

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
University of Mostaganem
Faculty of Foreign Languages Department of English



**Scriptotherapy as a Healing Agency of Trauma in
Contemporary Female Narratives**

A Thesis Submitted in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Doctorate Degree in English

Literature

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Academic Year 2022/2023

Dedication

Foremost I affectionately dedicate this work to,

A man whose touch is tender, whose love is unconditional, whose words are wisdom and whose laughter is warm; warm enough to subside the scolding feeling you develop due to the frailties of life..A man whose love is incomparable; a man called awesome Dad.

And to a woman who sustained me over the course of life: A woman whose kindness is immeasurable, whose sacrifices are massively limitless, and whose virtues are countless; a woman who wrestled life teaching me steadiness and strength through softness.Strength through perseverance, strength through faith and piety; a woman who mothered me and mothered my daughters alike; a woman called Great MOM.

To both of you, I will always be grateful and I can't thank you enough for making me who I am today.

To the most stunningly beautiful gifts that Allah sent me from heaven, after I had to sail through the valley of demise giving way to partial death to invade my body just to bounce, then, in the elated merriment of beholding paradise' prettiest angels; my lovely daughters Ikhlas and Alaa.

To my life companion and the one who has endorsed my intellectual journey, early in its cradle, regardless to its emotional or material costs and very far destinations. To the one who has restored my self-confidence when doubt of having this thesis accomplished crept in. To my beloved husband Kheirieddine,

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I am deeply grateful to Allah the Almighty, the Most Gracious, and the Most Merciful for endowing me with the needed strength and patience to have this work completed.

It is also essential, in this section, to express my heartfelt thanks and gratefulness to a number of people, institutions and libraries that have vividly contributed to my PhD journey. Primarily, the most sincerely exalted forms of reverence and gratitude go to my supervisor Pr.Djafri Yasmina. Her priceless advice, constant support, thoughtful orientation and relentless patience, throughout my PhD project, are dearly appreciated and forever remembered. Thank you for your intellectual generosity, for you have always shared your deep knowledge and overflowing experience throughout the guidance of my academic research.

My sincere gratitude also goes to board of examiners who have devoted time, knowledge and energy in the realization of this project. Special thanks go to the committee members for taking time to proofread, evaluate and analyze my project.

I would also like to extend my thanks to Pr.Bárbara Arizti, a senior lecturer in English Literature at the Department of English and German Philology of the university of Zaragoza, Spain and a member of the research team ‘Contemporary Narrative in English’, for enlightening me with her plentiful knowledge and thoughtful instructions. I met her when I was still disorientated not knowing what literary theory adequately fits the requirements of this research. As I exposed her with my research queries, she urged me to read Henke’s book on scriptotherapy. Thence, my real journey in this research started and I had to dismiss my chapters on psychology trauma to start research on literary trauma from scratch.

I have to attest that despite the very far distance, it has been a magnificent experience to work between research teams, universities and libraries across different towns and departments; namely Mascara, Mostaganem and Eldjelfa. I am also indebted to a number of libraries that have hosted my PhD journey to complete my research when home offered no more serenity. I am indebted to

the principle public library of Mascara and the cultural house library Abi Ras Elnasiri for offering me a green outdoor of concentration to start working on my research. Similarly, I am deeply indebted to the cultural Islamic centre library in El Djelfa downtown that became my true solace after I moved to the town. I am thankful to its amazing welcoming team who always meet readers, academics and researchers with their cheerful smiles and encouraging support; special thanks to Hoyam and Allia.

An immense thank you goes to my library companions with whom I spent the most marvelous quality time in the midst of books and culture. Despite our differing cultural and social belongings, we all shared an abiding love to knowledge and scientific research. A special thankfulness goes to the diligent writer Radjaa, the zealous teacher Affaf and the ambitious student Siham. Thank you for your support, help and input. Your friendship and inclusivity have added colors to my intellectual and personal life. I was truly blessed to have you, for you were the rainbow to my clouds.

Abstract

Unyielding statistical implications of modern sociology reveal that, murder, rape, war, incest, child abuse, mauling, electronic crimes, domestic violence, females' battering and other atrocious offenses are the most horrific events that the postmodern age is hosting. These disturbing events are prone to lead to trauma. Trauma studies, at first, appeared in the field of psychology and then penetrated the field of literature. Deeply concerned with revealing an authentic representation of the terrific traumas that befell on the post modern age, contemporary authors, especially female authors, managed to create the genre of postmodern trauma fiction through testimonial life narratives. Thus, the main research problematic of this thesis is to analyze the way female traumas are represented in three selected contemporary female writers' narratives and investigate the means by which they survived these traumas. Ultimately, the main qualitative research method that is used, and which is premised on a métissage approach, is scriptotherapy. Blending different literary genres and techniques together, scriptotherapy is the eclectic theoretical foundation of this research. The major objective of this research is to analyze the process of recovery from multiple female traumas through practically investigating the deployment of scriptotherapy's techniques on the selected narratives. The study aims to show that scriptotherapy proves to be therapeutic making self acceptance, personal growth and social visibility possible. The findings of this study point out that the highest rate of using techniques of scriptotherapy are to be found in Susan Abulhawa's *The Blue between Sky and Water* (2015). Medium rate of using other techniques of scriptotherapy are found in the second novel: *Push* by Sapphire (1999). The last results on the usage of scriptotherapy techniques reveal that the lowest degree of using scriptotherapy is maintained in Shafak's *Black Milk* (2007). These consequences are followed by potential interpretations that justified these differing rates. Our achieved findings are also condensed with an open discussion about other possible interpretations of the significance and symbolism of protagonists' names, places and narratives titles and the way they contribute to the major healing process of the female protagonists. The closure of this thesis provides the readers with some recommendations for future research.

Key words: trauma-scriptotherapy-contemporary female narratives-healing.

List of Acronyms

PTSD	29
DSM	53

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General Introduction

When we glance back at the early beginnings of literary studies, we notice that it was the unrivalled age of innocence and glamour, as it was teeming with happy ending tales and predictable plots. Back then, Narratives' storyline were most of the time in blossom endowed with high forms of poetics and rhetoric. Literary texts were so munificent granting literature aesthetically rosy-colored themes during different periods of time. However, literary theory and criticism has changed drastically leading the aforementioned appraisal to its downfall. The glamorous happy ending tales of literature started to dissipate and, thereupon, dwindle away. It was time for literature to teach us the bitter lessons of life. After the outbreak of the First World War, the Victorian optimism with its ingrained conventional morality was no longer valid in a so much changed urban, capitalist and industrial world. The vigorous advancement in sciences and technology also prompted a sense of alienation that is incompatible with the instilled ethics, theology and values inherited in the previous literature.

Though fundamentally premised on a rational ideology and individualistic approach, modernist literature generates an unredeemed state of loss, anxiety and exile. Regarding this, A G. George contends: "anxiety is the central experience of modern consciousness Anxiety is the result not only of social crisis but also the crisis in the theoretical approach to life, confusion in intellectual matters and the absence of a sustaining faith"(15).The swift shift in the social construction of the modern age led advances in human sciences, notably psychology leading the foreground to Freudian theory. The seemingly bright gleam of modernism with its project of Enlightenment reached its nadir with the resurrection of the postmodern age. Emerging after the dire psychological and physical aftermaths of the Second World War, Postmodernism appeared discarding the sense of logic and individualism that the modernist literature held. As a rule of thumb, Postmodernism was critical of most of the forms that were sustained by the capital and liberal frameworks of the modern technological and scientific society. It had a set of replacements:

Instead of natural reality—anti-realism. Instead of experience and reason—linguistic social subjectivism. Instead of individual identity and autonomy—various race, sex, and class groupisms. Instead of human interests as fundamentally harmonious and tending toward mutually-beneficial interaction—conflict and oppression. Instead of valuing individualism in values, markets, and politics—calls for communalism, solidarity, and egalitarian restraints. Instead of prizing the achievements of science and technology—suspicion tending toward outright hostility (Foucault 175).

Endorsing the same idea, John Gray presumes that: “We live today amid the dim ruins of the Enlightenment project, which was the ruling project of the modern period” (145) In *Explaining Modernism*, Stephen Hick reports that postmodernist thinkers are prone to doubt the modern notions of equality, fairness, peace and development. In the postmodern rubric, those notions are always put between quotation marks. In fact, the postmodern age is based on an inconsistent relationship which makes, “Our most strident voices tell us that Truth is a myth. Reason is a white male Eurocentric construct. Equality is a mask for oppressions. Peace and Progress are met with cynical and weary reminders of power—or explicit ad hominem attacks (Hicks16). According to postmodernists, objective truth is but a fallacy since there is no absolute truth and no linear way of thinking. The absolute truth is substituted for relative and a skeptical truth. Dull and inconsequential, the standards of civil justice are just a subtle means to conceal hypocrisy and oppression brought through an imbalance in powers and instilled by cynical power manipulations. Disparity of thought is confronted by the use of coercion and animosity. More pertinently, exhaustion, nihilism, and cynicism became the pillar of thought in the postmodern age as advanced by major thinkers like Martin Heidegger, Michael Foucault, Jacke Derrida, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Friedrich Nietzsche, Karl Marx, Jean Francois Lyotard and Jean Baudrillard. On parallel thought, the German philosopher Nietzsche ascribes the term ‘nihilism’ to be the threshold of the postmodern age claiming the presence of multiple realities and the absence of an absolute truth. It is an attack on rationality, whether in art, philosophy or in science. To elucidate a sense of

deep uncertainty, Nietzsche brought forth the motto “the death of God”.(qtd. in Lyon 11). The slogan is adopted to confirm the burgeoning doubt and skeptical reality. Thus, since reality is unable to depict the truth, the truth is portrayed in fiction.

We are currently witnessing daily shocking events that leave us frightened, aghast, flabbergasted and horrified. The relentless statistical significance of modern sociology shows that assassination, rape, murder, war, torture, incest, child abuse, mauling, electronic crimes, domestic violence, females’ battering and other heinous crimes are the thorny subjects of the new millennium in social media, newspapers and television. These unsettling experiences tend to leave their vulnerable victims traumatized in inevitably devastating and intimidating situations. Intersecting with nihilism, cynicism and relativism, trauma emerges in the midst of the postmodern fiction straddling the world of psychology and literature alike. Additionally, postmodern literary trauma signifies a sub-field of postmodernism that is, as stated by Larrissy’s, less “lucid” and more “skeptical” (8). Postmodern authors start to probe traumatic experiences of the new age in the most heavily authentic and persistently self-reflective ways through testimonial narratives by opening a new horizon for psychoanalysis, psychology, sociology and, even medicine to meet one another from scratch at the gateway of trauma. Anne Whitehead explains that the new growing fiction can be called postmodern trauma fiction which, “emerges out of postmodernist fiction and shares its tendency to bring conventional narrative techniques to their limit” (82).

Postmodern traumatic self-reflective fiction keeps a kernel of truth maintaining assurance with the real and hence, it eventually, “cannot free itself from the claims of mimesis” as Michael Rothberg assumes (140). On parallel lines, he explains that, “[t]he abyss at the heart of trauma entails not only the exile of the real but also its existence” (140). We argue that the selected postmodern trauma narratives, in this study, are not part of what is dubbed “grand narratives” as put in the terms of Jean Fracois Lyotard, but rather minor narratives pertaining to world literatures (qtd in Hutcheon55).

The geographical diversity of our corpus is based on the premise that trauma has no one unique nation, but it is rather international linking humanity alike regardless of its race, gender, religion, belonging, etc. Sounding the voices of subdued, enlightening the images of the subsidiary overshadowed, giving voice to the voiceless, postmodern trauma narratives attempt to “call attention to wounds that have been hidden under the grand narratives of history and to pain and suffering that has been ignored (Hutcheon 11).

The founding theorists who were the innovators of trauma studies in literature and the humanities since the mid 1990s are Cathy Caruth, Shoshana Felman, Geoffrey Hartman, and Dominick LaCapra. However, contemporary trauma theorists extend their studies connecting their work to the previous scholars’ works. Among the contemporary theorists of trauma narratives, we may mention Michael Rothberg’ and his major works *Traumatic Realism* (2000) and *Multidirectional Memory* (2009). The latter mainly focuses on memory and Holocaust studies.

The very beginnings of trauma studies had a profound intersection with postcolonial studies denoting the aftermaths of the Holocaust, yet it soon started to probe family trauma as an imperatively urgent problematic. Multiple individual traumas; like incest, rape and aggression are among the most influential themes tackled in postmodern fiction. In this regards, in his book *Sigmund Freud and Trauma Theory*, Nasrullah Mambrol asserts that trauma theory originates in the 1960S from numerous angles of social alarm, namely “recognition of the prevalence of violence against women and children, rape, battering, incest, scars inflicted by torture and genocide especially in regard to the holocaust”(9).

A concurrent trauma’s term that penetrates postmodern trauma narrative is the Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The latter is also a diagnosed symptom in psychiatry. The term is debatable in trauma narratives revealing a disorder articulated not only in its “practices, technologies, and narratives” by which it is studied (Young 5), but it is mainly also maintained by the enunciation of its syndromes. Iro Fillipaki comments that PTSD’s symptoms involve “disruptions—flashbacks, numbness, displacement, nightmares—of our linear perception of time,

space, and experience” (7). He argues further that PTSD ignites a double exposure because it interrelates “individual symptoms” with “collective social and political circumstances” (8). At this stance, contemporary trauma narratives are, dauntingly, demanding for their double burden exposure. Clarifying this argument, Iro Fillipaki reassures that “the intrusiveness of past memories, the fusion of a specific time and place, and the overall disorientation are readings invited by double exposure and by the diagnostic criteria of PTSD” (8). In clearer words, post traumatic stress disorder symptoms’ link individual aftermaths of trauma to socio-political and cultural factors causing their occurrence.

On parallel lines, contemporary women movements and feminists alike contribute substantially to the field of trauma studies by highlighting traumatic issues that particularly distress women and children, for instance “physical and sexual abuse, female sexual slavery, genital mutilation, the practices of suttee, bride burning and honor killing” (Farrel 13). Contemporary female narratives provide an ever-increasing public awareness of “the reality of violence against children and women” and to what extent this violence is prevalent (Farrell 15). With the increase of these socio-cultural aspects, a significant amount of narratives start to emerge echoing the voices of contemporary female authors who tackle traumas of children, gender-related traumas and their poignant imprints on macro levels. For example, in *I Never Told Anyone* by Elen Bass and Louise Thornton (1983), the writer includes a collection of numerous female children sexual abuse testimonials originating from a broader source material that comprise a book excerpts, poems and essays written about the abuse experienced by this category of females. This nihilistic vision of childhood as a time of agony and pain instead of a peaceful placidity makes childhood period a hosting home of trauma and, thus, casts childhood phase into the hell of post traumatic stress disorder. Nonetheless, it culminates to dire psychological disruptions. Christa Shonfelde claims that Terezza Azzopardi’s *The Hiding place* (2000) is another pertinent example of childhood traumas. In this narrative, the protagonist-narrator Dolores is physically harmed in a fire when still a baby. Following this incident, Dolores’s early youth is conquered by corporeal

and emotional brutality “and stigmatization” (9). A hysterically superstitious person, Dolores’ father considers his daughter’s “disfigured hand as the devil’s imprint” (9), whilst her siblings look upon her as a “despicable cripple.”(9) Azzopardi’s literary work projects the asymmetrical power of female childhood trauma and its complexities. Yet, the text also details the urgent need to fathom the context of this familial trauma, figure out its meaning and therein, investigate pointedly the recovery that the female protagonist can make through this trauma. Such texts reveal female children relationships’ with their parents, care takers or close relatives and the damage that is provoked by these traumatic experiences and appalling family ties. Similar traumas can be related to what is called family trauma. Family trauma can metaphorically be seen as a toxic relationship that is disclosed by aggression, maltreatment, brutality, physical and emotional violence and incest. Those experiences are followed by disconnection, defeat, and demise, or any poignantly decaying end. In an endeavour to define the term family trauma, Christa Shonfelder states;

I use the term family trauma, first of all, to denote individual traumatic experiences that happen within the context of the family. At the same time, the term is also meant to express how the whole family may be affected by an individual’s trauma and how, in particular, interpersonal trauma within a family tends to shatter the group’s sense of safety and stability as well as damage the bonds of the familial community (19).

Though considered stressful installment causing psychological wounds, trauma is a scope of post/modernity, but its importance, as often has been noted, does not lie on it being a trendy, fashionable or innovative psychological phenomenon to emerge in the field of literary studies, rather its significance is to focus on the healing power of the trauma narrative. Worded differently, the very essence of trauma does not only lie on the experimental sensation of how it is articulated on our body and mind, but pretty well in the survival power it embodies. In this connection, Peter Levin assumes that, “trauma is not a disease, but rather a human experience rooted in its survival instincts” (34). This relationship between trauma and survival is pervasively debatable as it,

“bridges the mental and the physical; the individual and the collective and whose use in many diverse disciplinary fields, consequently, provokes perplexed continuous debate” (Radstore17). In *Unclaimed Narrative*, Cathy Caruth expresses candidly the causation of trauma and alludes to the importance of survival stating:

trauma is an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the events occurs in the after delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucination and other intrusive phenomena. Yet, trauma is not simply an effect of destruction, but also fundamentally an enigma of survival (24).

We claim, here, that it is only through identifying this paradoxical correlation between trauma and survival that we can distinguish the bequest of traumatic puzzlement at the heart of disastrous practices. James Pennebaker induces that the process of documenting throbbing occurrences especially in written forms can itself prove therapeutic. Meanwhile, “Once people can distil complex experiences into more understandable packages, they can move beyond trauma” (193). Through writing about the traumatic memories, as Jeniffer Freyd explains, “an individual can spontaneously create an episodic interpretation and integration of previously disjoint sensory and affective memories” (170).

Post trauma feminine narratives are most of the time testimonial relating the narrative to the private life of the individual. Being a biography, autobiography or memoir, a life testimony narrative as acclaimed by Shoshana Felman is not merely “a testimony to a private life, but a point of conflation between text and life; a textual testimony which can penetrate us like an actual life” (14). As an illustration, autobiography can replicate the panorama of psychoanalysis which is seen as a “life-writing which might provide a therapeutic alternative for victims of severe anxiety” (Felman 6).

In an attempt to correspond writing to the testimonial narrative within the framework of posttraumatic discourse, contemporary female authors aim to show the healing power of the written

word in promoting resilience, power and transformation from invisibility to visibility and consequently from vulnerability to invulnerability, “social purity and temperance campaigns of the late 19th century, for instance, hoped to encourage male continence and end male brutality towards women” for the dire traumatic results it construes”(Satter 451). Scholars like Alisson Light declare that, “literary biography has become the most successful literary form among the British readership since the 1960s” (175). In addition to that, Roger Luckhurst asserts that, “a memoir boom has invaded the literary panorama since the 1990s” (117). In addition, Leigh Gilmore considers that, “memoir has become the genre in the skittish period around the turn of the millennium” (1). On the same light, Silvia Pellicer contends that during the 1990s, literary memoirs were the main trendy production which became the bridges between creative writing and reality. Indeed, they have pervaded the actual life writing genres as stated by Alison Light (176).

The very notion of healing through writing in contemporary female narratives is embodied in the term scriptotherapy, which can be considered as the theoretical foundation of this research. The notion of scriptotherapy can be related to Roland Barthes famous essay ‘*The Death of the Author*’ (1977) where he insured that the self is the outcome of writing rather than its reason and hence the self can be always remade and recreated through writing. Scriptotherapy has largely taken place in the last decade through the life writing of many authors whose literary contributions have taken different forms; autobiography, literary biography, auto fiction, memoir, etc. Interestingly, trauma calls for the representation and description of the indescribable and, hence, functions in opposition to any consistent narration or description of the self. This concern initiates a new life writing genre that was born out of the relationship between trauma and testimony. Regarding this, Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub believe that world societies endured many adversities in testifying their witnessing experiences due to the disturbing historical happenings that pervaded the 20th century (78). To help those societies cope with the burdens of their experiences, psychologists started reusing Freudian’s ‘talking cure programs’. Freud and Breuer’s suggested that the healing process may start when the traumatized victim is capable to

render the traumatic events into a “sequential narrative” (57-68). The idea was that when the trauma event was documented, the patient may get rid of its burden.

