in common (qtd in MacLachlan 181). As suggested by Eisikovits in his article "Forget Forgiveness: On the Benefits of Sympathy for Political Reconciliation" (2004), "to determine whether someone is acting appropriately, we imagine how we would have acted under similar circumstances" (7). Therefore, even when the war is going on, Rosatis connect and reconcile with the German soldier, Friedrich, based on their actively acquired knowledge that tells them that their participation in war is not out of their free will. Christina understands that Friedrich resents war and violence, and he does not want Italy to go through destruction. Similarly, Friedrich knows that Rosatis and the entire of Italy are suffering violence because of the Germans. In the year 1955, a decade after the war, when Christina visits the partially ruined Villa Chimera at her mother and sister-in-law's funeral, she misses Friedrich despite all the destructions and deaths that followed the German occupation of the villa during the war. While walking in the villa, Christina thinks of Lieutenant Friedrich, the color of his uniform, and his eyes. She wears the necklace Friedrich gifted her during the war and presses its stone "against the top of her sternum. Against her heart" (Bohjalian 240).

Similarly, Detective Serafina, who is leading the investigation for the murders of Beatrice Rosati and Francesca in the year 1955, was also affiliated with partisans during the war. Enrico and Serafina are the only two partisans who survived the executions by the Germans during the war. Enrico blames Rosatis for the death of his comrades because he believes Rosatis told Germans about the partisans hiding in the villa. However, Serafina reconciles with Rosatis by acquiring information about the exact happenings at the Villa Chimera in the year 1945 when she was hiding inside the villa with her comrades. Christina tells Serafina that it was Enrico's British "sniper rifle" (Bohjalian 207) that made Germans suspicious of Rosatis and led to the execution of her father, Antonio Rosati, and brother, Marco Rosati, along with partisans hiding in the villa. Enrico is unaware of the truth and is targeting Rosatis to take his revenge a decade after the war. When Serafina finally finds

Enrico in the partially ruined Villa Chimera, where he comes to kill Rosatis, she tells him that Rosatis "hadn't a choice" during the war (Bohjalian 259). Serafina sympathizes with Rosatis as she is aware of the pain they have endured during and after the war. Serafina, a surviving partisan herself, lets Christina Rosati "shoot Enrico Tarantola in the back." Although this may seem like an anomaly, Serafina allows this act of Christina Rosati towards her comrade Enrico as a cathartic revenge for his ruthless murder of her mother and sister-in-law (Bohjalian 255). Therefore, the whole discussion shows that the partially ruined villa Chimera as an abject space serves as a tool to promote reconciliation among the people who are defined as the victims and perpetrators of war by society and culture.

5.4 Conclusion

Analysis of Bohjalian's *The Light in the Ruins* (2013) in the light of the proposed theoretical framework for the study substantiates the argument that wartime violence changes the identity as well as the performative role of architecture. Once hit by the war, Villa Chimera transforms from a safe space inhabiting Rosatis to a partially ruined abject space existing in an ambiguous state and challenging the established definitions for stable and completely ruined architecture. However, subjects' encounter with this abject space allows them to reinterpret the predominant socio-cultural definitions and orders and allow them to transform their negative experience into something constructive. Hence, characters in the novel who are defined as the rivals of war find a way to sympathize and reconcile with each other once they experience the abjection caused by the wartime destruction of the Villa Chimera. Abjection leads them to question or dismantle the established social, cultural, and psychological borders and open a way to connect people, irrespective of their wartime choices as well as identities.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This chapter concludes the present research into the relationship between wartime violence and architectural destruction and the role partially ruined architecture plays during and after the war. The chapter highlights the findings of the present research and explains how the findings answer the posed research questions as well as align with the objectives of the study. Moreover, the chapter also discusses the contribution this current research makes to architectural and literary studies. Lastly, recommendations for future studies relevant to the selected area of this research are provided towards the end of this chapter.