Coupled with the same thought, Shoshana Felman, Dori Laub and Geoffery Hartman ascribe the role of literature to the healing of the distorted self. On the same research procession, in her crucial work *Shattered Subjects* (1999), Henke has provided a definition of the term scriptotherapy as being “the process of writing out and writing through traumatic experience in the mode of therapeutic re-enactment” (xii-xiii). Consequently, one of the key targets of traumatic life writing would be to express certain excruciating emotional crises that could not be expressed or talked about by the writer or the protagonist. In consequence, “what cannot be spoken may be written” (Henke xviii). Lisa Taylor views that rendering traumatic experiences into a narrative form become more complicated, especially if the traumatic event is related to the Holocaust and the post-Holocaust periods. Scholars of Holocaust Studies believe that among the major factors that led this topic to be highly debatable is the human inability to face Nazi genocide (19). Furthermore, critics supporting this theory “consider oral and written, literary and non-literary testimonies as useful tools for the individual and collective since they work through trauma and attempt to preserve the historical memories for future generations” (Hartman 133-72). Felman and Laub contend that the phenomenon of scriptotherapy as advanced by Suzette Henke is rampant with female novelists who write fictional autobiographies in the twentieth century (57-74). Regarding this issue, she states: “though the act of writing is important to survivors' self-catharsis, sharing pain survivors also need public forums like the chance to connect with fellow survivors, to overcome shame and silence and to win the awareness if not empathy of readers” (Henke 21).

Undeniably, there is a strong bound between health, healing, and writing. As far as this point is concerned, Anne Kaplan is of the view that dramatists, poets, novelists, diarists, and even physicians, over the different periods of history have noticed a link between emotions, disclosure, and health. Writing makes self-expression, acceptance of feelings, personal growth possible. It

may even increase a person's "sense of spirituality" (87). It is important to attest that multiple trauma narratives are considered as fundamentally testimonial writings like the case of autobiographies and memoirs. Regarding this, Shoshana Felman defines a testimonial act as "a report of an event that relates what has been lived, recorded and remembered. Memory is conjured here essentially in order to address another, to impress upon a listener, to appeal to a community. Hence, to testify is thus not merely to narrate but to commit oneself, and to commit the narrative to both!"(204). Commenting on this, it is blatant that in any testimonial act that is articulated by the speaker or the writer conveys an emotional testimony to the listener or the reader who is considered as the receiver of the poignantly shocking truthful event. Such narratives beg for the representation of the unrepresentable and work against any coherent narrative representation of the self. Drawing on this, it is claimed by Anne Kaplan that a new life writing genre has been born out of the complicated representation of the self and the overlapping trauma (19). Linking the notion of trauma to the power of healing, Geoffery Hartman equates the function of literature as being that of a "talking cure" (259).

My motivation to undertake this research on the foundational background of scriptotherapy and its application on contemporary female narratives stems from my unquenchable curiosity to grasp the psychological effects of writing on the psyche and the exalted feelings of ecstasy that it may stimulate on my mind. Henceforth, through this tentative, my motivations hinged on the attempt to prove the psychological wellness that literary writing provide, especially as an attempt to mitigate trauma, through the close reading and the probing of the techniques of scriptotherapy in the three narratives under discussion. In the cross-disciplinary sequence of trauma, psychology and literature, another inclining motivation to do this research stems from the compelling need to bring to the threshold of academic research the theory of scriptotherapy and the way it is articulated in contemporary female narrative. The significance of this academic endeavour lies in the astute fusion of the literary techniques of scriptotherapy to bring forth healing through the selected literary works. Through echoing the auto-narratives of the

three selected female authors; the Palestinian-American writer Susan Abulhawa's *The Blue between Sky and Water* (2015), the African- American writer Sapphire which is a pen name for Romana Lofton and her autobiography *Push* first published in 1999 and adapted in 2009, and finally the Turkish writer Elif Shafak and her memoir *Black Milk* (2007).

We adopt an anti-canonical and anti-national approach. Worded differently; the selections of those novels do not adhere to canonical narratives but rather to world literature(s). Nonetheless, they do not belong to a specific nation, race, religion or country. In fact, they are international. The key elements that link them together is the human experience of female traumas and the healing power of the written word. In this vein, we attempt to reveal that the diversity of this corpus in terms of geographical dimension, ethnicity and social group do not impede the cultural repair and survival that the female writers come up with when implementing scriptotherapy in their narratives. Hence, the rationale that raises, at this stage, is concerned with the methods and techniques that are used in the selected novels to address the notion of female traumas and show how the central characters adopt scriptotherapy as a means to walk out of their chaotic traumas and hence bring forth healing and survival.

Our endeavour to closely scrutinize the various literary techniques and methods of scriptotherapy run deep in the roots of theoretical foundation of a métissage approach. Before we bring forth how we link Suzette Henke theory of Scriptotherapy to the métissage approach we find it pertinent to explain the métissage approach. It is, importantly, seen as a method of creative engagement. Kathy Bishop, Catherine Etmanski, M. Beth Page, Brian Dominguez, and Cheryl Heykoop, in their work *Narrative Métissage as an Innovative Engagement Practice*, expound that the métissage approach is premised on the principles of qualitative research and is distinguished by its quality of “merging and blurring genres, texts and identities;” (Chambers, Donald, & Hasebe-Ludt, para. 1). Traceable to the conventions “of life writing, storytelling, theatre and—symbolically—from the art of weaving or braiding” (Etmanski et al. 27), the métissage approach offers the scientific research a chance to highlight many different identities. The importance of

foregrounding multiple voices lies in what the Nigerian author Adichie's words when she explains that, "There is danger in a single story. The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story" (13). Through the practice of weaving together multiple stories, *métissage* celebrates non-linearity and disruption while finding common threads across stories, which serves to honour both unity and diversity in the individual and the collective. *Métissage* can be understood as an arts-based method insofar as writing is. Beyond its storytelling component, *métissage* is particularly artistic when authors take the time to craft and refine their narrative and confirm to the aesthetic as they move beyond the catharsis of personal writing. Therefore, as with any art form, *métissage* has permission to be beautiful and meaningful for its own sake. As a result of this, storytelling and aesthetic dimension, *métissage* presents a new possible means for researchers to represent findings, either verbally, written, or in other artistic forms (e.g. music, dance, silence). As an innovative practice, *métissage* can enable a change intervention by "tapping into experiential knowing to bridge barriers and join people together in community, and therefore creates both an event and artifact" (Bishop, Page, Etmanski, Heykoop, 3-4). The most influential theorization of *métissage* is interrelated with intuitive imagination and is well presented in artistic forms, like "dance, movement, and mime, as well as all forms of myth, fable, allegory, story, and drama (Davis-Manigault 27). Yet, *Métissage* does not aim to "Deconstruct [the narrative(s) of] lived experiences" (Hendry 492); rather, it aims to produce artistic practices through bringing forth a therapeutic space from the psychological, social, and culturally imposed boundaries." (Bishop et al 4) This therapeutic space, as related to surmounting any precedent socio-cultural or psychological boundaries or adversities, is associated with the very essence of scriptotherapy as embodied in contemporary post traumatic female narratives. (Bishop et al. 5)

Ingrained in the roots of a *métissage* approach and qualitative tools of scientific research, scriptotherapy is the main research method that is utilized in this research. It is, however, worth mentioning at this point, that though scriptotherapy as a notion appeared in Suzzete Henke's book

Shattered Subjects (1999), we presume that its techniques and mechanisms are not only used by Henke, but are still being developed by other contemporary critics and scholars namely Gladding & Wallace (2018), Hoffman (2002), Gladding (2016), Grothe(2002), Soroko (2012), Migrain (2016) Davis & Voirin (2014), Meltez (2022) and others .Based on this eclectic approach, the objective of this study is to investigate other unexplored techniques of scriptotherapy, besides those suggested by Henke and the way they are implemented by the female protagonists in these narratives to survive trauma and restore psychological stability.

Linking all the preceding sections together, the current study attempts to answer the following research questions:

- First, in what way is psychological trauma theory related to the literature of contemporary female traumatic narratives?
- Second, how is scriptotherapy deployed in contemporary female traumatic narratives?
- Third, why is scriptotherapy employed in contemporary female narratives?

Accordingly, the following research hypotheses are advanced tentatively: Primarily, delineated definitions of the term trauma theory in the field of psychology and literature are presented in terms of their etymological origin and interdisciplinary relationship. This is well meshed with a close scrutiny of female psychological narratives and the ways by which they present postmodern trauma issues like domestic violence, sexual incest, female battering, etc. Secondly, scriptotherapy is deployed in the three selected female testimonial narratives through a variety of literary writing techniques like; autobiographies, biographies, memoirs, memory books, the use of character sketches, the use of diaries, journals, letters, poems, epistolary letters, metaphors, optimistic ways of writing, writing the right and wrongs and reciprocal journaling forms. Finally, through the three narratives, scriptotherapy and its multiple techniques provide evidence that literary writing is effectively functional in the resolution of female protagonists' life traumas, likewise, the protagonists can only overcome the traumas they are

trapped in through the deployment of the different mechanisms of scriptotherapy. Consequently, when people involve themselves in therapeutic writing, they start to have a new clear mental picture about themselves, the personal surroundings where they live and, therefore, become mentally healthier. Thus, this assumption seems to go hand in hand with my earlier suggestion which vouches for the connection of scriptotherapy with psychotherapy. As such, literary writing appears to approve and rush the evolution of the psychological growth and healing from trauma.

To understand the interweaving approach of scriptotherapy as implied in the selected female authors, this thesis is designed into five chapters:

The first chapter serves as the literature review of this study, since it is chiefly dealing with the literary and psychological representations of trauma theory through the lenses of psychology and literature. Accordingly, we will try to trace back the original use of trauma in the field of psychology and how it is articulated in literary theory. To do so, we will discuss the theoretical premises of trauma as represented by early scholars of the theory such as Cathy Caruth, Shoshana Felman and Geoffery Hartman. Moreover, we will examine how trauma theory is implemented on contemporary female narratives through some illustrations of female contemporary texts.

The second chapter is the theoretical background of this study where we will tackle the issue of trauma survival as related to the use of scriptotherapy in female narratives. Though first techniques of scriptotherapy are traceable to Henke theory, more contemporary techniques of scriptotherapy are deftly developed by other scholars. Finally, some of the most integral means of literary writing, as sated earlier Gladding & Wallace (2018), Hoffman (2002), Gladding (2016), Grothe (2002), Soroko (2012), Migrain (2016) Davis & Voirin (2014) and Meltez (2022). Such techniques may include; writing autobiographies, writing poetry, writing diaries, letters, poems, optimistic notes, therapeutic fairy tales, metaphors, etc. All together, these techniques prove to be a successful way to get the individuals out of distressing anxieties caused by traumatizing experiences.

The third chapter is the first practical part of this study where we will try to implement the theoretical background of scriptotherapy with its different techniques like; creating a character sketch, writing a memory book, writing optimistically, writing epistolary letters, writing poems and translating poems, mainly on the novel of the American-Palestinian writer Susan Abulhawa; *The Blue between Sky and Water* (2015). Along with investigating the proper usage of these techniques, we will also try to highlight the main traumas that the protagonist Nur goes through; like the trauma of her grandfather's death, the trauma of her mother's abuse and trauma of sexual incest. Nonetheless, we will see how Nur reacts and walks out of her trauma through earlier writing and hence becomes ironically a psychotherapist herself.

The fourth chapter is the second practical part of this study where we will depict another story of multiple traumas as faced by the female protagonist Pretious, in Sapphire's novel *Push* (1999), and the different techniques of scriptotherapy that are presumed to be used in this narratives. The main traumas that are to be mentioned also fall within the framework of family trauma as the female main character quibbles about the traumas of sexual incest committed by her own father and mother's verbal and physical abuse. Nevertheless, she also had to brazen out the trauma of HIV contamination in connection to her earlier trauma of sexual incest. The major techniques of scriptotherapy that are assumed to be found in this chapter are writing a journal, reciprocal journaling and writing a journal life story.

The fifth chapter is the third practical part of this study where we attempt to center our attention on another peculiar type of trauma that is different from the aforementioned ones. Through Shafak's novel *Black Milk* (2007), we will bring to the fore the writer's block trauma of the eponymous protagonist Elif who comes to be traumatized due to the loss of her writing talent. Through writing a memoir, Elif manages to face her own postpartum depression that caused her the writer's block. Shafak exposes the difficulties of motherhood and the obscurities that the protagonist went through due to the loss of her writing skill or what is termed the trauma of a writer's block. In this form of auto-fiction, the eponymous Elif writes this memoir shedding light

on the importance of writing in restoring her inner peace and stability. So the memoir, in this case, is our analyzed technique of scriptotherapy. Shafak shows how the female protagonist regained her skill of writing and, ultimately, reinstates her harmony as she comes to write this memoir. Taking the courage to write again was the only means for Elif survival, memoir writing was a means of scriptotherapy that led the trauma of a writer's block along with the depression that Elif was trapped in to vanish.

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The formulation of trauma as discourse is predicated upon metaphors of visibility and image as unavoidable carrier of the unrepresentable. From primal scene to flashback to screen memory to the dream, much of the language deployed to speak trauma's character is emphatically, if not exclusively, visual. (Salzman and Rosenberg xi–xii)

1. Introduction

Stories of revulsion were the fuel for trauma studies. The massive genocide and wars have become the signifier for the human wickedness in most of world cultures today and especially the Palestinian culture. The enormity of malevolence and the immoderation of soreness that thumped the world brought with it an unfathomable amount of dreadfulness, remorse, and indignity throughout the entire world. Postcolonial and post-war scholars find it urgent to bring forth the stories of suffering and pain of those who witnessed traumatic experiences during the atrocities of war for the world to hear about and how would it be possible to overcome the magnitude of pain through narratives. When interspersing, psychoanalysis and literary criticism, testimonial writings renders literature as a spectator to trauma.

This chapter is mainly about the literary and psychological representations of trauma theory. The researcher aims to demonstrate how the notion of trauma is tackled by early scholars of the theory such as Cathy Caruth, Shoshana Felman and Geoffrey Hartman. The researcher, also tries to show that the notion of trauma displays a deep compression of what is dubbed survival or a therapeutic energy. Despite its blurriness, trauma brings forth a survival energy that has numinous

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qualities that elevate the soul and heal the wounds brought by the traumatic experience. This will be illustrated through some contemporary female literary texts in which women traumatized experiences were shown through certain literary texts.

1.2. Defining Trauma

Through the course of the late nineteenth and twentieth century, a new trend in the humanities emerge to focus its attention on the notion of trauma as related to the body and the mind. As such, definitions of the term trauma vary and multiply since every scholar tries to define the term from a specific angle or perspective. For example, Suzette Hencke identifies the term Trauma as a Greek word that is literally interconnected with a physical wound which indicates a corporal injury in the last century (5). She further states that among the variations of trauma are what the military psychiatrist Charles Samuel calls “combat fatigue syndrome” (qtd in Hencke 6); which is defined in the twentieth century as post-traumatic stress disorder,¹ abbreviated as PTSD. The latter’s foundations are traceable to pre-Freudian psychoanalysis that is formulated by the nineteenth century authors. It was until the mid 1970s that therapists started to create connections between the trauma of war and the trauma of civilian life. Despite the multiplicity of the term’s definitions, contemporary theorists agree on certain criteria that apply to the term trauma advancing that all traumatic experiences are sort of overwhelming as they disrupt the social and psychological sense of the self and “precipitate an existential crisis” that is distinguished by a sum of syndromes such as; “flashbacks, nightmares, emotional numbing, depression, guilt, violence, autonomic arousal², an inclination to hypervigilance,³ etc” (Yvette 85).

¹**Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)** is a mental disorder that can develop after a person is exposed to a traumatic event, such as sexual assault, warfare, traffic collisions, or other threats on a person's life.^[1] Symptoms may include disturbing thoughts, feelings, or dreams related to the events, mental or physical distress to trauma-related cues, attempts to avoid trauma-related cues, alterations in how a person thinks and feels, and an increase in the fight-or-flight response.^[1]

²A disorder characterized by persistent or recurrent signs and symptoms mediated by the autonomic nervous system, excluding pain but including palpitation, hyperventilation, or nausea. It is not diagnosed if it is caused by a general medical condition.

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Though there are multiple and no one all satisfactory definition of the term trauma, scholars agree on the effects that trauma leave on the traumatized person. Regarding this, Cathy Caruth states that it is mostly impossible to put trauma into words. However, she maintains that there is a “lasting effect which leaves the traumatized person always vulnerable and constantly struggling to reclaim their memories in a form which is bearable to them” (Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience* 91-92). Judith Herman posits that writing a narrative after being exposed to a traumatic experience helps the individual to recover (89). This therapeutic view of trauma is illustrated in the narratives to be analyzed in this research. The concept of trauma seems not only one of the trendiest and omnipresent subject matters within the fields of humanities, but it is also highly controversial and debatable. The reason behind such a controversy lies in the fact that, “it is one of these tangled objects whose enigmatic causation and strange effects that bridge the mental and the physical, the individual and collective, and [whose] use in many diverse disciplinary languages consequently provoke perplexed, contentious debate” (Luckhurst 15). The Oxford Advanced English dictionary defines the term trauma as a mental state caused by severe shocks, particularly when the damaging effects last for a long period of time (Hornby 1575). The Merriam Webster dictionary defines the term trauma as a disordered psychic or behavioral state resulting from severe mental or emotional stress or physical injury (4). Germinated from a Greek word, the term trauma, as noted by Cathy Caruth meaning wound originally referred to as an injury that is inflicted on the body (Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience* 86). When used in medical, psychiatric literature and Freudian texts, the term trauma is used to refer to a wound that is imposed not merely on the body, but more certainly on the mind as well. In current times, the term refers to emotional wounds. This may be summed up in Allport’s definition:

³**Hypervigilance** is an enhanced state of [sensory sensitivity](#) accompanied by an [exaggerated](#) intensity of behaviors whose purpose is to detect activity. Hypervigilance may bring about a state of increased [anxiety](#) which can cause [exhaustion](#). Other [symptoms](#) include: abnormally increased [arousal](#), a high responsiveness to [stimuli](#), and a constant scanning of the environment.^[1]

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The word trauma, deriving from the Greek word for wound, represents a concept of great complexity. Originally used to describe an external injury, over time the use shifted to include the kind of injuries that remain unseen: wounds of the internal kind, wounds sustained by the psyche. As such, psychological wounding became defined as both caused by a trauma and as being trauma itself (Allport 11).

The overall definition of the term trauma revolves around the effect that physical wounds and injuries have on the mind. The lingering effects of any physical event, become trauma themselves. In the sections that follow, clear delineations of the term will be provided in addition to a clear difference between trauma in literature and trauma in psychology.

1.3. Examples of Literary Trauma from Algerian and Western Literature

The view of the therapeutic notion of trauma was presented by Nuha Baaqueel in her article, *Representation of Gendered Art through Gendered Memories in Ahlam Mostaghanmi's Memory in the Flesh (2003) and Cahos of Senses (2015)*. Baaqueel argues that in *Memory in the Flesh*, the male protagonist Khaled finds solace and hence recovery from the traumatic memories of the past in painting. Whereas, the female protagonist Ahlam/Hayat finds her way in writing and she becomes a writer herself in the second novel, i.e. *Cahos of Senses* (17). In *Memory in the Flesh*, Khaled seeks to capture the quintessence of the city of Constantine during the resistance period in his drawings. However, the female protagonist Ahlam/Hayat in *Cahos of the Sense*, recalls her personal memories and tumultuous emotions through her writings. Through her writings, Hayat highlights the traumatic experiences she witnessed in her city and how she managed to survive the hideous effect that lurks in her memory. In fact, Hayat explores Constantine and the mayhem the city went through; such as the numerous murders, killings, violent outburst, etc.

In *Melancholy and the Archive, Trauma History and Memory in the Contemporary Novel*, Jhonahtan Boulter advances that Paul Auster's late novels are only concerned with trauma and loss (56). For example, *'The Book of Illusions'* (2002) traces how a man overcomes the loss of his entire family while *'Oracle Night'* (2003) is concerned with the story of a man who has lost his

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sense of place in the world. Moreover, *Travels in the sprictorium* (2006) is about a man who has lost his own authority, his sense of history and memory. Boutler argues further that Auster seems to contend that there is not one theme only which is loss persay, however it is interrelated with its potential overcoming. Moreover, Jonothan Boutler advances that *Freud's Mourning and Melancholia* can be taken as a means to interpret Auster's novels as they represent the notion of successful mourning. Regarding this, he states: "I think that Auster's novels, with their ambivalent representation of mourning, interrogate the very idea of successful mourning, much in the same way as the ambivalence in Freud's essay itself is a marker of an anxiety over the possibility of overcoming loss" (Butler 106). In addition, the *Book of Illusions* and *Oracle Night* are, in some sense, indirect commentaries of Freud's ambivalence and Auster's depiction of mourning's ambivalence. Asuter's mourning ambivalence can be seen through his figuration of the subject's relation to the archive. The archive is a way through which Auster shows how loss is overcome or in Boutler words, "how and where loss is mourned or only folded into a kind of perpetual static melancholy that we begin to see how carefully Auster begins to interweave the economies of mourning and the archive" (106). *The Book of Illusions*, for example, portrays a person's negotiation of grief or mourning as associated to a sequence of secrets which are hidden in his written notes. The novel portrays how the protagonist coped with the grief of the death of his family on a plane crash after he found interest in an oeuvre of a silent film star. *Oracle Night*, on the other hand, puts its protagonist plainly in the archive or the crypt. It is claimed that it is only when, "the archive as a literalized site of melancholy is materialized that loss can be comprehended as such" (Boulter 56).

1.4. Literary Trauma Theory

In his book, *Waking the Tiger: Healing Truama* (2010), Peter Levine expounds that the notion of trauma displays a deep compression of what is dubbed survival energy or a therapeutic session (9). The latter has long been neglected to the extent that it could not pursue its meaningful course

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of action. Despite its blurriness, trauma brings forth a survival energy that has, numinous qualities that elevate the soul and heal the wounds brought by the traumatic experience. The term of literary trauma theory started to appear within the scheme of academia in the early 1990s. Coined by a small assemblage of scholars counting Cathy Caruth, Shoshana Felman and Geoffery Hartman from Yale University, it is influenced by the deconstructionist approach following Jacques Derrida and Paul de Man. Levis Ward associates the popularity of trauma theory with the quantum jump of studies that appeared in the 1990s. Accordingly, he sates: “trauma theory’s popularity in the 1990s owed more to the parallel wave of Studies that sought to define the century around the Shoah, than to any sustainable project of mapping onto literary form” (Ward 4). According to Judith Herman, literary trauma is a theory that “emerges focusing on the relationships of words and trauma and helps us to read the wound with the help of literature” (02). Hence, it is made clear that trauma stems from psychoanalytic resources, despite the fact that it is greatly influenced by literary practices. In fact, “it recasts, an older question: what kind of knowledge is art and what kind of knowledge does it foster?” (Heman 2). The said theory is premised on the idea that the source of trauma knowledge is made of two paradoxical components. The first is the traumatic incident that is “registered rather than experienced” (Heman 3). The latter appears to go beyond “perception and consciousness” (Herman 3), and goes straightly to the psyche. The second is being a type of memory of the traumatic incident which occurs in the shape of an ongoing trooping of the memory which may go beyond the psyche or simply discard it thoroughly.

Focusing on the principle of unrepresentability, the original use of trauma theory was assumed to close off any potential portrayal of traumatic experience in literature and, hence working through trauma theory was a far reaching project (Ward 212). At its very beginnings, trauma theory was associated with the poststructuralist and postmodern critical theories in terms of fragmentation, a decentred self, the sublime and apocalypse. James Berger notes that trauma theory appeared along the side with the aforementioned theories to problematize the notion of

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representation (9). Altogether, they aim to speak about the unspeakable and represent the unrepresentable which is the core of traumatic experience in literature. This, he adds, can also attribute one of the concealed articulations of trauma. Because of this unspeakable and unrepresentable part of traumatic occurrence, trauma theory is compellingly required to deal with the paradox of the incommensurability and impossibility of language and representation as associated with trauma from one side and the compelling need to use language as a means to express those traumatic experiences. Because of the unrepresentable and unspeakable quality of traumatic experience, trauma theory comes to the fore of literature studies to unveil people's painful experiences, but more importantly to show how they manage to get themselves out of those painful situations. Regarding this, Shoshana Felman attests that:

Trauma theory is forced to engage with the paradox of the incommensurability and impossibility of language and representation in relation to trauma, on the one hand and the desperate need for a means of expression, on the other and hence perceiving literature as a form of turning toward a catastrophe, an instinct, and a desire-an attempt to face them in the most radical and immediate way possible (113-115).

Freud's *Beyond Pleasure Principle* (1961) is related to a breach or abreak in the mind (8). Unlike the wound of the body that may heal through time, the wound of the mind takes a differently intricate form when occurring and healing. In this respect, Cathy Caruth advances that the wound of the mind "is experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known and is therefore not available to consciousness until it imposes itself again repeatedly in nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor"(Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience* 3-4). This reveals that trauma is more than pathology or an illness of a wounded psyche. It is rather a story of a wound that cries out in attempt to unveil a hidden truth. Though delayed or belated, that truth resides in what remains to be unknown in our actions and language (Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience* 5). Nonetheless, Cathy Caruth suggests that trauma is not merely an outcome of destruction, but also,

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essentially, an enigma of survival (8). Regarding this, she states: “it is only by recognizing traumatic experience as a paradoxical relation between destructiveness and survival that we can also recognize the legacy of incomprehensibility at the heart of catastrophic experience” (18).

Among the most fundamental references that are used in literary trauma studies stand, Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub's *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995) edited by Cathy Caruth and Caruth's own monograph *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* (1996), co-authored by Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995), edited by Cathy Caruth. Those are the most seminal books which have oriented the humanities to the notion of trauma. Theorists and scholars coming afterward have either aligned themselves with those who supported those theories or criticized their presumed pitfalls. Susanah Radston mentions Ruth Ley's and Dominick Lacapra's critiques of Caruth's work on trauma as *Unclaimed Experience* claiming that the early beginnings of trauma theory were mainly concerned with postmodern deconstructive understanding of trauma that mainly emphasized epistemological and representational intricacies and impossibilities. A traumatic event may cause psychological symptoms long after the physical wounds have recovered. Emotional wounds may afflict emotional trauma especially after the occurrence of a drastic incident such as wars, natural disasters, sexual harassment or sexual abuse, etc. The symptoms of emotional trauma may consist of depression, anxiety, flashbacks or chronic nightmares (Merriam-Webster dictionary).

In her Essay *Trauma and Literacy studies, Enabling Questions* (2007), Elissa Marder contends that despite its close relationship with psychoanalysis, the term trauma has an association with interdisciplinary studies. She alludes to the influence of trauma in the multiple fields. Cathy Caruth and Shoshana Felman are two major members of the Department of Comparative Literature at Emory in Atlanta, USA. From the very early beginnings of 1990s, both scholars; Cathy Caruth (Winship Distinguished Research Professor of Comparative Literature and English Language) and Shoshana Felman (appointed as Robert W. Woodruff Professor of Comparative Literature and French last year) have done strenuous efforts to make a creative link between

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trauma, literature, and psychoanalysis. In 1995, Cathy Caruth worked on a significant introduction to a compilation of essays entitled *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* and in 1996 she published *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Henceforth, Cathy Caruth has been identified as a pioneer of trauma theory. Shoshana Felman's interest in trauma started with her significant 1992 book *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*. In the 2002 book *The Juridical Unconscious: Trials and Traumas in the Twentieth Century*, Shoshana Felman investigates the connection between literature and psychoanalysis to trauma, testimony and critical studies.

In *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (1996), Cathy Caruth envisions literature and literary methods of analysis—to emphasize the construction of traumatic events and delayed experience. She stresses the noteworthy role of literature in portraying traumatic incidents and the manner by which it helps the reader to eyewitness events that have been ignored before and expose us to experiences that could have remained unveiled and unspoken about. Caruth claims that the impact of the traumatic event relies in its belatedness; that is to say the effect of the traumatic experience does not occur directly. In *Unclaimed experience*, she contends: “the impact of the traumatic event lies precisely in its belatedness, in its refusal to be simply located, in its insistent appearance outside the boundaries of any single place or time”(9). The belated event is a trauma which is “absence” or “missed encounter” (Caruth *Unclaimed Experience* 9).

The scope of trauma studies in literary criticism attained great importance in 1996 after the publication of Cathy Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* and Kali Tal's *Worlds of Hurt: Reading the Literatures of Trauma* (1996). A theoretical tendency to study trauma was initiated by these scholars who, in their turn, lead the way to psychoanalytic poststructural approach to appear. In other words, this approach started to scrutinize trauma through investigating the peculiar use of language in the traumatic discourse in literary texts. So, trauma appears to be an unsolvable conundrum of the unconscious mind. It could enlighten the human

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experience through the use of written language. Paul Nandi advocates that literary trauma theory considers the things that cannot be fully expressed, or acknowledged or what he refers to as the illegible or the unspeakable through the use of figurative language and literary devices such as metaphor, simile, metonymy, etc.. Just like literary writing, psychic trauma includes intense personal sufferings along with the tough identification of realities that most people could not cope with or encounter (Nandi 5). Nonetheless, Paul Clear Nandi adds that Freud's first writings on trauma revealed the opportunity of incorporating lost events into relatable memories to be part of the healing process which ultimately leads to the oblivion of the traumatic event. This approach is exclusive as it demonstrates the interdisciplinary approach that contributes to the ongoing studies in the field of trauma theory. Through this diversity, people may not only learn how to relieve and hence alleviate their sorrows, but also start anew. Hence, thanks to this multifaceted approach, that entangles psychoanalysis, psychiatry, sociology and literature, people get to identify the never thought about realities that trauma theory provides to get themselves out of pain. The multifaceted approach is also used under "the term pluralistic model of trauma" (Balaev 16). Critics who deal with the rhetorical elements of trauma exhibit the manner and the reason why traumatic experience is demonstrated in literature by integrating psychoanalytic theory with postcolonial theory or cultural studies. Scholars like Luckhurst, Mandel, Yaeger, and Visser investigate the social and political consequences of trauma from a variety of frameworks. Scholars who deviate from the classic model are called, according to Balav "revisionists" (qtd in Balaev). They are not merely supporting the early trauma critics, but they also add their own theoretical foundations. Regarding this, Balaev states that: "revisionist critics either move away from Freud and Lacan altogether, or "take up certain Freudian or Lacanian theories while hewing a new theoretical paradigm in analyses that achieve a starkly different destination" (16). However, the majority of contemporary theories "have developed new Lacanian and neo Freudian approaches to trauma by focusing on its rhetorical, semiotic, and social implications" (Balaev 3). The notion that information of the special past experience can never be unveiled or stay unclaimed by the person

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who endured the experience or the community in which that human being lives is no longer an impossible matter. Hence, this would clarify other potentials as far as the value of trauma is addressed from the psychological, linguistic, and social frameworks. The pluralistic model of trauma presumes that criticism may investigate trauma as a subject that opens the gates for examining the relationship between language, the psyche, and behaviour without considering the classic definition of trauma that affirms “an unrepresentable and pathological universalism” (Balaev 17). Literary criticism within the field of trauma exists to recognize the impact of pain on persons and societies. It aims to reflect on the function of literature in a brutal world, or to examine how language transmits intense experiences.

When considering that trauma is the revisit of the repressed in Freud and Lacan’s points of view, Caruth writes in *Unclaimed Experience* that “trauma is not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual’s past, but rather in the way that its very unassimilated nature—the way it is precisely *not known* in the first instance—returns to haunt the survivor later on” (4). Caruth’s representative trauma model implies psychoanalytical references for a literary criticism that sets up claims about the oppressive, repetitive, and dissociative scenery of trauma. Otherwise said, trauma theory aims at making a sort of reconciliation between the individual, the community and the historical past “under the sacred assumption that trauma is inherently dissociative. The dissociative model of trauma here, additionally, sustains the idea that “one’s own trauma is tied up with the trauma of another” which forwards the notion of transhistorical trauma” (Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience* 141). Psychological studies advocate that amnesia, dissociation, or repressions are probable reactions to trauma but they are not limited responses. The pluralistic model to trauma is premised on the assumption that language and linguistic relationships help to unveil the mysteries of trauma which occur to specific bodies or people. Nevertheless, it aims to show that “trauma is never simply one’s own,” and that “we are implicated in each other’s trauma” (*Unclaimed Experience* Caruth 24). Michelle Balaev argues that the challenge to comprise all and sundry as victims of trauma stakes of counting everybody as being perpetrators.

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However, the idea of the pluralistic model of trauma aims at “universalizing the experience of trauma as well as collectivizing the instigator of violence, of which both implications serve to make anonymous the actor and recipient of violence” (20). Modern pluralistic approaches in literary trauma theory often admit both the neurobiological and social backgrounds of the experience, response, and narratives, in addition to the power of language in conveying the different implications of trauma. Through an analysis of Zakes Mda’s novels *Ways of Dying* (2000) and *The Heart of Redness* (2003), along with Witi Ihimaera’s *The Whale Rider* (2005), Whale Rider Visser states that trauma may work as a source of community when traumatic wounding is considered in relation to mechanisms of power and tribal authority (5).

When considering postcolonial trauma, Anne Whitehead, wrote an article about Wole Soyinka’s fiction stating that it probes the practice of misplacing a Western assumption on the varying experiences of pain and suffering told in African postcolonial literature indicating that, “Soyinka forces us to encounter a response to trauma that asserts the relevance of localized modes of belief, ritual, and understanding, thereby undermining the centrality of Western knowledge and expertise” (27). Merlinda Bobis advocates the insertion of spirituality and oral modes of literary expression in postcolonial theories of trauma by revealing how orality and rituals work are catalysts in processes of mourning and grieving in the consequences of traumatic events. In the Philippine perspective, Bobis argues, “trauma is closely connected with the recuperative influence of narrative, and with the healing forces of the spiritual and the magical” (62). Other recent critical essays also allude to the multifaceted interrelatedness of trauma, power, and recovery in postcolonial literature, by linking trauma to social activism and political protest and the role of colonizing and decolonizing trauma (Andermahr 34). As such, resistance and resilience are to be perceived as not merely responses of individuals but more prominently, as part of a collective process of living and working through trauma. This goes hand in hand with Chinua Achebe’s remarks about colonialism stating that, “it was essentially a denial of human worth and dignity” (22). It is important to understand that “the great thing about being human is our ability to face

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adversity down by refusing to be defined by it, refusing to be no more than its agent or its victim” (Achebe 23). In his book *Postcolonial Witnessing: Trauma Out of Bounds* (2012), Stef Craps enforces the notion often articulated in postcolonial studies that literary trauma criticism is still too dependent on the initial beginning texts of the mid-1990s, whose domination and hegemony should be upturned (65). This leads to a new culturally and historically differentiated ways for reading, interpreting and analyzing literary studies dealing with collective trauma. The disciplines that helped in the new interpretation of trauma are sociology and anthropology, which have a superior theoretical directness to the collectivity of trauma, hence, literature presents an integral part in what sociologist the Alexander Jeffrey terms the “trauma process; the process that gives narrative shape and meaning to “harmful or overwhelming phenomena which are believed to have deeply harmed collective identity” (Jeffrey 10). Through this definition, collective trauma is not only the traumatic event or its hidden existence, but also the outcome of a socio cultural function of creating a traumatic experience through narrative, “Events are not inherently traumatic but, rather, trauma is “a socially mediated attribution” to events, typically after “an event but also as events unfold, or even before they occur” (Jeffrey8).

1.5. The Concept of PTSD

The notion of PTSD has stemmed from recent studies in psychology, psychoanalysis and neurobiology. Those studies explored the direct effect of external violence in psychic disorders. In her other seminal book, *Trauma Exploration in Memory*, Cathy Caruth contends that PTSD depicts an overwhelming experience of an unexpected or a disastrous event in which the response to the catastrophic event happens in the usually unrestrained recurring appearance of hallucination and other disturbing phenomena. Furthermore, PTSD reproduces the undeviating imposition of the mind of the inescapable certainty of dreadful events, the taking over of the mind, psychically and neurobiologically, by an event that cannot be manageable. As such, PTSD seems to supply the straightest link between the psyche and external violence to be recognized as the most destructive psychic disorder. When tackling the notion of PTSD, which is a clinical concept, research shows

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that there are various critics who have adopted it to be aligned with the cultural theory of trauma. Roger Luckhurst states that since 1980, the cultural theory of trauma stretched the notion of “post traumatic subjectivity” (15). The latter becomes a controversial issue at the end of the nineteenth and the twentieth century. Farrell et al. use the term to indicate what they consider a mood of cultural crisis by the end of the nineteenth and twentieth century since things went wrong in the modern world as they attest. They employ a psychocultural function of trauma and distinguish four qualities or characteristics of PTSD: “Firstly, the belated disguised and somatic nature of symptoms; secondly, the occurrence of dissociation; thirdly, its contagiousness; and, fourthly, the way in which it destabilizes the ground of conventional reality and arouses death anxiety” (Caruth Trauma Exploration in Memory 11-12).

Ambiguous enough, the term PTSD is associated with trauma to be understood as an interpretive method that is teeming with fantasies. It is noted that critics such as Felman, Laub, Caruth, Herman and Lacapra attempt to merge, through their studies, the clinical to the cultural. Lacapra believes that applying the psychoanalytic concepts to both the historical and socio-cultural analyses is of paramount importance to the people and the culture (98). That is to say, cultural aspects that initially lead to trauma may increase the syndromes of PTSD. The encyclopedia of Britannica defines the term as Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), also called post-traumatic stress syndrome, emotional condition that sometimes follows a traumatic event, particularly an event that involves actual or threatened death or serious bodily injury to oneself or others and that creates intense feelings of fear, helplessness, or horror. The symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder include the reexperiencing of the trauma either through upsetting thoughts or memories or, in extreme cases, through a flashback in which the trauma is relived at full emotional intensity. People with PTSD often report a general feeling of emotional numbness, experience increased anxiety and vigilance, and avoid reminders of the trauma, such as specific situations, thoughts, and feelings. It is normal to experience such reactions to some extent

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following trauma, and they are not considered symptoms of PTSD unless they last for at least one month or have a delayed onset. People with PTSD can also suffer from other psychological problems, particularly depression, anxiety, and drug abuse.

It is believed that PTSD is caused due to the following occurrences: firstly, a direct personal experience of an event that includes authentic threatening, death or a severe injury, or an intimidation to one's physical integrity. Secondly, it may be due to witnessing an event of death, an injury or the threat of the physical integrity of another person. Thirdly, PTSD may also be triggered because of the announcement of an unexpected violent death, serious harm or threat. PTSD is distinguished by a re-experiencing of the traumatic event or the meaning related to it in a psychoanalytic thought. This experience produces a downpower of emotions. Intense emotions like fear and helplessness are triggered through amnesia or a numbing of all sensitivity. The essence of trauma is its overwhelming quality. Anne Garland and Chris Williams assume that trauma shakes out ordinary thinking and behaviour. Reenactment of the traumatic experience may contain distressing recollections, nightmares, hallucinations, flashbacks and other involuntary restoration of the traumatic experience that replace the conscious thinking about it. Those thoughts are absent from the conscious mind because "trauma damages the capacity to think" (Garland and Williams 199). After trauma occurs, identification tends to substitute thought. That is to say, the recently lived traumatic events would be provoked or identified or in Garland and Williams' words "mentalised" whenever the person witnesses similar circumstances (3).