The thesis statement postulated in the first chapter of the present study asserts that the partially ruined architecture depicted in the selected literary texts is an abject space existing in an ambiguous liminal state between stable architecture and completely ruined one and promotes reconciliation among its inhabitants irrespective of their conflicting roles during the war. The two literary texts selected to conduct the research and authenticate the proposed argument are Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient* (1992) and Chris Bohjalian's *The Light in the Ruins* (2013). The theoretical framework of the present research comprises three theories including Andrew Herscher's theory of warchitecture, Julia Kristeva's theory of abjection and liminality, and Nir Eisikovits' theory of reconciliation after conflicts. By analyzing the selected literary texts, research aimed at exploring the relationship between war and architecture, the impact of wartime violence on the identity and role of architecture, how the partially ruined architecture in the selected texts is an abject space, and in what way this abject space leads to reconciliation among victims and perpetrators of war.

6.1 Research Findings and Answers to the Research Questions

The first question of the present research asked how violence against architecture transforms the identity as well as the performative role of architecture. To address this question, I analyzed the shifts wartime destruction caused in the identity as well as the role of Villa San Girolamo and Villa Chimera depicted in *The English Patient* (1992) and *The*

Light in the Ruins (2013) respectively. Both the villas suffer violence during World War II and play multiple roles during and after the war.

Before World War II started, Villa San Girolamo in *The English Patient* (1992) was a nunnery (Ondaatje 41). During the war, Germans take over the villa, convert it into their fortification post, and start using it as a tool to perpetuate violence. However, when the Allies come to Florence, Italy where the villa is located, they force Germans to leave the villa and convert it into a war hospital (Ondaatje 9). Germans mine and bomb the building and leave it partially destroyed. This partially destroyed Villa San Girolamo becomes home to the four survivors of war, Hana, Caravaggio, Almásy, and Kip, and despite their conflicting roles during the war, prompts reconciliation among them. Thus, war and violence move Villa San Girolamo through four stages during the war, with each stage demonstrating a unique identity and role. It was first inhabited by nuns and was looked at as a harmless building of religious significance. War violently takes over the building and converts it into a German fortification with the new role of perpetuating violence and destruction in the city. However, the building becomes a place of healing after the Allies convert it into a war hospital. Despite being severely destroyed, the villa becomes a space of shelter and treatment for people who get injured in war. It attains the identity of a medical center. When the war ends and all the patients and medical staff leave Villa San Girolamo for a safe place, the villa becomes home to Hana and Almásy, who decide to stay. Later on, Caravaggio and Kip also join Hana and Almásy at the villa, and all four individuals with entirely different identities and histories start to live like a family in the partially ruined Villa San Girolamo. They take care of the building as their home and even arrange parties in it. Thus, we witness a constant shift in the identity and role of the Villa San Girolamo as a result of wartime violence and destruction.

Just like Villa San Girolamo, Villa Chimera in *The Light in the Ruins* (2013) also goes through multiple transformations in its perception, identity, and role during the war. Villa Chimera is located in a small village called Monte Volta in Florence, Italy, and is inhabited by Rosatis, an Italian noble family. Before the war, the villa, which is embellished with ancient art and material richness, is home to Rosatis and is also esteemed highly by the people of the village. However, once the war begins, German and Italian soldiers start visiting Rosatis to take Etruscan artifacts from the villa to move them to Germany. Hence,

the home of Rosatis becomes a war spoil for Germans and therefore, its safety gets jeopardized. Towards the end of the war when the Allies enter Italy, Germans start commandeering the villa and move the whole Rosati family into the kitchen where they are "squeezed like olives" (Bohjalian 76-77). At this point, the villa is a fortification post for Germans and a prison for Rosatis. Antonio Rosati, the head of the Rosati family even admits to his wife, Beatrice Rosati, that Germans "have made us prisoners in our home" (Bohjalian 174). Thus, both Rosatis and Germans inhabit Villa Chimera at the same time, but its perception varies between both parties. When the Allies come further closer and enter the village of Monte Volta, Germans move Rosatis to the Kitchen of the Villa and start to destroy the whole building. At this point, partisans, who are the freedom fighters against the Germans, are also hiding in the villa, and when Germans find this out, they kill Antonio Rosati and his son Marco Rosati along with partisans. Hence, for the Germans, the identity of the building moves from a spoil of war to a fortification post and, lastly, to an enemy space that must be demolished. For Rosatis, Villa Chimera, their home gets converted into a prison and then into a torture center where they get brutally killed. A decade after the war in the year 1955, the villa is portrayed as a partially ruined, abandoned building encapsulating the pleasant memories of the pre-war period juxtaposed with the excruciating memories of the pain and torture Rosatis suffered during the war. It is this semi-ruined space where the murderer, Enrico, targeting Rosatis, gets detained by detective Serafina and gets shot by Christina Rosati. Hence, the building not only connects the Rosatis with their past but also allows them to seek vengeance for the murders of Francesca and Beatrice. Therefore, war and violence cause multiple transitions in the identity as well as the function of the Villa Chimera in *The Light in the Ruins* (2013).