The early beginnings of Trauma studies were initiated by two importantly controversial works written by Sigmund Freud; *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), and *Moses and Monotheism* (1937). Those works were written in an era of turmoil and wartime malaise: World War 1 and World War Two. Read together, those two works signify Freudian formulation of the notion of trauma theory as a theory of the atypical incomprehensibility and full complexity of human survival.

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Tanya Lee Allport explains that any kind of wounding can be mortal, however if it is exterior it is straightforwardly recognized and can be dealt with explicitly, as it is evident to everyone (7). However, if it is internal, the wounding is hard to be diagnosed since it depicts an unspoken trauma. It is noticeable as an idiosyncratic event that varies outside the secure boundaries of the majority of collective or social norms. The occurrence, examination, treatment and demonstration of trauma are tangled with the social context. For that reason, the significance of trauma has been built up during history in double functions which both reveal and construct the scopes that evoke and heal trauma. Such a complexity “is reflected in the engagement with trauma, as it is marked by elusiveness throughout the study of the human psyche, vacillating between intense analysis and complete disregard within the changing socio-political context of discourse”(Allport 11). The essential question about trauma experience sheds light on how an internal wound can be localized and externalized. In the ICD-10 Classification of Mental and Behavioral Disorders, as advanced by Tanya Lee Allport, the World Health Organization recognizes trauma in the diagnostic categorization of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, as a stressful experience or condition be it short or long resulting from an exceptionally intimidating or disastrous nature that would be prone to cause invasive anxiety in any person. Through this, trauma is the preliminary exterior stressor that spreads the beginning of a given disorder. Amal Root provides a wider definition of trauma that exhibits the dual role of it as a medium as well as a perpetuator of mental distress; she asserts: “trauma represents destruction of basic organizing principles by which we come to know self, others, and the environment: traumas wound deeply in a way that challenges the meaning of life” (229).

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1.6. Women Psychological Trauma

Women voices have also been echoed through the history of trauma analysis naming their mental health in relation to the physical health or development. The experience of trauma was related to women's bodies on every level of their being such as menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth, menopause, etc. The aforementioned were prominent factors that cause mental disorder. For example, for women, menstruation is presumed to bring a sort of mental unsteadiness which may lead on to delicate mania⁴. Pregnancy, on the other hand, may cause melancholia and at times moral distortion. The most influential practitioner dealing with problematic manifestations of women's trauma was Freud. The most prominent concept he tackled is the concept of female hysteria. Hysteria is a word that originates from the Greek word *Hystero*, which means womb. It was applied to distinguish the mental disorders that were evidently related to dysfunctions of the womb. The syndromes may range from paralysis to convulsions, anorexia and hallucinations (Teicholz and Kriegram 43). The development of psychoanalytic theory established original methods of treatment that integrated hypnosis and essentially listening to patients' life stories. The interconnectedness between the telling and the listening, or the telling of the patients' story was advanced in this practice, as Freud declared this connection to be vital to healing (Teicholz and Kriegram 44).

Another critical development that stems from Freud and Breuer's preliminary theory is the connection between traumatized women patients and the incident of sexual abuse. Examining the cases of some patients' childhood memories has revealed the experience of sexual trauma which was overpoweringly explored by Freud in *The Aetiology of Hysteria* (1896). Through this, the association between child sexual abuse and subsequent adult psychological dysfunction is

⁴**Mania**, also known as **manic syndrome**, is a state of abnormally elevated arousal, affect, and energy level, or "a state of heightened overall activation with enhanced affective expression together with lability of affect."^[1] Although mania is often conceived as a "mirror image" to depression, the heightened mood can be either euphoric or irritable; indeed, as the mania intensifies, irritability can be more pronounced and result in violence, or anxiety.

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explicit. In conjunction with the historical development of trauma theory, this could have become a noteworthy turning point, as it echoes women's experiences of patriarchal cruelty and domination. Nevertheless, the medical community has criticised Freud and disclaimed his sexual abuse theory arguing that he believed that patients had been either deceitful, or merely have been unfolding their sexual fantasies.(Freud, *The Aetiology of Hysteria* 76). The contribution in violent collide on the remarkable events of World Wars One and Two turned the study of trauma towards the male experience of war, progressively asserting the external foundation of trauma for men through diagnoses such as "shell shock," and later on "war sailor syndrome," or "Vietnam veterans' syndrome (Coxton 123). The clarification of male trauma that was perceptible by an ideology about masculine physical and emotional strength has made the diagnosis somewhat thorny which led the fairground to the notion "invulnerability as opposed to women's "natural vulnerability" (Freud, *The Aetiology of Hysteria* 78).

The examination of the history of trauma and women incites the inquiring of the starting place of pain, the incidents, mechanisms or problems that historically and presently wreak the trauma experience for women. The preceding investigation into the historical manifestations of trauma has pointed toward the intricacy of imperceptible wounds that are shared by humankind. When dealing with trauma, there are massive amount of experiences, a range of psychological and physiological implications that may probably be assembled together as they both originate from self wounding, yet not cohesively regrouped as a whole. Women are not simply traumatized by particular events or occurrences, but rather by a sequence of incidents and conditions that can "be both personal and political, and individualized and collectivized" (Astin et al 24).

The trauma that is vital to the socialization based on gender and race is what Maria P. Root identifies as 'insidious trauma,' "implicating the trauma that is "associated with the status of an individual being devalued because a characteristic intrinsic to their identity is different from what is valued by those in power" (Root 65).The early beginning of trauma accentuate the role of

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violence which led to the development of traumatology. The legalization of violence is influenced by the rigid gender construction, as in the case of imposing women's construction as others. Through this view, men are thought to be able to put up their approved masculinity and role within patriarchal hierarchy. The notion that women are owned by this constructed patriarchy expresses the early practice of overcontrol and violence which trigger traumatic experiences. As such, violence seems to inflict a hierarchy that attempts to limit women and constrain their potential. To affirm this, studies show that there is a close universality of the mechanisms of violence, that is proved by modern-day figures that "globally, one in three women will be raped, beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused in her lifetime (Russel De50). The view of sexual abuse can be attributed to different societies in history, it has just been during the past thirty years that feminist analysis has found out the history of rape and, thus, tackled it. David DelMar states that, in her book *Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape* (1975), Susan Brownmiller pictures a re-creation of the time in history when men identified their physical capacity to compel women to have sexual intercourse. In fact, "man's discovery that his genitalia could serve as a weapon to generate fear must rank as one of the most important discoveries of prehistoric times, along with the use of fire and the first crude stone axe," "From prehistoric times to the present, I believe, rape has played a critical social function" (Dermal 64).

Violence is the responsible starting place for trauma in overtly all social systems that are dependent on the compulsion of one another. Whichever social system that is based on the notions of power and strength is being accomplished through violence. Hence, violence against women exceeds time borders, geographical districts or customs – It occurs repeatedly whether it is inside,

the age-old practice of African/Middle Eastern 'clitoro dectomy,' Chinese foot-binding, India's widow burning 'Sati,' the mass of women and girls raped and sexually abused every year, the many Iraqi women killed during just one month of war, or the growing number of domestically and sexually abused Māori women and girls (Irwin51).

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As the basis of trauma, violence is situated in this gamut ranging between the private and the public. Though it must be attested that not all human experiences are the same, the sources of women's trauma may be common to many cultures; mainly domestic or what is called "partner violence, sexual abuse and war violence" (Mooney 20). Jayne Mooney adds that each period in history breeds numerous transformations that affect the type of social exchanges and feedbacks that determine public and private emergence of violence. For example, whereas the early twentieth-century studies had a tendency to deal with public violence, mainly combative, political and criminal violence, postmodern studies are concerned with the private incidences of violence. Women violence is described as a "major cause of death and disability for women" (Mooney 54). Nonetheless, women are strongly affected by violence due not only to their physical vulnerability, but also due to a figurative vulnerability that has been enacted due to the social practices, besides war-zones (Mooney 56).

The wounds of trauma for women can be seen in many ways; anxiety and worry, panic, depression, manifold personalities, paranoia, anger, and sleep disorders, propensity to commit a suicide, bad temper, mood swings, odd rituals including a complexity in trusting people, complicated relationships, general despair along with aimlessness and hopelessness (Root 12). With the modern understanding of epidemiology,⁵ it is well established that women have a higher prevalence of "depression, dysthemia, deliberate self-harm, seasonal affective disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, panic attacks, social phobias and eating disorders...than men" (Kohen 3). According to Lewis Herman, disempowerment may stem from disconnection from the outside world as claimed by women survivors of trauma. The importance on making trauma stories

⁵Epidemiology: branch of medical science that studies the distribution of disease in human populations and the factors determining that distribution, chiefly by the use of statistics. Unlike other medical disciplines, epidemiology concerns itself with groups of people rather than individual patients and is frequently retrospective, or historical, in nature. It developed out of the search for causes of human disease in the 19th century, and one of its chief functions remains the identification of populations at high risk for a given disease so that the cause may be identified and preventive measures implemented:

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known and heard facilitates the healing process of trauma. In order for the healing process to take place, it is, “necessary to reexperience cognitive and affective memories associated with the original trauma” (Root103).

Speaking about one’s story and having it heard are considered as significant reasons to the trauma healing process. Listening to the common trauma story supplies the necessary call for outer connections within the context of human relationships. When disconnection is a primary outcome of trauma, then the connection that is redone through the teller/listener dynamic is very important. In the postmodern Western milieu, this demand is tackled by the psychological counseling associations “of therapists and their clients, survivor groups, and other therapeutic relationships where ‘testimony’ is central” (Neimeyer and Levitt 46).

1.7. Women Trauma in Literature

As for women writing fiction about women’s trauma, the course of exhibiting these experiences has been long and thorny, because of women writers’ individual position which made them seen as a voiceless other. This complexity, according to Tanya Allport, seems to be pivotal in the sense that women writers aim at unveiling women’s traumas that are basically transgressing a forbidden area which is considered as taboo since the act of representing trauma discloses the social practices of othering and the brutal systems that impose them (12). Uttering this prohibited arena implies that the literary trauma narrative can penetrate and, hence, destabilize a number of the foundational ideological organizations that have to stay sheltered to be embraced. As long as the feminist analysis, the view for distraction from patriarchal social standards through writing about trauma is colossal. Writing fiction can permit marginalized voices to contribute in discourse as an act of resistance. In this regard, Bell Hooks states: “Story-telling becomes a process of historicization; it does not remove women from history but enables us to see ourselves as part of history” (538). In connection with this claim, Tanya Allport contends that the growth of women

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writing about trauma in literature culminated to the development of feminist traumatology, which in its turn facilitates the course towards curing which brings in its folding a social change (89). In his paper, *Wild Voices: Fiction, Feminism, and the Perennial Flowering of Truth*, Carol Gilligan argues that the well spring of art and political opposition has become the cornerstone of feminist psychological theory with the understanding that liberating the human voice to dismantle the foundation of patriarchy (234).

Extending the same argument, Jhon Harvey suggests that, “the storytelling approach to dealing with major loss highlights the idea that loss becomes gain as we heal and particularly as we use our losses and what we learn from to contribute to others who also suffer (110). In her phd thesis, *Women Writing Trauma: An Analysis of psychological trauma in Ingeborg Bachmann’s Das Buch Franza, Christa Wolf’s Kassadra, Patricia Grace’s Cousins and Ngahula The Awekotuku’s Ruhahine_Mythic Women*, Tanya Allport explains that both Ingeborg Bachmann and Christa Wolf are cases of female writers who have expressed the female trauma experience through the use of multiple characterisations, plots and narrative techniques. Both writers reveal certain important features of women’s trauma experiences, which throughout their moment of writing were not spoken of and, hence not fully fledged in both literature and psychology. Their novels exhibit that the type of trauma female characters experienced hurt them deeply and last for a very long period of time. That kind of wound is experienced in both their bodies and minds. Nonetheless, their presentations conceal the type of trauma experienced by their characters as a direct outcome of the mechanisms that take place in the societies they write in relation to, “Both writers chose to situate their narratives in contexts that represent, on the surface, extraordinary circumstances, while simultaneously overturning the notion of extraordinariness, by showing how pervasive and encroaching on women’s experiences these circumstances actually are” (113-114-115). In the same context, Kathie Irwin contends that “[...] our women and their stories have been

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buried deeper and deeper in the annals of time by the processes of oppression that seek to render us invisible and keep us out of records” (3).

Due to its interdisciplinary role, trauma is entangled with different ethical; social, political and historical dimensions, and, hence, is not just restricted to the psychological dimension. As such, trauma as a discipline has influenced different other fields. Thus, it has an impact in and outside those fields of studies. Psychoanalysis trauma involves serious long-term negative consequences particularly past trauma which include dwelling on old memories of the past. The latter influences the mind of the individual more than any other thing. Among other factors that may trigger traumatic experiences, confusion, insecurity, sexual abuse, employment discrimination, police brutality, bullying, domestic violence and childhood experiences which may lead to violent behaviour later on. Psychoanalysis trauma may be caused due to other events such as war, treason, betrayal and sexual abuse. Nonetheless, the most interesting aspect is that people are different, and they will not react to the same event in the same manner. Differently stated, not everyone who may experience a traumatic event will be psychologically traumatized. Trauma as a field of study emerged as a movement to provide people with an installment of change. The passageway of distress and pain develops arrive to a graspable point of knowledge. Laura Adamo is of the view that post modern writers tend to choose the female characters with peculiar mindset or psyches to instigate a search for the traumatic experience with Feminism and Psychoanalysis as two major approaches of research. It is important to state that when these two scopes meet at the valley of literature, literary criticism is another approach that can link to them (Adamo 435). Margaret Atwood as a Canadian poet and writer is critical about the environment and society that we live in. She attained numerous literacy Awards (Toronto Arts Award, Governor General's Award and Los Angeles Times. Fiction Award). She represents trauma in the life of female characters by putting the traumatized female at the core of the novel. In fact, the female characters are broken by patriarchy. Currently, the contradictory situations of victim and victor are essential

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to embody a range of self-consciousness and self actualization. In her paper the *Imagery Girlfriend: a study of Margaret Atwood's three novels The Handmaid's Tale (1985), Cat's Eye(1988) and The Robber Bride (1993)* and Aliace Grace, Laura Adamo finds out that the female characters, used in the novels, stand for the traumatized past of the childhood and adulthood.

More interestingly, it is worth mentioning that the notion of trauma does not only entail a negative connotation. Laury Vickroy proposes that in *Cat's Eye* Elaine's "artistic expression reveals trauma but also provides evidence and structure with which to work through it" (129). She presumes that Elaine's unconscious trauma is conveyed and fully expressed through art. That unconsciousness traumatic state also initiates a moment of recovery (Vickroy 10). Art facilitates for her to rethink of the past experiences "not as a fear but as a temptation" (409). Actually, to reject the past is alluring, even releasing. However, for Atwood, and Freud, the past must "first be recovered before it can be relinquished" (Tolan 101). That is to say, the traumatic experiences must first be healed and cured before they are cast away into oblivion. In *The Robber Bride*, Atwood pictures Charis's way of 'forgetting' to suppress (rather than repress) the unwanted past as a way of recovery. Through the *Cat's Eye* and *The Robber Bride*, "Atwood's traumatized protagonists achieve some kind of emotional equilibrium" (Tolan 102). "Elaine utilizes art as a powerful means of expression; and Charis finds comfort in meditation and spiritualism" (Tolan 103). Art and meditation are the supremacy of accurate knowledge that the character realizes after the pain and suffering take place.

1.8. Cooperation of Literary Critics and Psychoanalytic Thinkers

It has been attested that there is a close relationship between critics and thinkers in the field of literature and critics and thinkers in the field of psychoanalysis. Freud as a psychoanalyst brought to the fore some interesting terms like "the talking cure" and "cleansing of the soul" (Freud, *Mourning and Melancholia* 17). In order for the patient to recover, their old

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recovered memories of their demoralized childhood and adulthood must be unconcealed and talked about. As such, they can achieve self knowledge and self-acceptance. For instance, women who were cured from traumatic experiences have recreated themselves, by what Foucault identifies as 'technologies of the self,' transforming their "bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being" through "their own means or with the help of others" in order to attain a higher state of existence (Foucault 18). More importantly, pioneering academicians and clinicians in the field of social sciences, medicine, and the humanities who identified the worth of separating psychoanalytic ideology from its patriarchal origins and, hence they started reworking and reviewing Freudian ideas to deal with women concerns (Horvitz 20). Famous by her theoretical and clinical work with trauma survivors, thinks that the active process of testimony may give way to the active process of forgetting which in its turn works to limit the aftermaths of sexual abuse. Geoffery Hartman argues that female writers at the start of the twentieth century stretched themselves thanks to their creative works. Consequently by the end of the nineteenth century and much into the twenty-first century, critics find women fiction flourishing. Regarding the research on trauma scopes, Geoffery Hartman maintains:

To hold a traumatic reality in consciousness requires a social context that affirms and protects the victim and that joins and witnesses in a common alliance. For, the individual victim, this social context is created by relationships with friends, lovers, and family. For the larger society, the social context is created by political movements that give voice to the disempowered (9).

Cathy Caruth is a literary critic who had broadly worked on psychoanalytic and trauma theories claims that Freud turns to literature to describe traumatic experience, it is because literature like psychoanalysis, is concerned with the composite relation between knowing and not knowing. And it is, indeed at the language of literature and the psychoanalytic theory of traumatic intersect that the language of literature and the psychoanalytic theory of traumatic precisely meet.

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At this site of fusion, in other words, story originates(9). To understand the importance of trauma, it is necessary to stress the individual nuances and qualities of every narrative of the victim. The Psychologist Elizabeth Waites clarifies trauma as: “an injury to mind or body that requires structural repair” (27). Accordingly, Waites speaks of the main outcomes of trauma as disorganization; be it a physical and/or mental. This disorganization triggers the breakdown of the self, disunity of social relationships, corrosion of social supports (qtd in Horvitz 19). In view of that, in *Worlds of Hurt: Reading the Literature of Trauma*, Kali Tal defines trauma as, “a life threatening event that displaces one’s preconceived notions about the world” (15). Judith Herman emphasises that trauma is a threat to the human life as it damages the integrity of the body, as it may also cause a personal bump into violence and death” (33). Kali Tal represents trauma as an intuitive condition in which reality is shattered (15). Hence, the issue for both the writer and the literary critic happens to be: How can such a lost indescribable condition of being be narratively exhibited? Can narrative, per se, by convincing victim-survivors to remember and to recall chronicles replete with horror, anxiety and pain supply a soothing function in the therapeutic process? Definitely, psychoanalysis supposes that the ability and motivation to integrate the traumatic event within one’s self as a vital piece of personal history and identity is central to healing from a traumatic experience. While fictional narrative is inseparably related to memory and the course of remembering, every story is told in a different way for each protagonist. In fact, some are more likely to recast their lives after the occurrence of the traumatic experience. Immersed in the issues of gender and race, Elizabeth Abel, Judith Butler, Jennifer Fleischner, Male G Henderson, Marianne Hirsch Barbara Johnson, Toni Morrison, Nell Irvin Painter, , Arnold Rampersad, Claudia Tate and Michel Wallace are among the writers who distinguish the versatile potential of the psychoanalytic theory when applied to literary criticism as claimed by Deborah Horvitz (8).

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Commenting on current works in the field of trauma, psychoanalytic feminist theorists, especially Laura S Brown, Cathy Caruth, Shoshana Felman, Judith Heran, Kali Tal, and Elizabeth Waite, delineate cultural or political trauma which is ascribed as an officially formal, sadomasochistic system of oppression in which a targeted group, perceived by the dominant culture as an obstacle to the goals of existing hegemony, are tortured, imprisoned or killed. In this country, slavery, genocide of American Indians and the witch hunts of the seventeenth century are examples of cultural and political trauma (qtd in Horvitz 11). Through the use of the terms individual personal or psychological trauma, Horvitz refers to sadomasochistic violence in opposition to a selected victim who is known personally by her attacker: such as the victims of domestic abuse and incest (67). Natalie Goldber conceptualizes this union of political and personal trauma when she spots out that large numbers of African-Americans who continue to be traumatized by the American-experience. Furthermore, she includes an integral question that is: "what is the role of fantasy and the unconscious in the experience, recollection, or memory of trauma?" Moreover, what kind of psychological damage does trauma cause and can such victims be reached by psychoanalysis" (Goldber 263, 262)?

Throughout the past one hundred and twenty-five years, three exclusive types of traumas appeared within the public consciousness: the first being hysteria in the belatedly Victorian age, the second is combat neurosis subsequent to World War I, and the last and the third is the violence which is practised against women and children and which is perpetuated to the present days. Symptoms of hysteria were mainly checked among middle and upper class women. Symptoms of shell-shock were probed among soldiers who came back from the first World War. Studies made about combat trauma ceased being tackled after World War II. Those types of studies reached their zenith within and right away after the Vietnam War, but became matters of conventional reactions after the Gulf War. In fact, a huge number of warriors came back ill from the Mideast, revealing a set of physical symptoms, which were ultimately

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categorized as Gulf war syndrome. Those syndromes “were pejoratively called hysterics and malingerers” (Goldberg 12). Deborah Horvitz explores that the term Post Traumatic Stress Disorders (PTSD) became recognized as an entity in 1980 with the third edition of American psychiatric Association’s Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM III)§. The latter comprises of the preceding diagnoses of “shell-shock”, “combat neurosis”, “combat fatigue”, and “traumatic neurosis”(American psychiatric Association 75).

Cathy Caruth reports that the victim’s ability to recover restrained memories long after the intimidating incident took place can occur only when the victim can write down those memories. Writing about the traumatic experience, and can, hence, facilitate healing (87). Deborah Hortvitz scrutinizes varying abilities to employ art, particularly, narrative, as a process of dealing with or healing from trauma. She also considers the way sexual trauma and artistic infatuation is articulated in everytext especially when it is explored in an environment of violence and oppression. She also seeks to comprehend how recollections of agony and stories of cruelty can be maintained and, hence, even changed into art without generating the act of oppression. Dissimilar to the American myth of let off the past behind and start life anew, trauma studies are built on failures, pain and ruptures of the past. Indeed, without digging deep in the tormenting memories, the healing process cannot be accessed. Hence, “the need to be listened to, in addition to the need to tell is a trope that appears and reappears in the written and oral testimony of victims” (Hortvitz 19).

Shoshana Felman and Dauri Laub are literary theorists, and psychoanalysts who have written a book entitled *Testimony: Crisis in Witnessing in Literature, psychoanalysis and History* (1992). In the latter, they shared an experience they underwent in a graduate seminar where they taught at Yale entitled ‘Literature and Testimony’. They have presented video taped interviews with holocaust survivors to their students to check their reactions later on. After, they have watched the videotaped interviews; there was a kind of an emotional panic and intellectual

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perplexity. Felman interpreted their feedback as an expression of trauma. Considerably, for Felman, anyone can be a trauma victim; that is to say, the individual does not need to experience trauma incidents to be called a trauma victim. In *Power, Sexuality and Intimacy*, (1986), Muriel Dimen states that there is a missing link in the theory of patriarchy; since Psychoanalytic theory did not openly emphasize women's trauma because Freud moved away from the seduction theory⁶ shortly after publishing it in 1896. In recent times, trauma ensuing from domestic abuse has become an interesting topic in the public discourse, interdisciplinary academic conferences, scholarly publications, essays, magazines, editorials, memoirs and novels.

The vast majority of scholarly examinations dealing with the issue of trauma as related to psychoanalysis deal with the traumatic recall as being the return of the repressed, that is in its turn a variety of "an intrusive past that generate a delayed response to an event which reappears after a period of latency or incubation as a trace in the subject consciousness as if to haunt or possess him or her" (Caruth *Trauma Exploration in Memory* 5). Cathy Caruth stresses the association between people and their old memories by contending that, "to be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or an event" (9). Nemeroff et al. contend that a literary work cannot stand on its own, for it does not consist of a secluded structure. It may be considered, "as non-equilibrium system within the context of multiplicity of discourses that are combined with facts which are ultimately a form of fiction, order lurks behind a façade of chaos which is ultimately a subtle form of order" (153). Messina et al. confirm that literature possess a pragmatic power to bring out a form of solidarity which comes up with a therapy that serves as a means to surmount any type of tragic event; be it associated with an action of colonialism or not (65). Hall Willson argues that being

⁶In psychoanalysis, a theory propounded by Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) from 1895 to 1897, and then abandoned, according to which neuroses were attributed to repressed memories of sexual seduction in childhood. But in 1897 he ceased to believe that the fantasies were based in reality and propounded a theory of psychical reality to deal with the problem. In his article 'On the History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement' (1914), he wrote: 'If hysterical subjects trace back their symptoms to traumas that are fictitious, then the new fact which emerges is precisely that they create such scenes in *phantasy*, and this psychical reality requires to be taken into account alongside practical reality' (Standard Edition, XIV, pp. 7–66, at pp. 17–18). **From:** seduction theory in *A Dictionary of Psychology* »

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contemporary or chronological, traumatic events are identical to an emotional tsunami (45). Principally, feelings are the raw emotional responses to stimuli every human being experiences and, thus, are the most familiar emotions that are given to characters. Among the main emotions that could be caused by trauma, we may site: fright, disappointment, remorse, lowered self esteem, despair, loss be it physical o psychological, helplessness, hatred, rejection, melancholy, etc. When somebody is influenced by a given type of preliminary feelings like the aforementioned, secondary emotions are provoked. Secondary emotions are caused by one of the most prevailing primary emotions including feelings like: fury, anxiety, and disgrace. Among the secondary emotions that could be triggered because of trauma the followings may be included: anger, shame, anxiety, hostility, transgression, numbness, and woe. Historical Trauma demands authenticity especially for someone who has experienced any kind of past trauma be it; distressing, physical, sexual or verbal.

The activation of trauma may not trigger all the detailed events that the victim went through. However, the details may be triggered in severe cases like combats veterans. When someone has severe syndromes of PTSD, his or her body may react to past trauma as if it reoccurs all over again without actively restating the event. They're more presumably to evade thinking of the whole event until they've gone to psychotherapy. Hall Wilson adds that authors are supposed to deal with this issue cautiously especially when trauma is a central theme in the story (76). Bodily trauma symptoms endured by the characters of the story indicate to the readers that the characters or mainly their body is experiencing a traumatic scene again even while the character himself or herself is not conscious about it. For instance, a woman who was sexually abused when an infant will not relive the event in her mind every time a man enters into a room. Nevertheless, this woman may remark an accelerated heart beat as she may start to panic by sweating or blushing for no reason since it is a sign of anxiety.

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Past Trauma may have three permanent responses which are labeled: Fight, Flight or Freeze. It is presumed that the vast majority of people hears about the fight and flight reactions as it as being a natal phenomenon. As preliminary emotions of trauma are intrigued, the victims may respond violently and have a deep rage either to the cause of the traumatic experience or toward themselves. On the contrary, the victim may escape the situation and abstain from the pain to be secured which may be considered as a flight. They may resolve to solitude, isolation, numbness or withdrawal. Dissimilar to the two previous cases, the victim may freeze and have no reaction at all. They may stay when they have to escape, and even deny the outcome of trauma. Through the story, the character may show one of the previously mentioned reactions. If they show as wrecked and floundering, they may grow stouter and stronger as they may end up even more ruined. They may also show nothing but numbness. What is special about PTSD and anxiety is that the outcomes and consequences are personal. It is generally an upshot of powerless emotion and despair especially when feeling in capable of altering their circumstances or the results that were caused due to the traumatic experience. Two persons may go through a similar trauma and one among the two people can surpass the PTSD while the other may fail at this. The emotions of helplessness and bleakness can be caused by a huge variety of circumstances that to certain may not appear to be traumatic at all. A surgery or an invasive medical procedure at infancy can lead to a permanent anxiety in the future. Nonetheless, neglect, abuse, and dreary living conditions can lead to trauma. Being an orphan at an early age or being the victim of divorce may also be one reason of trauma. Essentially, everything that compels a child to sense insecurity can cause trauma. It is believed that whenever the child is young enough to go through a traumatic experience; the more complicated his situation becomes at the age of adulthood

Besides rape, kidnapping, torture, there are other types of traumatic experiences that may lead the fairground to anxiety. For instance, if a child is once locked in a pitch-black place, he or she may have a lifelong anxiety. Once can cause lifelong anxiety. "The degree to which the

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adult allows this anxiety to define them, or shape their thinking (often trauma leads to shame), the more the consequences will become evident in day to day life” (Wilson 13). Trauma has a sort of care that is called a health care which is sustained inside a framework and that combines various effects; neuro cognitive, psychological, physiological and social. Vagrant people generally have high rates of trauma both throughout and after their experience of vagrancy. Nonetheless, the experience of vagrancy itself is a sort of trauma which can be considered as a type of profound sickness. The sociologist, Arthur Frank, as stated by Eve Ensler, relates it to a disease that darkens one’s life (73). As an incident, trauma is an event that endangers one’s life and one’s self at both the psychological and physical level. This may culminate to: “serious accidents and medical mishaps; drug and alcohol addictions, natural and man-made disasters, wars, rape, intimate partner violence, Childhood neglect, physical, and sexual abuse” (Ensler 43). Complex trauma is a type of trauma that happens among caretakers and relative relationships. This type of trauma lasts for a long period of time. Complex trauma is an intricate type of trauma to stand, live with or cure. The phrase, *‘scared speechless’*, is used to describe the fear that overwhelms and suppresses the speech and language area of our brain while we are in the midst of a traumatic event. As Bessel Van Der Kolk, a physician and expert on trauma puts it: “All trauma is preverbal” (43). Trauma goes beyond the sphere of the brain and goes straightforwardly to the more primordial “fight and flight fear area—the amygdala” (in Ensler 43). The latter is composed of two almond-shaped spheres within our brains in “the primitive limbic system” (44).

Trauma is not a stocked memory with an introduction, middle and end. It is rather a combination of sections of occurrences, representations, scents, echoes, and other physical feelings. The people who have endured a momentous traumatic experience long after the trauma is ended still find adversity to tell their story or more precisely what has happened to them through their journey. However, their bodies bear witness to the event through terrors, flashbacks, numbing, and stress-mediated physical problems like migraines and auto-immune diseases—diseases in

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which the body turns on itself, as if in slow suicide. If the trauma happened to the person as a child before the firm development of a sense of self, that person's memories of the event can remain visceral and largely inaccessible to verbal processing (Enslin 213). Van der Kolk infers that, "Almost every brain-imaging study of trauma patients finds abnormal activation of the insula. This part of the brain integrates and interprets the input from the internal organs—including our muscles, joints, and balance (proprioceptive) system—to generate the sense of being embodied" (249). Ultimately, trauma leads people to feel like they are not the same. In fact, they feel like they are someone else or probably are no one at all. They feel like they have a tormented or a distorted identity. He goes on to declare that for a person to overcome trauma he or she is supposed to have assistance and help in order to relate back to their body and self and hence go back to normal.

Among the most dominant treatments of trauma reside in art. Importantly, music, painting, and other forms which are used for patients to overcome any type of trauma they suffer from. Those forms do not depend on reason or logic. To confirm this idea, the psychiatrist Laurence J. Kirmayer et al. points out, "if the text stands for a hard-won rational order, imposed on thought through the careful composition of writing, the body provides a structure to thought that is, in part, extra-rational and disorderly. This extra-rational dimension to thought carries important information about emotional, aesthetic, and moral value" (324-325). Der Kolk recalls a life experience when he worked as a nurse practitioner in the late 1990s, in a Seattle area community health clinic. Many of his patients were from the refugee camps of Bosnians and Ukrainians (67). Among the most heart-aching patients was a Bosnian girl of four years whose teeth were rotted to the gum line after her mother had tried to make her calm by giving her a sugary soaked rag to soak to flee the civil war. Additionally, the language interpreter has said to him that the kid's elder brother had been murdered and that her mother was raped during the war time. He took the child to the children hospital where they have removed all her teeth through a surgery and put child dentures instead till her adult teeth showed up. At the beginning he tried to

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send the mother to a talk therapy for recovery, and then he realized that a massage therapy is better for her case to deal with her traumas with a female therapist who is well informed in trauma studies. Maddy Coy is a UK-based examiner who handles cases of female victims who survived prostitution or sexual abuse especially when young. The type of trauma based therapy that worked with this category was the yoga along with massage. Both types are crucial for the recovery. The employment of the aforementioned body based trauma therapy is usually important for healing. When making the body work, it helps the traumatized to restore a new emphasis to show the victim what the body can do instead of what has been done to the body (qtd in Wilne 90). Laura Van Dermout Lipsky et al. points out that sociologists and psychologists and whoever works in health care and other serving professions are frequently using their works as a form of trauma mastery. As such, they are expected to help not only others who are unsustainable and disparaging, but also themselves. She goes on to declare that the strenuous efforts scholars go through are made to attain “self-discovery and self-empathy” (Lipsky et al 159). She mentioned that scholars doing research on trauma have been not only successful to a certain degree to help the world, but were also successful in mending their own souls. In her book, *In the Body of the World*, she confined a part for world repair as her personal role models and that this approach for healing trauma is pivotal at both the personal and professional levels.

The scope of trauma studies in literary criticism attained considerable attention in 1996 after Cathy Caruth has published her own book *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* and Kali Tal's *Worlds of Hurt: Reading the Literatures of Trauma*. Early studies established the early beginning to literary trauma theory by spreading the notion of trauma as an indescribable event. Cathy Caruth is a pioneer in the psychoanalytic and post structural approach. She suggests that trauma is a type of problem that cannot be solved as it is related to the unconscious that enlightens the intrinsic oppositions of experience and language. Michelle Balaev advocates that the history of the concept of trauma is versatile because it is teeming with

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conflicting theories and ongoing debates which open the gate for numerous definitions of the term trauma (23). In her comparative study *We Heal From Memory* (2000), Cassie Premo Steele studies the healing possibility of witnessing in literature. This comparative analysis deals with trauma in three women's poetry, as well as the treatment or healing process each woman presents in her work through the use of image, metaphor and re-immagination. Every one of the three poets alters real life experiences into a literary narrative. Each poet's use of image, metaphor, and "re-immagination" turn a "trauma of history into poetry of witness" (Steele 5). Steele claims that poetry allows each writer to deal with personal traumas through narrative. Through narrative, the writer also presents the reader, their witness, with possibilities to heal from similar personal or historical trauma. According to Steele, this healing renovation renders poetry as a means of healing. It allows a witnessing of traumatic events shared by principal female characters or others like the case of sexual abuse and incest. Steele adheres a detailed course: "poetry turns wordless images of the traumatic memory and feelings of pain, into a shared narrative—a beginning of witnessing" (Steele 8).

When dealing with autobiographical poetry, Steele relates the poet's work with his or her own personal life. In fact, her own analysis of traumatic events in poetry emphasizes the "gaps in knowledge and experience that provide clues to a traumatic event," and "signs of having survived trauma in each writer's work" (Steele 6). Nonetheless, Gay Wilentz's *Healing Narratives: Women Writers Curing Cultural Dis-Ease* (2000) infers that "wellness narratives" address cultural "dis-ease and the latter's are mainly narratives written by female writers. Wilentz illustrates the manner some novels heal cultural or historical illnesses. She exclusively investigates Black women's novels in the U.S. and the Caribbean; writers who explore the residual features of their African past to comprehend the postcolonial slavery and the postcolonial distress that thwart the development of their societies. When it comes to curing a cultural dis-ease, Wilentz questions herself why female writers specifically write about healing and make it vivid in the novel as a

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favored form of expression. Wilentz figures out that the authors whom she studies deliberately write: “healing narratives and community-based models of healing with the objective to heal their communities and to re-establish women’s role as the custodian of the culture (Wilentz 3). However, this type of narrative is not confined to the novel genre. Poetry, autobiographical testimonies, memories shared in diaries and performances may function as literary healing tools. For instance, Steele and Fahey work with poetry and autobiographical fiction. However, novel, poetry, autobiographical testimonies and performance can also be considered as a healing narrative. Defining literature as a healing art, Terry Eagleton’s *Introduction to Literary Theory*, refers to the novel as a consolation or a solace as the plot is written to recover a missing object (87).

Gay Wilentz’s infers that a “healing discourse heals both the self and the community from socially constructed diseases, on a metaphorical level. She argues that self-esteem and “discredited” healing practices make up a healing discourse that “[repairs] fragmented communities and dis-eased cultures” (Wilentz 3). Wilentz contends that literature can be considered as a healing apparatus by stressing the role of language through the course of healing. Each writer works with the means of art that best works for him or her as a healing apparatus. For example, Cassie Premo Steele uses poetry, Wilentz writes novels, and Alicia Lynn Fahey uses autobiography as a means of healing. When focusing on Latin American and Latina women writers, Fahey states that they emphasize or focus on fictional explorations, autobiographies and the complexity of past personal and political traumas and the psychological struggle to cure that type of pain. In her previously analyzed books, the autobiographical tone shows a protagonist who utters a struggle and strives to redeem his uncertain and wounded identity to repair a wounded identity. So, the emphasis, here, is mainly psycho-political. She establishes a direct relationship between personal and political realms, and demonstrates how each protagonist’s personal injuries stem from historical events and/or repressive cultural prejudices. Alicia Fahey

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pinpoints how each autobiography proposes a different model for social transformation within society model for social transformation within society (Fahey xii). Alecia Fahey identifies injury as a wound that engages both the body and the mind. Portrayals of the bodily injury, disease or sexual frustrations are related to the traumatic state of the protagonist through her literary works in general. Additionally, she argues that the recoveries that are associated with either the psyche or the body both revive the body, “Insofar as women’s bodies are revealed here as repressed or scarred by acts of repression and violence, the vision in each novel is to revive the body. Recovery is depicted as sexual, spiritual, sensual, and erotic” (xv). To revitalize the spot of scars, repression and abuse, sexuality is an integral part for the healing process.

1.9. Clinical Psychological Perceptions on Trauma from the DSM

The American psychiatric association, in the fourth edition of its diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders, associates the term trauma with some integral symptoms. Among these; we may site recurrent and disturbing recollections of the traumatic event; psychic numbing of emotional anesthesia and feelings of alienation. Baranowsky et al. argue that there is a cumulative emotional effect and psychological wound that is passed on among generations and that is known as intergenerational trauma (87). This type of trauma can culminate to higher rates of mental problems. The cumulative emotional effects and psychological wounding that is transmitted across generations is also known as “intergenerational trauma” which also lead to higher rates of mental health and physical health issues within communities of Color (Baranowsky et al. 56).

Kali Tal made a clear distinction between the trauma of combat veterans and the trauma of sexual abuse victims. He states that soldiers in the battle are considered as both victims and victimizer. However, sexual abuse victims especially women tend to derecognize the means of violence applied to them due to their powerlessness. On the opposite side, soldiers and warriors are aware about the vulnerability of their acts and hence recognize the tools of violence (80). In

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Australia, the reliable investigative reference for mental disorders and mental health problems is the *American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders* (DSM 12). The DSM's defines psychological trauma, as related to the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder through a number of criteria which remain controversial. Controversy, here, has been sustained after publishing the most recent edition of the Manual (DSM 30). The first figure recalls diagnostic criteria for post traumatic stress disorder. The first one being the stressor refers to the person who was exposed to traumatic event. This can be: death, threatened death, actual or endangered injury, sexual violence, etc. The aforementioned situations may happen indirect exposure, witnessed in person, hearing indirectly that a close friend or a close relative passed away or simply has been exposed to a violent or accidental traumatic incident, being exposed to frequent or intense traumatic incidence through electronic media, television, movies, or pictures, etc.

The second criterion entitled, intrusion symptoms, refers to the traumatic event that is steadily re-experienced in one of the following manners; frequent, unintentional, and invasive memories. It must be noted that if a child who is older than the age of six may express those symptoms in a repetitive manner. Other symptoms may appear in a form of traumatic nightmares; this may appear in the form of horrific dreams especially with children. Nonetheless, other symptoms may encompass dissociative reactions; like flashbacks, which may happen in a continuum from succinct episodes to total fainting. The victim may also have an extreme and an enduring distress when exposed to traumatic reminders.