This description of the transformation in the identity and role of architecture caused by wartime violence and destruction answers the first research question I posed in the first chapter. Once war and destruction begin, identity and, hence, the role of the buildings depicted in both selected texts transform.

The second research question of this study asked how the partially ruined architecture acquires a liminal identity and offers an ambivalent space for the co-existence of victims and perpetrators. To answer this question, I analyzed the condition as well as the role of Villa San Girolamo and Villa Chimera after they were partially destroyed as a result

of wartime violence and destruction. Villa San Girolamo in *The English Patient* (1992) gets partially destroyed by the Germans when the Allies force them to leave the area towards the end of the war. Due to wartime violence and destruction, the partially ruined villa neither falls under the category of a standard building that is safe and stable to be inhabited nor does it conform to the definitions of complete ruin that is entirely destroyed and unusable. Thus, the villa exists in a provisional state between stable architecture and complete ruin and is still inhabited by the four survivors of war: Hana, Almásy, Caravaggio, and Kip. Characters realize the potential dangers of inhabiting the villa that has remained the German Defense post during the war and is yet to be cleared of the explosives. However, they cannot disregard the usefulness of this partially destroyed building, which not only offers them shelter but also acts as a therapeutic space, allowing its inhabitants to heal from the atrocities of war. In such a state, the Villa fulfills the criteria of what Kristeva defines as an 'abject' entity in her theory of abjection and liminality.

Abject is something that demarcates socio-cultural definitions and laws and exists in a place where "meaning collapses" (Kristeva 2). The subjects do not desire the abject as it induces feelings of horror and uncanniness, and the subject wants to expel it. However, the unavoidability of abject is a reality because of its places of "banishment"; abject never stops "challenging" as well as fascinating subjects (Kristeva 2). Therefore, the abject exists in an ambiguous liminal space between self and others and creates possibilities for subjects to turn the negativity surrounding the abject into something positive. Subjects, after encountering abject entities, are in a state of abjection where they want to expel the abject but at the same time find joy in it "violently and painfully" (Kristeva 10). They channel the negativity and discomfort surrounding abject entities channel the disturbing emotions surrounding them into something creative and, most importantly, socially acceptable.

Present research validates that Villa San Girolamo is an abject space existing in an intermediate state between complete stability and complete ruination. Characters inhabiting the villa are aware of its potential dangers; however, they also realize that this space gives them shelter as well as the freedom to live on their own terms. Thus, in this ambiguous liminal state, the villa induces both feelings of horror and hope, familiarity and uncanniness, and safety and susceptibility to danger. However, in this abject space existing in a liminal state, we find four characters with conflicting identities and wartime affiliations

living in complete harmony with each other. Unlike Hana, Caravaggio, and Kip, who serve the British in the war, Almásy serves the Germans. However, this information about Almásy does not engender any hatred towards him in the hearts of the other three inhabitants. All four characters, Hana, Almásy, Caravaggio, and Kip, despite their identities as the victims and perpetrators of war, co-exist in the partially ruined villa in complete harmony with each other.