The third criterion being avoidance include the following perspectives: constant effortful prevention of upsetting trauma-related stimuli following the event, trauma-related thoughts or feelings, trauma-related external reminders (e.g., people, places, conventions, activities, objects, or situations).

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The fourth criterion of trauma is the negative alterations in terms of cognition and mood. Negative changes or alterations in terms of reflection or mood may begin or get worse after the traumatic event has taken place. The victim may show an inability in recalling the main features of the traumatic event, such as amnesia due to injuries happening at the level of the head, alcohol or drugs, he or she may be distorted revealing negative beliefs about oneself or the environment where the person lives; the victim may loath himself or herself saying: I am the worst person in this damn world. Therefore, the victim keeps victimizing himself or herself or sometimes even blaming the whole universe for what has happened. Furthermore, the victim may have persistent negative trauma-related emotions such as fear, horror, anger or shame. The victim may also show a lack of interest in his or her pre-traumatic activities and, hence, settles to a sedentary life style as an alienated and detached individual in addition to being unable to express any positive emotion. However, The fifth criterion of trauma as noted by the DMS is related to alterations in stimulation and reactivity that starts or worsen after the traumatic event. This may include the following aspects: bad-tempered or violent behaviour, self-distractive or uncontrolled behavior, hypervigilence, extravagantly flabbergasted response, difficulties in concentration, sleep disturbance. The aforementioned criteria are classified as traumatic perspectives after being ceaselessly repeated for six months after the traumatic experience. The last perspective as related to trauma is what is called exclusion. An individual diagnosed with a high level of severe trauma may have the following reaction to trauma-related stimuli. The first one being depersonalization; which means that this person may be perceived as an outsider or watcher. The victim may not be only detached from the whole world but even detached from himself or herself. He may not even believe that the event has happened to him personally; he feels like it is a dream. This would lead to another criterion called derealization; which ultimately implies an experience of unreality, distance and distortion I.e things are not and may not seem to be real for the person.

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The DSM-V's predecessor, the DSM distinguishes three kinds of trauma victims: those who had a direct encounter with the stressor like war veterans or sexually abused victims); those who experienced the stressor vicariously like taking part of a traumatic event experienced by others.; and those who acknowledge the stressor through media or in other words through information like those who saw and heard about 9/11 attacks' television coverage. However, the third category of 'victim' aroused controversy. Richard McNally advances that the prevalence of television in particular means that, in the developed world, 'most people today qualify as trauma survivors' (10). Clinicians point out that "PTSD symptoms have appeared with dental patients after having their wisdom tooth extracted" (De Jongh et al 123). Nonetheless, they have noticed that PTSD after giving birth to a healthy child; even the natural act of giving birth, or what (Olde et al. 6), call a "routine delivery, which may lead to extreme symptoms of PTSD "which require an urgent cure to the stressor. Another form of traumatic event leading to PTSD is sexual jokes at the work place which may ultimately lead to humiliation of the person. In this regard, it is stated "any unit of classification that simultaneously encompasses the experience of surviving Auschwitz and that of being told rude jokes at work must, by any reasonable lay standard, be a nonsense, a patent absurdity"(McNally 387).

Now that we have a clinical definition of the term trauma as provided by mental health practitioners and those included in the DSM, it is important to have a less technical definition. Trauma is also defined as being the emotional and psychological result of unexpected tense events that shake any sense of security rendering the person helplessly vulnerable in a perilous world. Traumatic events tend to include a hazard to life. Hence, any circumstances that culminate to an overwhelmed feeling can be called traumatic, even if it does not engage any physical damage. This means that it is not the objective facts that decide if the event is traumatic or not but rather, the subjective emotional encounter of the incident perse. Consequently, the "more distressed a person feels, the more likely he or she is to be traumatized"(Olde et al13). One of the pitfalls of the DSM-V's definition of trauma is its concentration on the extreme stressor or an acute exposure

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‘violent, threatened, or serious events like the aforementioned perspectives shown through the different criteria. The limitation is shown in not highlighting the less acute, but more perpetuating stressor. PTSD symptoms have been noted in survivors of imprisonment or internment, people living in refugee camps or war-zones, and children whose parents’ relationship is emotionally abusive, even where these individuals have not been directly exposed to ‘actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence’. Perhaps the key understanding of PTSD is that the stressor(s) which produced the trauma are now objectively in the past, but the person continues to relive or revisit these stressors subjectively in the present—or must invest energy in avoiding doing so—to the detriment of their present well-being. This is an important point, in both the creative work and the current theoretical investigation of narratives of trauma.

The notion of clinical trauma is linked to the aforementioned symptoms, whereas the notion of literary trauma is related to “trauma narratives and writing of trauma survivors” (Tal, 117). It is important, at this point, to draw a clear cut distinction between literary trauma and clinical trauma. The main discrepancy manifests itself from the previous discussion. Clinical trauma is related to psychological symptoms witnessed by people, whereas literary trauma is related to literary characters witnessing some dire traumatic experiences and more importantly how they recover from those experiences. In this respect, recovery is aligned to what Ann Garland calls “the capacity to get on with it and in reasonable good spirits, rather than to get over it” (5).

1.9. Conclusion

All in all, this chapter is a sort of an all inclusive overview about the notion of trauma as related to literature and psychology. The researcher tried to make a clear cut distinction between literary trauma theory and psychological trauma theory by highlighting the contributions of scholars of both fields. In addition to that, the researcher tried to illustrate and, hence, exemplify from some female narratives.

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The upcoming part will shed light on the notion of therapy through narratives and more focally female narratives. The crucial point to be highlighted is how the therapeutic energy of metanarrative is made possible. More interestingly, we will focus on how literature and psychology are intertwined to foreground such a function.

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There are some stories that resist telling. Heather Walton argues that some stories cannot be told without domesticating the pain and the horror of the experience, and that new ways of speaking need to be found: 'What is needed is not narrative but poesis; images, symbols and metaphors that carry the pain of trauma without committing the blasphemy of trying to represent, comprehend or reconcile the horror in story form.' [. . .] This poses the question as to whether ritual comes into its own when words and stories are inadequate. [. . .] Perhaps there is an elusive element in ritualizing which takes us where storytelling alone cannot go. (Walton, Heather, "Speaking in Signs").

2. Introduction

Even if writing as a healing therapy to trauma is neither original nor innovative, methodical inspection of its effectiveness has taken place just recently. When reviewing the book of Suzette Henke *Shattered Subjects: Trauma and Testimony in Women's Life-Writing* (1999), there is a quantum jump in the literary productions that relate to the widespread use and benefits of therapeutic writing that may help curing the traumatic experiences human beings tend to encounter in life. Thus, by means of what the scholar Henke coins scriptotherapy, writers and female writers in particular show how the human characters can overcome any traumatized experience through literary writing. Thanks to writing, the narrator can be incorporated in an act that reinforces the thinking skills, and comes up with positive therapy results. Bayu Wardianto et al. argue that the use of written imagery in writing a story, poem, or journal is a tool of scriptotherapy that can be used to equip the author with more material by bringing the

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unconscious to the level of consciousness. Laurie Moore purported that imagery is universal and an unusual model for helping people change, and that it is most of the times considered as an event or a way of being which can ultimately be more concrete and visible through literary writing (45).

In a point of fact, poetry has often been considered as one of the most widely used forms of creative writing in therapeutic healings. Panel Philip et al. claim that employing poetic writing generally as a tool for assessing disorders, individuality functioning and conduct may provide psychological development (67). Sihem Magaji adduces that bibliotherapy was known as: “bibliocounselling, bibliopsychology, book matching, literatherapy, library therapeutics, guided reading and biblioguidance” (14). Likewise, Bijal Sah refers to this guided reading of written materials in gaining understanding or solving problems as relevant to a person’s therapeutic need” (23). On parallel thought, scriptotherapy is seen as an intentional written act that is designed for healing ends. The concept of scriptotherapy, as coined by Henke, explains that writing about trauma causes personal and public healing and lessening of the symptoms that are associated with trauma. Henke’s inspection of her female authors’ autobiographical writings denote the approach a writer/victim can produce, or as Jeniffer Freyd states, an “episodic interpretation and integration of previously disjointed sensory and affective memories” (34).

The present chapter will tackle the issue of trauma survival as related to the use of scriptotherapy in female narratives. Light will be shed on the importance of expressive writing in the development of the psychological, and hence the physical health. The first focused attention will exhibit the general theoretical background of the term as well as its literary evolution and influence on both psychology and literature. Moreover, the etymological origin of the term will be shown in accordance to the development of the term by Suzette Henke and other scholars. Nonetheless, light will be shed on the notion of trauma survival through scriptotherapy from the point of view of Henke, who shows how this notion developed through the study of six female

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narratives. Finally, some of the most integral means of literary writing, as shown by Samuel Gladding and Melanie Wallace in their study, '*Scriptotherapy: Eighteen Writing Exercises to Promote Insight and Wellness*' will reveal the most used therapeutic literary means for psychic disorders. Such techniques may include: writing autobiographies, writing poetry, writing diaries, letters, poems, optimistic notes, therapeutic fairy tales, metaphors, etc. All together, these techniques prove to be a successful way to get individuals out of distress and anxiety caused by traumatizing experiences.

2.1. Theoretical Background of the Term Scriptotherapy

Ortic Silvia Pellicer contends that in the 1990s, literary memoirs were the main trendy production which became the bridges between creative writing and reality (12). Indeed, they have pervaded the actual life writing genres as stated by Alison Light (4). Contemporary scholars, especially those who pertain to Yale University in the 1990s, like Cathy Caruth, Geoffrey Hartman or Shoshana Felman, apply the medical thoughts of psychic traumatic courses to the analysis and interpretation of works of fiction which ultimately paved the way for trauma studies (Whitehead 2). Trauma calls for the representation and description of the indescribable and, hence, functions in opposition to any consistent narration or description of the self. This concern inaugurated a new life writing genre that was born out of the conjugal relationship between trauma and testimony. Regarding this, Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub believe that world societies endured an adversity in witnessing due to the disturbing historical happenings that pervaded the 20th century and which urgently need an oral or written testimonies so as to be worked through. Sigmund Freud 's (-68) "and Carl Jung" argue that the healing process starts when the traumatized victim is capable to render the traumatic events into a sequential narrative. That is to say that the essence of healing emerges when trauma is expressed.

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On the same research line, Suzette Henke has provided a definition of the term scriptotherapy as, “the process of writing out and writing through traumatic experience in the mode of therapeutic re-enactment” (xiii). Consequently, one of the key targets of traumatic life writing would be to express certain excruciating emotional crises that could not be expressed or talked about by the writer. Thus, “that what cannot be spoken may be written” (Henke xviii). Rendering traumatic experience into a narrative form becomes more complicated when the traumatic event is related to the post-Holocaust periods. Lawrence Langer argues that scholars of Holocaust Studies believe that among the major factors that led this topic to be highly debatable is the human inability to face Nazi genocide (20). But, critics such as Judith Hartman, Soshana Felman and Dori Laub “consider that oral and written, literary and non-literary testimonies are useful tools for the individual and collective working through trauma as well as for the preservation of historical memories for future generations”(Henke 57-74).It is important to attest that multiple trauma narratives are considered as fundamentally testimonial writings, autobiographies and memories. Regarding this, Shoshana Felman defines a testimonial act as,“a report of an event that relates what has been lived, recorded and remembered. Memory is conjured here essentially in order to address another, to impress upon a listener, to appeal to a community. ... To testify is thus not merely to narrate but to commit oneself, and to commit the narrative, to others” (204). Commenting on this, it is blatant that in any testimonial act that is articulated by the speaker or the writer an emotional testimony is conveyed to the listener or the reader who is considered as the receiver of the poignantly shocking truthful event.

2.2. Theoretical Bases of Scriptotherapy in Literature and other Disciplines

In his article, *Scriptotherapy: Therapeutic Writing as a Counseling Adjunct* (2016), Ritchard Riordan advocates that the term scriptotherapy is used to indicate a variety of written formulas that are employed for therapeutic aims. There are a lot of theoretical bases that launch the explanation

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of the therapeutic effects of writing. The psychosomatic⁷ theory of inhibition, for instance, advocates that repression of individual thoughts, emotions, or obvious behaviours, especially those feelings or ideas that are disturbing or upsetting; traumatic, is a variety of both physiological and psychological employment (Pennebaker 90). When writing is enacted with trauma, it permits the person to cognitively access the event and regain a sense of control, and thus reducing the work of inhibition. In this concern, Ritchard Riordan assumes: “Properly framed, writing is thought to assuage obsessive internal ruminations and continued negative emotions that can exacerbate health and psychological problems” (15). Through writing, the writer can be integrated in an active physical practice that enhances the thinking skills which, accordingly reinforce the processes related with positive therapy results. Consequently, it is more convenient to probe scriptotherapy from different perspectives or standpoints. Ritchard Riordan is for the idea that the use of written imagery in writing a story, poem, or journal is assumed to equip the author with more material by bringing the unconscious to the level of consciousness. Samule Gladding purported that imagery is a universal and an usual model for helping people change, and that it is most of the times considered as in the mind of an event or a way of being which can ultimately be more concrete and visible through writing. Actually, “poetry has often been cited as one of the most widely used forms of creative writing in therapeutic healings” (Mazza 87).

Other scholars have noted that those who write poetry figure out that precedent suppressed thoughts and feelings can be written and shared, faced and pondered, and that “personality incorporation, tension reduction, and self-understanding are improved” (qtd in Riordan 67). Writing poetry may also be helpful in identifying and overcoming the psychic disturbances a person goes through. H L Silverman contends that employing poetic writing generally as a tool for assessing disorders, individuality functioning and conduct. In other words: “the use of poetry as a marker on the disturbed-to-healthy continuum” (14). Ritchard Riordan

⁷The idea that learned or psychological factors may influence somatic structure and function is not new but dates to prehistoric times (1). The early Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans accepted varying forms of the **psychosomatic** hypothesis.

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explained that writing original poetry helped people defeat anxieties and disturbances of belated adolescence (76). J C Fuchel advances that scriptotherapy is highly recommended for people who suffer from psychic troubles; they are asked to write freely without consideration of style, grammar, or other regulations. Keller et al. assumed that the use of journal-keeping techniques with talented teenagers endorsed an elevated quality of self-analysis (3). They highlighted the significance of focusing on progression of those who suffered from post traumatic stress disorder through the use of scriptotherapy and its multiple techniques (Keller et al.7).

When using scriptotherapy on a personal level, Graves Paul records a short story written by a rape victim. Composing the story recalled the rape scenes back into her memory which she was able to go through when she only mastered the trauma by changing the fictional contexts and creating a new effect. For Paul Graves, only by suggesting that the attack had occurred to someone dissimilar from herself was the lady able to revive the experience through writing the story (87). Her urge to understand the trauma and the compulsory effect of the apprehension and psychological disturbance caused by it was essential in her writing. In his counseling attempts of a six-year old young girl who had been sexually abused, Matias Lindahl used letter writing to investigate the trauma condition of a girl who had been sexually abused. The girl performed sexual scenes and her talks were constantly filthy. She talked about sex in pornographic way, but could not admit her personal sexual abuse. To help her overcome her trauma, the counselor lastly used the tactic of telling her that she was involved with another (fictitious) girl who was her age and who had been sexually abused. Lindahl ensured the little girl that the other girl asked for a written letter from another person to help her work through the sexual abuse she experienced. The resulting letters reduced the acting-out behaviour and, hence, boosted her self esteem which ultimately brought about a therapeutic or a cathartic release providing her with an ability to restore her childhood innocence and dismiss the idea she is not a good girl. Letters that are written but never delivered to the addressee have been reported as powerfully therapeutic (Lindhal

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19). Ellen Bass and Laura Davis encouraged the survivor of sexual abuse to write a letter to the abuser, and they give the specific instructions that the letter should not be sent. Consequently, the survivor is free to write without fear or apprehension or feeling of disgrace and embarrassment. Jessy Jravley and Anne Mcleney claimed that journal writing is generally used as a treatment device for survivors of childhood incest and sexual abuse. They consider it as a useful tool in recording inner lives of characters' feelings and thoughts, who undergo therapeutic sessions (9). Jussi Valton believes that writing an autobiography is highly recommended for collective treatment for those who suffer from compulsive gambling. Working with over 200 in an intensive treatment program of thirty days clients indicated that writing the autobiography assisted in restoring the clients' self-discipline, self-acceptance, responsibility, control, and personal choice (23).

Recent studies show that a significant body of literature proved that the practice of reading and writing can effectively transform the human psyche. In her dissertation entitled *Poetry and Story Therapy: The Healing Power of Creative Expression*, Geri Giebel Chavis (2011) argues that poetry plays a unique healing and motivating role in human issues. She confirms that unrivalled place of poetry is well recognized throughout history. In this regard, she states:

The shamans and medicine men and women of ancient civilizations chanted poems as part of their healing art. In ancient Greece, Apollo, the patron god of poetry and music, is also recognized as the divinity of medicine and healing . . . Through the multifaceted Apollo, poetry is associated with light, sun and prophecy. The Biblical David soothed the cares of Saul with his psalms. Early dramas that provided inspiration and catharsis for entire communities also were performed in poetic form (Chavis19).

The healing outcomes of expressive and literary writing are also raised in James Pennebaker's *Writing to Heal* (2004). He encourages people to read and write poetry, for poetry functions as a

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cure of people's psychic disorders. He believes that the inclusion of poetry as a therapeutic device is not proved by scientists despite its usefulness in psychotherapy. Pennebaker reports, "as readers we might understand intuitively that expressing emotions about powerful experiences through poetry should have positive health effects. Hence, '[u]nlike straight prose writing, poetry can often capture the contradictions inherent in most emotions and experiences'" (Pennebaker 145). This, similarly, means that poetry can act as an adjunct of scriptotherapy for its redemptive function since it alleviates the intense feelings and tough experiences encountered by people. James Pennebaker's claims go hand in hand with Cassie Steele's study that poetry is an exceedingly efficient structure of eyewitness to the traumatic experiences in human relationships, for it permits the humanity to witness how survivors have gone and worked through their traumatized experiences to recreate themselves. Cassie Steele believes that: "poetry, like trauma, takes images, feelings, rhythms, sounds, and the physical sensations of the body as evidence," and that "[t]rauma is recorded as images and feelings." So, it is poetry – 'with its visual images, metaphors, sounds, rhythms, and emotional impact – that can give voice to having survived' (3).

Likewise, Walter Kalaidjian is of the idea that poetry produces a sort of a reasonable way of the voicing of trauma, just like testimonial narratives do (3). This resonates well with Cathy Caruth who infers "that any traumatic experience ought to be spoken in a language that is literary and poetic, a language that defies, even as it claims our understanding" (Unclaimed Experience 5). Central to the previously mentioned claims is "the agency of the letter in poetic discourse testifies [y] to the truth of traumatic reference in ways that make special claims on us in excess of our normal roles as authors and readers" (Kalaidjian 26). In their *Foreword to Testimony: Crises on Witnessing in Literature, Psychology, and History* (1992), Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub presume that literature and art are one of the most convenient modes of "witnessing what we do not yet know of our lived historical relation to events of our times", and that art can be a 'precocious mode' of 'witnessing' and accessing reality" (xx:). Nick Mдика studies poems in

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Molande's Seasons as illustrations of poetic language that exhibit the already lived historical relations to events of our times and assist us to access the actuality. She argues that the poems she discusses provide as Malunga states “refreshing and poignant commentary on the social ills characterizing the Malawian political landscape” (2010, p. vii), and, consequently, composes the trauma story. Kate Schick pinpoints that for a trauma story to support therapeutic healing, it should include four elements. Primary, the story recalls actually what happened, depicting the series of events that triggered their trauma. Secondly, the narrative should deploy larger socio-cultural elements, exhibiting the history, customs, and values that foreground the narrative. Thirdly, the work of fiction should assimilate the survivor whose personal and societal implications of suffering require healing. Finally, the trauma narrative builds a connection with a listener – public testimony; that is to say, it is healing not only for those who write their own stories, but also for those who listen and read (Schick 63).