Similarly, Villa Chimera in *The Light in the Ruins* (2013) also exists in a liminal state and allows some of the victims and perpetrators of war to co-exist by developing a bond characterized by care and sympathy. The Villa gets partially destroyed as a result of shelling and bombing by the Germans towards the end of World War II. Rosatis, who were in a delusion that their lineage grand villa would protect them from the atrocities of war, become prisoners in their own house. When Germans commandeer the villa and start destroying it with bombs, Rosatis are imprisoned in the kitchen of their own house. At this point, they are also hiding the partisans in the villa. Partisans are freedom fighters against Germans and Italian supporters of Germans. Throughout the war, partisans and Rosatis treated each other as enemies because, for partisans, Rosatis were the traitors supporting perpetrators while, before this, the Rosatis had hated the partisans for posing a constant threat against them without knowing the truth about Rosatis' affiliation with Germans.

However, when Partisans enter the partially ruined abject Villa Chimera, their preconceived perceptions of Rosatis as traitors get dismantled. Similarly, Rosatis also sympathizes with the partisans when they see them injured and helpless. Therefore, their shared susceptibility to violence allows them to stay at the villa without showing any signs of hatred or dislike towards each other. For Rosatis, the villa is no longer a haven they lived in for years before the war; however, partisans come to the villa to seek help and shelter. Villa Chimera, under the occupation of Germans, does not appear as an object of desire for Rosatis and partisans; however, its existence, as well as the memories associated with it, cannot be denied. Villa is an 'abject' space, which, in terms of Kristevan theory, it is not an ob-ject facing me, which I name or imagine. Nor is it an ob-jest, an otherness ceaselessly fleeing in a systematic quest of desire (1). Villa exists in a liminal state where it appears both familiar and uncanny. It still carries the signs of pre-war life, peace, and freedom; however, the current state of the villa invokes feelings of discomfort, fear, and uncanniness

in the inhabitants. They no longer have ownership of the villa but they also do not leave it because they are the true owners of their house. This abject state of the villa induces repulsions but at the same time, subjects (which in the present case are Rosatis) get attracted to it. It exists in an ambiguous state where it dismantles the animosity prevalent between Rosatis and partisans and offers an ambivalent space for their co-existence under the same roof.

The third research question of this study asked how the partially ruined architecture promotes reconciliation among the victims and perpetrators. To answer this question, I conducted a comprehensive analysis of the relationships that the inhabitants of Villa San Girolamo and Villa Chimera develop while living together. In the Villa San Girolamo depicted in *The English Patient* (1992), the four characters from entirely different backgrounds are living together towards the end of World War II. Apart from Hana and Caravaggio, they have never met each other before or during the war; however, they all live like a family in the partially destroyed Villa San Girolamo. They have developed a strong bond characterized by sympathy and care, and according to Nir Eisikovits' theory of reconciliation after conflicts, this sympathetic connection that promotes reconciliation can only be forged if people know and understand each other. The four characters living in the villa communicate and show a keen interest in knowing each other's stories. However, they do not rely on any external sources to gather information about each other and do not show resentment over anything that appears contradictory. For instance, Hana assumes Almásy, the burnt patient, to be an English man and takes good care of him. However, when Caravaggio tells Hana that Almásy is not English but a Hungarian who served Germans in war, she does not get enraged, rather tells Caravaggio that this no longer matters, "the war is over" (Ondaatje 122).

Even Caravaggio does not harbor any hatred or animosity towards Almásy; rather, he sits with him for hours to learn his story and help him understand his complete story because Caravaggio knew Almásy from the time of war. Caravaggio has never been a family man; however, he treats everyone in the villa with great care and kindness, even Almásy, who might have been affiliated with the Germans during the war. Similarly, Kip, the Indian sapper who comes to the villa to clear it of any explosives, falls in love with Hana while staying at the villa, and Caravaggio wants them to get married. Kip tells them

about his family in India and his experiences during the war. He develops a good connection with Almásy, too, and sits with him for hours to talk about war. Hence, living in a partially ruined abject villa allows the characters to look beyond the limits of socially and culturally constructed boundaries that categorize some of them as victims and some as perpetrators and allow them to perceive each other as the survivors of war, and that is what they do. They arrange makeshift parties, celebrate Hana's 21st birthday, dance, drink, and talk for hours. The sympathetic bond they have developed with each other based on each other's stories promotes reconciliation among them.