Stephanie Hilger states that the scopes of literature and medicine are interconnected as they are related with their common interest on the human condition in all the possible ways they occur; be they physical or psychological. She, further, argues that literature and medicine are strongly flexible because they contain varying concerns. Experts in the field of literature and medicine have been investigating a wide variety of interconnected topics such as narrative medicine (which implicates the analysis of the narrative of patients’ and doctors’ stories), the healing and therapeutic essence of reading (bibliotherapy) and writing literature (scriptotherapy), writing about illnesses (pathography), the pedagogical and academic employment of literature courses and lectures in the curriculum of medicine, the function of doctor-writers, the demonstration of the medical phenomenon in literary texts, the historical case medicine as a literary genres, and altering literary presentations of sickness, just to mention the names of some prevailing spots of investigation and inquiry (Hilger 28).

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2.3. The Literary Evolution of Scriptotherapy in Literature, and its Influence on psychology and Medicine

As far as literature is concerned, its healing role has, almost certainly, been acknowledged since the very beginning of the written communication. Even, the oral lore which was distinguished by the tradition of storytelling, that preceded the written communication revealed a feeling of relief for the audience. In fact, the oral literature or oral tradition could ease the pain and concerns of the daily activities people were involved in. One of the reasons why this oral communication remains alive in many cultures around the world is “the therapeutic psychological relief it conveys” (Hilger 17). Unlike scriptotherapy, the expected aim of relief is attained through reading books and some supplementary written narratives. In scriptotherapy, on the other hand, writing is proved to be the cause of safety, comfort and wellness. Stephanie Hilger adds that the common literary materials that both bibliotherapy and scriptotherapy share may comprise poetry, fiction, pamphlets, educational guidebooks, and multiple written materials like diaries, journals, autobiographies that are selected by clinicians for their patients as part written assignments proposed by health and medical professionals (17).

Using the written words as a curing therapy has an interesting history across various cultures around the world. The very first use of language for medicinal healing was practiced by the shamans who were considered as doctors of the early prehistoric civilizations. The shamans used to chant and sing poetry for soothing the members of the tribe. Afterwards, in the fourth millennium BCE, Ancient Egyptians “are said to have sought healthful benefits through the ingestion of papyrus inscribed with meaningful words and dissolved in solutions” (Hilger 26). Back then at that period, it was thought that words had the possibility to cure illnesses by means of an arrangement of the powers of medicine and magic. Ancient Egyptians were vehemently convinced that the words were powerful enough to heal the soul that they came up with that the

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phrase 'The Healing Place of the Soul' which was emblazoned over the library of Alexandria in Egypt. Accounts of ancient Egypt recorded that ancient Egyptians had a sacred library which bore the name the healing place. This indicates that the place that hosts words and letters is a solace for readers and knowledge seekers.

The interconnectedness between writing and medical healing can also be reckoned in the faith and performances of the Ancient Greeks (800–156 BC). From the worship and devotion to Apollo who is considered as the Greek god of literature and the healing arts to Aristotle's implication of the medical term 'katharsis' in Poetics, the Greeks believed that the written arts had a healing medical potential to humankind. In fact, watching and listening to tragic and or comedic plays was used for emotional relief; a practice that was endorsed by the first Greek physicians and later Roman physicians, "In the first century AD, the Roman physician Soranus prescribed tragedy for manic patients and comedy for his depressed clients and is considered by many to be the first poetry therapist" (qtd in Hilgar 94). These preliminary challenges at curing the ill and mentally disturbed people through the application of artistic performances and literary language ultimately culminated to the usage of literature per se for medicinal practices. Essentially, the initiative of harmonizing one's feelings through the reading and writing of comedy or tragedy; dramatical discourse would be sustained in the future years.

The notion of implementing literature as a device as an intended goal of emotional wellness was, first, related to the condition of melancholia in the fifth century BC by Hippocrates. Feelings related to melancholia were, first, believed to be a type of "bodily illness" (Hippocrates 8). Notwithstanding, in Elizabethan England, the condition of, as recorded by Stephanie Hilger, melancholia was considered as a disease of exterior powers, intrigued by excessive exertion brought on by studying or traveling a lot or due to emotional disappointments with one's work or connections (56). Andrea Leslie in her book, *Melancholy and Identity in Early Modern England:*

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Lady Mary Worth and the Literary Tradition (2011), argues that by the “end of the sixteenth century, melancholy became an identity that expresse[d] feeling[s] of loss, rejection, isolation, and sadness caused by external experiences” (2). The Elizabethans assumed that the reasons of these symptoms were more than a corporeal and psychological condition and were somehow connected with one’s spirit. On the same line of thought, Jeremy Schmidt in his book *Melancholy and the Care of the Soul: Religion, Moral Philosophy and Madness in Modern England* (2008) reported that the sixteenth-century treatments for melancholy as examined cleric, priests and physician intended to cure both the illnesses of body and the soul (11). Consequently, early modern writers fashioned texts as therapeutic languages which focused on Christian discussions of the good and human happiness. Serving as tools for instruction on and prevention of melancholy, books such as Richard Burton’s *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621) offered a kind of self-help manual to the reader reading and writing one’s way to wellness and claimed a curative purpose intrinsic to the act of reading (Schmidt 02). According to Stéphanie Hilger, Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1628) was an attempt to “banish melancholy in the fashion of a spell, recalling traditions of healing through magical means”(6). Robert Burton believed that reading his *Anatomy*, which scrutinized the problems of melancholia, could generate the subsequent positive results: “anatomize this humor of melancholy, through all its parts and species, as it is a habit, or an ordinary disease, and that philosophically, medicinally ... show the causes, symptoms, and several cures of it, that it may be better avoided” (72). It is inferred through the quote that the text suggests to offer the reader enough details to help the person who suffers of melancholic feelings to recognize melancholy’s symptoms in themselves. When they identify their melancholic state, the readers could find their healing through the selction of certain special like the Bible modifying their diet, and being involved in a healthful practice which would, thus, help them surpass their depression. So, Hilger tried to confirm that the positive outcomes were experienced as a consequence of Burton’s rhetorical ideas and the performance of reading per sey.

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The concept of writing therapy, history and research writing for therapeutic and curing ends was born out of the conjugal relationship between psychoanalytic therapies and literary studies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. “The initial psychotherapies of the 1890s used expressive therapies to relieve ailments associated with traumatic experiences” (Lepore et al. 3). Sigmund Freud was one of the physicians who brought on the need of expressing traumatic memories for the case of psychologically troubled patients to diagnose their situation. The outcome of Freud early research led to the emergence of:

psychotherapies that were developed to recover traumatic memories through the talking cure: Early psychotherapies were based on abreaction theory, which maintained that keeping traumatic experiences out of consciousness had adverse health effects that could be reversed by recovering the original memories of a trauma through techniques such as free association, talking, and releasing the appropriate effect associated with the trauma (Lepore et al. 3–4).

The quantum jump in psychiatric studies of patients and the cure of talking brought on new orientations associated with writing therapy. In *Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming* (1907), Sigmund Freud posited that the poet conjures up transmission of desires through writing which is similar to the way the daydreamer attains transmission of desires through dreams. Alice Brand and Richard Graves are of the view that “Freud’s connections between poetry and psychoanalysis [as well as] his practice of self- analysis and correspondence as a therapeutic medium dr[e]w... attention to the unexplored potential of writing for psychological wellness” (8). In fact, the publication of novels by 1920s revealed the interrelatedness between writing and therapeutic healing from mental disturbance. For instance, in the autobiographical novel *The Shutter of Snow* (1997), the writer Emily Holmes Coleman exhibited her psychological instability after she had as a postpartum depression following the birth of her son. This was explained further by Sophie

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Blanch in her paper entitled: *Writing self/delusion: Subjectivity and Scriptotherapy* in Emily Homlmes Coleman's 'The Shutter of the Snow', [she] explained how the act of daily writing, as well as the composition of her novel following institutionalization, helped her to write herself out of mental illness" (Blanch 220). Sophie Blanch explains further that this example is reminiscent of another literary text which is, *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1892) by the female author Charlotte Perkins. The text recalls the story of a woman who became crazy due to her inability of writing her own reflections on paper while going through a type postpartum depression. Accordingly, "These early examples of women's writing suggest that the ... process of self-articulation through writing functions as a source of conflict resolution" (Blanch 219).

Though talk therapy predated expressive and creative art therapeutic techniques which gained fame and popularity mainly during 1930s and 1940s, it was still used as a traditional way to treat traumatized individuals in counseling, "Practitioners of expressive therapies realized that people had different expressive styles—one individual may be more visual, another more tactile, and so forth" (Malchiodi in Hilger, 17). In order to treat diversity of mentally unstable patients, psychotherapists included different methods of healing besides writing. In this regard Malchiodi states:

Attempting to treat a broader range of patients with severe mental illness, psychotherapists began incorporating art, music, dance, and writing: Major psychiatric hospitals such as the Menninger Clinic in Kansas and St. Elizabeth's in Washington, D. C., incorporated the arts within treatment, both as activity therapies and as modalities with psychotherapeutic benefit (qtd in Hilder 5).

Within the 1950s and 1960s, art and poetry were used as psychiatric facilities in the United States. Research that occurred before in that time in 1940s and 1950s illustrated that writing was one of the most successful therapies to express and cure depressions. V Heverm indicates that

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Allport Cordon's use of Personal Documents in Psychological Science (1942) examined modern studies on diary and journal writing and suggested their increased implications in clinical contexts. On the same research line, M Landsman argues that patients could ameliorate their anxieties through writing as opposed to talking. He further assumed that writing demonstrated the swiftness of therapy sessions when revealing and examining the patients' commonly oblivious emotions and thoughts. Another interesting reference that foregrounds the importance of writing therapy to heal mental instabilities and emotional break downs is the rationale of Ellis Albert and Elis Debbie Joffe about Emotive Behaviour Therapy that was developed in 1955. Throughout this notorious yet innovative therapy, Ellis Albert and Elis Debbie Joffe articulated multiple writing devices "to help his patients understand the origins of their emotional turmoil and control damaging feelings" (qtd in Hervern 9).

Written communications as a curing therapy reached their zenith during the 1950s and 1960s as an outcome of many issues: "a mental health crisis in America, an increasing need for clinical psychotherapists to treat patients, and a need for treatments to achieve goals quickly" (Mazza 12). Since clinical psychologists were not physical doctors and, hence, were not able to prescribe medicines, their curing therapies included mainly oral and written therapies. For instance, in 1965, a symposium was held by the Psychologists Interested in the Advancement of Psychotherapy organization at the annual American Psychological Association convention. Much of the discussion focused on clinicians' experiences with patient written communications, such as letters and diaries. The conference proceedings, compiled by Leonard Pearson as *The Use of Written Communication in Psychotherapy* (Reid 328), focused on the success of employing writing in psychotherapy, which provided patients with a means for expressing and analyzing their emotions (Mazza 12).

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A broad diffusion of therapeutic researches were conducted in the 1970s investigating the results of writing when practiced in group therapy, counseling checkings, teenagers therapy, and poetry therapy. Lucien Buck and Arnon Kramer found that “using poetry therapy facilitates group process” (47). Consequently, group members became more receptive and less reluctant to group discussion (32). Wallace Gladding claimed that counselors and therapists contend that poetry is a productive tool for healing. He “emphasized that working with clients in structured ways to write poetry that can be therapeutic” (6). By the mid-1970s, journal writing, biographies, and diaries emerged prominently to be the foundation of therapeutic writing, “which touted its strength as proffering self-validation and self-help” (Brand 26). Inaugurating his research in the 1980s, James Pennebaker centralized most of his studies on:

expressive writing and the effects of writing on specific populations. Pennebaker’s experiments suggest that writing or talking about emotional issues can have multiple health benefits, including improved immune function, decreased number of physician visits, reduction in stress, improvement in grades, reductions in emotional and physical health complaints, and decreased depression (162–164).

Meanwhile, he reported that for the vast majority of people, “the mere act of disclosure is a powerful, therapeutic agent” (Pennebaker 162). Subsequently, the work between client and counselor produces a “coherent story that explains the problem and ... the cure. Therapeutic writing seems to function by creating for the author/patient a sense of coherence and the ability to find meaning in the events of life, which is then “linked to positive immune and health outcomes”(Pennebaker 165). In a nutshell, writing therapy helps people to make sense of upsetting events and “integrate[s] them into the flow of their lives” (Booth and Petrie 168).

Conducted studies in the 1990s were administered to confirm the positively helpful health effects of writing as connected with disease. In their research review, James Pennebaker et

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al. argued that artistically expressive written communications obtained long-term improvements and ameliorations in numerous patients' health problems like an inferior occurrence of doctor visits, a decrease in blood pressure and improved the function of liver which ultimately lead the patient to remain for few days in the hospital, "Promising results have also been reported in relation to writing and immune system functioning" (Pennebaker et al.4). Stanton and Burg in their study *Emotional Expression, Expressive Writing and Cancer* (2002) concluded that female patients' with tumor felt better about their illnesses when they expressed their emotions through writing. This research study noted a decline in the number of women whose stress rate was overrated. The wellbeing was as a consequence of expressive writing. A more current study by Perry Pauley et al. on men who suffered of testicular cancer affirmed the association between positive expressive writing and the redemption of the mental health state (199). Adam W. Carrico et al. used exercises that were based on human emotions to help patients infected with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), "Following 4 days of writing for 30 minutes a day, patients experienced lower HIV viral loads and higher levels of CD4+ lymphocytes. These findings bolster the already positive trend for using communication for health benefits" (30).

Not only can writing improve the physical health, but it can also benefit people in their everyday activities. For instance, in certain studies employing scriptotherapy, the score points averages of students improved (Pennebaker and Francis 96), the number of absenteeism from study lowered (Francis and Pennebaker 92), and participants intrusive thoughts decreased and their capacity of their memory was enhanced (Klein and Boals 20). All in all, therapeutic writing maintains an elevated position in healthcare as a safe tool for sustaining people with a better psychological and hence a physical health. When she wrote *The Wonders of Literature in Medical Education* (1982), Joane Trautmann was enrolled in the teaching literature to students of medical studies at Hershey Pennsylvania for 5 years; a time during which she had heard the most general reservations about the combination of such dissimilar disciplines. She began by tackling the

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oppositions that medicine and literature commonly expose. She noted that the two branches are fundamentally opposed in their methodologies, resources, and content as medicine is concerned with the real world and literature is concerned with the imaginary world. She rejected “the real versus the fictional” (32). For her, this contradiction is an unacceptable difference between medical and literary worlds. On the other hand, she came up with the concept of fictionality, and inferred that “the great literature of the past and present is one of our best sources for illuminations [not just illustrations] of many medical subjects” (35). The pivotal part of Trautmann’s essay appears as a response to the protestation that medicine is supposed to be “decisive and to the point” (36), whilst literature is vaguely hazy and indirect field that is ambiguously teeming with detailed metaphors, symbols, etc. It is specifically these features that render literature greatly helpful in medical education:

In short, to teach a student to read, in the fullest sense, is to help train him or her medically. To ask the medical student what is being said here—not at all an easy question when one must look at words in their personal and social contexts and when several things are being said at once —is to prepare him or her for the doctor-patient encounter (Trautmann 36).

She explains further that language is the device of diagnosis and therapy. It is a tool by which the patient’s needs are uttered and the doctor’s advice are transmitted. She, further, notes that “understanding the nuances of language, its cultural and ethnic variations and its symbolic content are as essential as any skills the clinician may possess” (Joane Trautmann 22). In this line of thought, she emphasizes the intrinsic vitality of language to both literature and medicine.

In her paper, *Scriptotherapy in Toni Morrison’s the Bluest Eye and Maya Angelo’s I know why the Caged Birds Sing*, Josephine Mcwail advances that literary critics have lately used findings related to the field of trauma researches when approaching contemporary female

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narratives by analyzing and exploring the written texts of traumatized artists like Anais Nin, Virginia Woolf, H.D. and others to mention but few. Most of these female writers use techniques of scriptotherapy in the evidently fictional autobiographical novels like Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* (1847) and edited by Currer Bell.(56) Suzette Henke in her seminal book *Shattered Subjects: Trauma and Testimony in Women's Life-Writing* (1999) examines life-writing state that both fictionalized autobiography as with H.D.'s "autobiographical fantasy," and the supposedly non-fiction works, like Sylvia Fraser's *My Father's House: A Memoir of Incest and of Healing* can use techniques of scriptotherapy as means of healing.(42) Josephine Mcwail assumes that *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison (1970) and *Maya Angelo's I know why the Caged Birds Sing* (1970) appear to go beyond the borders that exist between fiction and nonfiction though both of these works could be considered as examples of scriptotherapy. The aforementioned two books show identical themes that reveal the potential of women healing. The similarity between the two books lie in the fact that they were both published the same year, 1970, denoting experiences of individuals of who experienced traumatic experiences during the end of the great Depression that took place in the U.S. Suzette Henke remarks that "the twentieth century may well be remembered as a century of historical trauma" (xi). Prior to this, trauma studies, actually, started with World War I and the horrendous experiences of soldiers and civilians recuperating from a cruel war where they had bitterly suffered both from physical and psychological wounds. Shell shock as shown before was one term for this. Suzette Henke claims that any writer who composes his writing about trauma must have a recipient, and writing emphasizes the efficiency of disclosure (24).

2.4. The Concept of Scriptotherapy as Advanced by Henke and Other Scholars

Germinating from the Latin roots *scriptum*, denoting anything that is written and *therapia*, meaning to nurse or cure, scriptotherapy meshes adequately with its equivalent or

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counterpart, bibliotherapy. Bibliotherapy “refers to the guided reading of written materials in gaining understanding or solving problems relevant to a person’s therapeutic need” (Riordan and Wilson 506). On parallel lines, scriptotherapy can be considered as the deliberate use of writing designed to enhance therapeutic outcomes.

Although they focus on autobiographical writing, Henke's *Shattered Subjects* (1999) and Gilmore's *The Limits of Autobiography: Trauma and Testimony* (2011) consider the healing properties of testimonial narrative. The concept of scriptotherapy as coined by Suzette Henke can lead to the argument that writing about trauma causes personal and public healing and easing of the symptoms that are associated with trauma. Her examination of her female authors’ autobiographical writings denote the approach a writer/victim can produce, in Jennifer Freyd's words, an “episodic interpretation and integration of previously disjointed sensory and affective memories” (43). Suzette Henke's argument that scriptotherapy can recreate the self and redeem the shattered subject to reevaluate the past which relates to numerous fictional narratives that highlight protagonists who make strenuous effort to survive by inventing uplifting stories and self-concepts to recuperate the self, and hence, overcome the upsetting losses (56).

In accordance with Suzette Henke perspectives, Leigh Gilmore's choices of autobiographies mirror the contemporary increased insertion of women in narratives that defy oppressive social contexts (12). Silvia Pellicer highlights studies on incest and child abuse to denote the implication of such narrativees in reducing the symptoms of post traumatic stress disorders in children who have been exposed to sexual abuse. Jennifer Freyd's *Betrayal Trauma*, Karin Meiselman's *Resolving the Trauma of Incest*, and Judith Herman's *Father-Daughter Incest* supply a setting for locating the positions and interpersonal relationships of the main characters in *Bastard out of Carolina* and *The Bluest Eye*. Significant concerns in their works are the loss of the deceased mother, heartbreaks of betrayal, and psychic emotions that relate both the feelings of being

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abandoned and the fright of death. Long-standing incest, however, applies only to Allison's work (Henke 45-48). Scriptotherapy, or the process of writing out and writing through traumatic experience as a vehicle of therapeutic reenactment or recovery, as Henke explains, is frequent to women's autobiography in the twentieth century, "Though the act of writing is important to survivors' self-catharsis and in sharing pain, survivors also need public forums, the chance to connect with fellow survivors, to overcome shame and silence and to win the awareness if not empathy of readers" (Henke 21). As far as the readers are concerned, this can be a direct practice of healing. When a writer happens to address the readers' similar traumatic experience, it could have troubling or therapeutic outcomes judging by the reader's emotional ability for facing their situation. For the vast majority of trauma fiction writers, their utmost recompense is a feeling that their narratives was a means of healing for their readers.