Just like Villa San Girolamo, Villa Chimera in *The Light in the Ruins* (2013) is also an abject space that fosters sympathy and reconciliation among its inhabitants despite their identities as the victims and perpetrators of war. When Germans start visiting the villa to steal the artifacts, Christina Rosati, the youngest Rosatis' daughter, falls in love with one of the German soldiers, Friedrich Strekker. According to the societal orders and definitions, Friedrich is a perpetrator and must be resented by the victims. However, they both share their painful memories, fears, and hatred towards violence. Friedrich tells Christina about his family, how he lost his foot in war with Russia in Voronezh, and how much his mother hated violence. He also accepts the truth that Germans are causing all the violence in Italy. This information about Friedrich fosters trust in him and leads to the mitigation of the Rosatis' skepticism towards him. Christina's parents, Antonio and Beatrice Rosati, also realize that Friedrich is forced to participate in war, just like Rosatis. They admit to each other that Friedrich is "not the reason the barbarians took over our home. He's not the reason the whole house smells like a stable" (Bohjalian 173). Therefore, the shared vulnerability to pain while living in the partially ruined Villa Chimera allows Friedrich, as well as Rosatis, to transcend the socio-cultural orders that categorize Friedrich as a perpetrator because of his German identity and Rosatis as victims. Similarly, partisans who are the freedom fighters against Germans and supporters of Germans have always considered Rosatis the enemies because they seemed affiliated with Germans. However, when they come to Villa Chimera to get help and shelter because one of their comrades is severely injured, they see the partially ruined state of the villa and Rosatis being imprisoned in their own house. Similarly, Rosatis also witness the helplessness of partisans and show

kindness and care towards them. Hence, the shared defenselessness towards the Germans fosters sympathy between Rosatis and partisans and promotes reconciliation.

The whole discussion supports and validates the thesis statement of the current research that partially ruined architecture depicted in the selected texts is an abject entity existing in a liminal space between stable and completely ruined architecture. This abject architecture fosters reconciliation among the inhabitants despite their conflicting identities as victims and perpetrators of war by offering an ambivalent space for their co-existence. Current research builds a link between architectural and literary studies by investigating the relationship between war and architecture and the role of the partially ruined architecture depicted in

Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient* (1992) and Chris Bohjalian's *The Light in the Ruins* (2013). Architecture has mainly been studied as a victim and perpetrator in war, however, present research extends the debate by investigating the role of partially ruined architecture in promoting reconciliation among its inhabitants categorized as the victims and perpetrators of war. While Herscher proposes that even destroyed architecture possesses autonomy and significance, similar to architecture-as-construction, current research builds upon this idea and explores the role of partially ruined architecture during and after the war.

6.2 Recommendations for Future Research

The current study has explored the various intricacies of the relationship between war and architecture, and the role of semi-ruined architecture during and after the war in the context of selected literary texts. While conducting the research for this study, a number of concepts relevant to the selected area of research emerged in my mind that merit academic exploration and can be considered for prospective studies.

Both *The English Patient* (1992) and *The Light in the Ruins* (2013) fall under the genre of historical fiction and revolve around the period of the Second World War and its aftermath. A comparative analysis of the depiction of wartime violence and its impact on people as well as architecture can be undertaken for research. Ondaatje in *The English Patient* (1992) provides intricate details of the characters, their stories, and the space they

inhabit, which invokes a deep emotional resonance. However, the lack of details in Bohjalian's *The Light in the Ruins* (2013) and the fast-paced story leads to a distant reader experience. Therefore, a comparative study can also be conducted to explore the influence of writing style in shaping as well as reinforcing the thematic elements of the novels.

Just like the architecture depicted in the novels, characters also exist in a liminal state between their pre-war and post-war identities. The present research has studied that they are also in a state of transformation from one identity to another. However, an extensive study can be carried out by combining Julia Kristeva's theory of abjection and liminality with a psychoanalytical theory in these or similar texts.

Herscher's warchitectural theory and Kristeva's theory of abjection and liminality can also be employed to investigate the depiction of war-ruined architecture in memoirs to get a closer understanding of the situation of people surviving in ruins in the real world. Moreover, a comparative analysis of the depiction of war-ruined architecture and its inhabitants depicted in fictional texts as well as in memoirs can be conducted to explore the difference in the expression of pain and suffering in both genres.

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