The historian and theorist Dominick LaCapra explains that the functions of empathy and affect enable the critics to read the responses of those who survived traumatic experiences. Literary texts are considered as gates for readers' empathy LaCapra affirms. He focuses on texts that can lead the readers to work through trauma and put them into a critical as well as empathic approach (34). In *Holocaust Testimonies: the Ruins of Memory*, Lawrence Langer focuses on camp survivor testimonies to reveal several kinds of memories that demonstrate how the remaining self is reduced. For instance, humiliated or disgraceful memories evoke individuals' vulnerability in the face of heightened degrees of deficiency and aggression. Tainted memories, on the other hand, evoke past actions that recall a sense of a lost morality and normal behaviour. Unheroic memory ruins the happiness of liberation, for so much that is integral to the individual identity has been gone or compromised: beloved ones, self-respect, choice, and a sense of self. Lawrence Langer's combinations of memory and identity stresses the outcomes of missing relational ties, social status, moral orientations and all vital elements of the self (10). Suzette Henke records women autobiographers' and the enduring efforts they made to compose a

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consistent life narratives out of shattered identities that became tremendously inconsistent and confused due to incest, sexual abuse and the loss of close relatives. Since this chaos generates a deeply distressing sense of self, traumatized characters try to overcome this extreme disorientation and, hence, to resist it. Thereby, the attempt to generate or uphold a sense of organization and order to reject the fragmentation the characters became entangled in. To do so, a common strategy of scriptotherapy has been embodied in the female autobiographies to show how they, narrators/protagonists, survived trauma experiences through writing their narratives; the narrators/protagonists of trauma fiction.

Through the trauma narrative Silvia Pellicer states that readers are engaged to help in the reconstructing experience and the redemption of the self since trauma authors represent to them a multiplicity of voices, subject positionings, and symbolizing that underline the confusing and befuddling aspects as well as representative s or approximations for improvement. In the works of *Beloved* by Morrison (1987) and *Paco's Story* by Heinemann (2005), numerous voices, feelings, and occurrences blend together to create personal and collective memory and to cancel out silence and oblivion. Both Morrison and Heinemann deploy many narrators who provide a first- person testimony, witness characters who have been silenced by trauma, incite the protagonist's unwilling memory, or recommend shared suffering. Such narratives may, at times, underpin and sometimes face up one another, denoting both the possibility for allotment of the traumatic experience, thus, healing it (16-17).

Surviving the toughness of life in the mother's absence in *The Autobiography of My Mother*, Jamaica Kincaid reports how one might endure trauma with incomplete emotional resources. Jamaica Kincaid assumes that this traumatic experience inquires readers to imagine how it would be like to live without a mother: "how an individual could survive without the crucial early object relations with a maternal figure who can act as a safe psychic container,

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helping the child to fantasize, imagine, remember, and in short, process her experience of the world before taking it on herself” (106). Kincaid's account displays how the loss of this safe internal rest typically sustained by the mother can demolish the subject's ego arrangement, worldview, and potential relations. Moreover, Godwin and Rajasekaran argue that Scriptotherapy is a space where the writer displays his/her writing for therapeutic results. The novel *Push* (1996) by Sapphire reveals the role of writing in overcoming pain and suffering. The novel foregrounds the experience of the character Precious who witnesses various problems at infancy. In fact, before Precious reached the age of 16, she got pregnant two times outside wedlock due to paternal sexual abuse. As a result, she endured severe symptoms of psychic trauma that culminated to complete state of depression. Most difficulties she witnessed in life were related to her family. Those problems made her become lost, disheartened, ruthless, a dejected and heartless girl. One day her teacher motivated her to write to overcome the misery she has been through. Hence, by adopting the techniques of self- narration, she could reestablish her lost sense of self through writing. In this regard, Godwin and Rajasekaran claim: “Precious searches the opportunities to uplift her, and writing helps out. By writing, she finds a way to change her attitude and finds a different place in the classroom in which once she was considered rude. Writing serves as a way to heal. Scriptotherapy in her life helps her to get out the traumatic problems” (4).

In his book, *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence- from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (1997), Judith Herman notices the conflict that exists between the willingness to refute horrible events and the determination to announce them clearly as the essential dilemma of psychological trauma. He adds that the necessary need to make use of self-writing narrative techniques is required for any person who undergoes trauma for multiple factors (19). There could be authors who create narrative accounts for history records, or simply recall and record their personal experiences, but only few of the writers help themselves and their readers to survive. When witnessing tragic events in life and familiarizing those conditions in one's writing as a

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whole, one may generate an enormous impact on one's life as a whole. By means of scriptotherapy, writers try to overcome it through their writings. For Suzette Henke (1999), Scriptotherapy is a discursive horizon where all the psychological hurts and wounds that can cause painfully psychic sorrow to an individual are re-enacted, but for the sake of therapy and healing.

2.5. Scriptotherapy as a Means of Healing and Survival in Henke's Female Narratives

In her book, Suzette Henke coins the term *scriptotherapy* explaining that, whenever there is a case that requires a healing of the traumatic experience, the writer deploys literature as the process of scriptotherapy. She adds that the creative techniques to heal the self from the multiple damages that may be caused by the traumatic experience are the tools of scriptotherapy. Henke has mentioned many types of insufferable traumas as endured by the writers and the characters they use to portray their own suffering (xii). For instance, the traumas that are mainly found in the novels she has analyzed are linked to World War I, other traumas are related to pregnancies and marriage problems that occurred during this period, traumas triggered by parental seduction, etc. The reason behind such an attempt of healing trauma resides in the writers' personal traumatized experiences. She recalls that the stillbirth of Hilda Doolittle (the first writer referred to as H.D) child in 1915, jointly with her husband's leaving, triggered what has been identified later on as symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder by Henke herself. According to Suzette Henke, such experiences "would slowly be unraveled over the next several decades through the healing mechanism of scriptotherapy" (43).

Other writers have also followed the same path ascribing that writing uplifted and redeemed their own situations. For example, the writer H.D (Hilda Doolittle) mentioned Freud as the one who specifically approved the healing process of writing as a cure for his writing block. In fact, the draft of the novel *Bid Me to Love* "seemed to release H.D. from the stranglehold of post-traumatic stress disorder" (qtd in Kaplan 04). Suzette Henke's book suggests a re-reading of the

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literary writing of six women from the critical perspectives of trauma theory. The female writers are Colette, H.D., Anai's Nin, Janet Frame, Audre Lorde, and Sylvia Fraser (2). She shrewdly picks women from various countries to probably show that trauma is a human experience that is shared by all women in the world. Though the experiences may be different, the sufferings remain the same. Regarding this point, Caren Kaplan states that Henke's book addresses important questions about trauma in females' lives, and the possible drive they show toward creative writing which involves self healing. For Suzette Henke, scriptotherapy is also a way of autofction. Commenting on this point, Kaplan goes on to say:

What interested me most in the book, however, and where I think its value lies, was its showing that across all the national, racial, and generational aspects of Henke's chosen authors—all of which were very clear to me despite Henke not paying that much attention to such differences—very similar family traumas shape the women's lives. In at least four of the cases, it is patriarchal cultural assumptions that permit the damaging of the women; in each case, the mothers are unable to protect the female child. In addition, while the different women respond differently to the similar traumas, all do evidently find some relief in their writing, confirming to a point Henke's theory about scriptotherapy (03).

The term scriptotherapy came into being to heal the writer's self at the first place from the personal damaging experience and the same thing applies to the characters. Colette, Henke's first author, is a case in point. Interpreted by Suzette Henke, it is clear that Colette was traumatized by Willy's emotional and physical abuse. She describes the dreary state of the young girl Colette stating:

prohibited by Willy from giving birth to a child but she was forced to play the diminutive role of Incarcerated in a cluttered Parisian flat and treated like invalid, the youthful Colette succumbed to traumatic symptoms of psychic numbing and emotional anesthesia by

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enacting the role of a sick and dying Camille. . . . Not only was Colette his surrogate daughter (Henke 10).

Furthermore, HD novel *Bid Me to Love*, H.D. as suggested by Suzette Henke is an attempt to release the author from the throttle hold of post-traumatic stress disorder. This is what has been described by Henke as a healing recovery from the haunting echoes of wartime trauma. While H.D. highlighted paternal seduction at war time, Nin and Fraser portrayed their different situations of their Fathers' sexual abuse (15). The situation of H.D. is noticeably different from that of Colette. H.D. was a British daughter of a Doctor Doolittle, but her childhood was somehow different from that of Colette. Yet, the formation of the traumas she has endured was reminiscent to that of Colette. At the beginning Henke emphasizes H.D.'s autobiographical fantasy *The Gift* which was written in 1943 when H.D. was fifty-seven years old. In the situation of H.D., Henke pinpoints two essential traumas which are the skull snapping accident of her father when she was ten years old, and the immense fires and dreadful bombing of London. While Colette had a tormented psyche due to an abuse from her husband, H.D. suffered from an emotional indifference and neglect from her suddenly wounded father.

While Fraser is an actual classic victim, viciously broken emotionally by the trauma of her father's abuse, Nin intentionally echoes the fantasy of the father's seduction in grown-up life. Nin's untimely trauma cropped up at the age of ten, when her father forsook his wife and child to leave with another woman. To fill the emotional void left by her father, Nin confines a voluminous diary where she could write about a fervent longing for her dream union with her Father/God/lover. The use of her voluminous diary, as she puts it, helps her to "relive my life ... in terms of a dream, a myth, an endless story" (qtd in Henke 57- 56). Moreover, as for H.D., the neglect of one's daughter emotional rapprochement had triggered an interesting issue in the girl self development. Incapable to identify and, hence, reunite with her offended mother, Rosa, Nin shunned any

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connection of womanhood with her mother, for she considered those bounds but negative ties. By doing so, she decided to mimic her absent father “by imbibing his fierce sexual independence” (Henke 62). Yet, Nin's ultimate indecisiveness about giving birth to an unwanted child led her to be entangled in an Oscillating situation between the feminine and the masculine, Nin could go gladly for motherhood. As Suzette Henke puts it, “Nin relived the pain of pregnancy-loss in revised aesthetic frameworks until the reiterated trauma could be mitigated, sanitized, and made acceptable to a tormented consciousness”(75). Additionally, Fraser attempts to make her unbearable sex abuse tolerable to a plagued consciousness by means of writing her memoir, *My Father's House*, and a work of fiction, *Pandora* (Henke 78).

Suzette Henke's two last writers are Janet Frame's *New Zealand and postcolonial odyssey* and Audre Lorde's *African-American Testimony*— drive the readers' attentions into new areas. Frame's life narrative develops as a distressing account of a female creative development while encountering upsetting corporeal and mental vicissitudes comprising the Great Depression of the 1930s, disastrous inadvertent deaths of siblings, and the worldwide disaster of Hiroshima, “Faced with all this, Frame retreats into madness: “Terrified of the specular gaze of a hostile world, Janet succumbs to post-traumatic dysphoria: 'Loss, death, I was philosophical about everything. I still had my writing . . . and if necessary I could use my schizophrenia.’” (99). To save herself from the damages she endured, the writer as quoted by Henke says: “I repeat that my writing saved me,” Frame tells us in a voice that reiterates the conviction that life-writing can function as a valuable defense against madness and despair” (101). In most of the previously mentioned narratives, the mother was unable to save the female child. The women; in each case, the mothers are unable to defend the female child. Moreover, while the different women react in different ways to the similar traumas, they all do obviously find some release in their writing, assuring to a certain degree Henke's theory about scriptotherapy. On similar line of thought, Caren Kaplan distinguishes different types of traumas in the same narratives assuming that Colette, for example,

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endured three different kinds: the traumas of wife abuse; of separation from her mother; and finally, of Nazi occupied Paris, when her third husband, a Jew, was suddenly arrested in the middle of the night. From what Henke says, it seems that only the third trauma was fully brought to consciousness by Colette. H.D. also suffered three kinds: the absence of the father as mirroring; the loss of a pregnancy; and the World Wars. Nin too suffered from the absent father, incest, and loss of a pregnancy (229.) He comments that the theory that Shoshana Felman, Cathy Caruth, and other critics came up with can be envisaged in the urgent need for trauma to be addressed explicitly by revealing the bitter reality of suffering, terror, disorder and destruction of all normal human processes and behaviors, to an audience who listens.

The therapeutic narratives of Suzette Henke's writers take a different road. They, in fact, use scriptotherapy as a means of healing and handling trauma. Their narratives, Caren Kaplan adds, are an attempt to reframe trauma into an acceptable scenario to the author to eschew the traumatic experience from the memory. Is it a curing to repress what really occurred, and to build an account of fiction that prevents one from recalling the actuality of a trauma? Caren Kaplan inquires! She goes on to say: "As far as I could tell, Henke raises the question only once, in the discussion of Sylvia Fraser: But how free can an incest survivor actually be, when the trauma of childhood sexual abuse is repressed like a specter haunting both dreams and waking imagination" (229).

2.6. Surviving Trauma through the Narrative Techniques of Scriptotherapy

In the recently published paper, *Scriptotherapy: Eighteen Writing Exercises to Promote Insight and Wellness* (2018) Samuel Gladding and Melanie Wallace posit that Writing is a therapeutic device which can be used for handling a variety of mental health problems like anxiety, depression, ambivalence, and trauma. They have included a vast number of counseling theories, such as narrative therapy; which they have integrated it into their therapeutic techniques

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(14). They suggested other approaches to counseling that use the written communication as a vehicle to help clients display their thoughts and emotions while making multiple choices. The authors of this work explore the beneficial value of scriptotherapy (therapeutic writing). In the upcoming discussion, attention will be turned on a variety of narrative techniques of scriptotherapy that can be used in literary writing to promote wellbeing for both writers and readers.

Writing is a major way of conveying thoughts and feelings to others and to oneself. The use of writing in counseling is known as scriptotherapy. Writing is seen as “an effective therapeutic approach to working with clients in the resolution of life difficulties, especially those that are unnoticed, denied, unresolved, or traumatized” (Pennebaker 99). Undeniably, the interrelatedness between health, healing, and writing is noteworthy. Meanwhile, “Dramatists, poets, novelists, diarists, and even physicians, throughout the centuries have observed a link between emotion, disclosure, and health. Writing enables self-expression, acceptance of feelings, personal growth, and sometimes an increase in a person’s sense of spirituality” (Gladding 17). Furthermore, writing can also alleviate painful experiences and help mentally disturbed participants to face their hurtful emotions on a cognitive and objective attitude (Esterling et al. 19). Expressive writing interventions were proved to be helpful for the helpless population especially adolescents infected with HIV and youth concerned with the wellbeing and infantile justice systems. Expressive and literary writing interventions were successfully used to moderate isolation, prop up personal development and boost resilience (Cynthia et al. 65). Resultant health advantages from expressive writing may take in an increase in emotional interrelatedness with a romantic partner, especially for men Wong and Aaron 87). As for the point of view of James Pennebaker, writing about strain and stress can change the focus of the sufferer and mitigate personal anxiety while bettering other facets of life especially physical, mental, behavioral, and

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social aspects. According to (Layous et al.), writing is a positive activity that can be promote a protecting shield against damaging mental health situations (31).

2.7. The Literary Techniques of Scriptotherapy as Suggested by Samuel Gladding and Mellanie Wallace and others

There is no one agreed upon way of therapeutic writing, but several methods have proven to be fruitful. Some are more elaborate and structured than others.

2.7.1. Writing an Autobiography

Tess Knight et al. claim that writing an autobiography is, typically, a more standard and organized task than writing a journal. They add that the most advantageous aspect of writing an autobiography is that it allows individuals to articulate the most important parts of their personal lives; be they positive or negative as it reveals their interests and their disinterests, recognize their values, depict their desires and expectations, recognize successes and failures, and summon up significant personal connections. A likewise experience, especially for the grown up individuals, can recall one's reflections and actions. Sometimes, the experience of writing can also reduce apprehension through a therapeutic release of repressed emotions. Nonetheless, Tess Knight et al. comment that there is no unique way to write an autobiography because people's lives are different. One structure of an autobiography for elder clients is a life-review. The latter indicates individuals writing their autobiography by means of family albums, ancient letters, individual memories, and interviews with other victims to elicit an accumulation of aspects and articulate their life experiences as a meaningful whole (88). Throughout, this endeavour conjures up wisdom and happiness while reducing suffering and remorse. In this regard, it is contended that:

For younger or middle-aged adults, an autobiography should include as much information as possible, from as many different times in life as feasible. The more material that is

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included, the more likely patterns and issues will emerge. These can then be discussed and hopefully resolved (Knight et al. sc 2).

This equally means that an autobiography is supposed to be teeming with information for youngsters and adults alike. A high inclusivity of stories in an autobiography indicates a large number of issues, traumas, problems or situations to appear and hence possibly resolved.

2.7.2. Writing Notes and Letters as a form Therapeutic Correspondence

The writing of notes and letters by clients or counselors after a session is a form of curing correspondence. Similar writing may take multiple shapes and purchase a number of theories. The gatherings in which victims take notes in the form of letter may arouse their thoughts and aid them ponder on concerns that are expected to be provoked. Typical letters of this form can, similarly, analyze the correctness of perceptions. The performance of therapeutic correspondence has been clinically promoted and widespread by the narrative family therapists trained by Michael White and David Epston. The included practitioners believed that they are not supposed to write different notes from those they would distribute with a family that is involved in the activity. For that reason, their clinical remarks are habitually written in the form of letters they send to victims' families, "Session notes in this form can stimulate clients' thoughts and help them concentrate on particular issues. Receiving a letter from a counselor may be a particularly meaningful experience for clients" (White and Epston 346).

Letters may also be employed in educational and academic environment so as to motivate learners to attend lectures and courses and spotlight their effectiveness and contributions among classes, to note their development, provide them feedback, and supply a conclusion by the end of classroom sessions'. For instance, in Julia Cameron and Mark Bryan's book, *The Artist's Way: A Spirual Path to Higher Creativity* (1992), they advance that the use of what they name Morning

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Pages or often mourning pages which are jot down in the early hours the day bring forth a sense of overall serenity. Moreover, the author and poet, Natalie Goldberg in her book *Writing down the bones: Freeing the writer within* (2005), believes fervently that writing is a spiritual performance that “is intricately woven with creativity” (71). Moreover, she adds that “the therapeutic benefit of writing results from dipping below the surface of discursive thinking and encountering oneself”(Goldberg 73). To endorse the idea, Julia Cameron and Mark Bryan explain that some poets and writers believe that other times or hours of the day or to a diversity of performances that are related to the discipline of writing can alleviate the pain. For example, even writing at very late hours at night may be useful for certain individuals. So, the most important thing is the writing activity regardless of the time of occurrence, for it is the writing performance and not the timing hours that provide wellness (5).

2.7.3. Writing Stem Sentences and Word Clusters

There are multiple techniques and methods for writing therapeutically. Among these, in his book *The creative arts in counseling* (2016), Samuel Gladding mentioned some that are plain and less complicated than those which are more complex like the followings: One of the ways that motivate the writer to start writing is to create stem sentences. To write such sentences, the individual is supposed to complete with a word or a brief phrase to have a meaningful thought. As an illustration, a stem sentence might read: “I eat like... a, and to the client may be offered a variety of optional words to fill in like the words bird, dog, or bear” (Gladding 18). To expand the activity, Samuel Gladding suggests the additions of the word *because* after filling in the empty space, the expansion of the idea is to stimulate clients thinking about their performances in the everyday life activities; an activity that aims at awakening their awareness of self and others (19). Nonetheless, clustering words around a focal term such as anger, anxiety, happiness, peace, or distress is a technique to hook up words that connect to one another and reveal attributes about

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one that could have been not have been noticed or close to one's consciousness. In this regard, Samuel Gladding states:

word clusters may look like a spider web with words connecting out from the center like the example provided here. An important point to remember about a word cluster is that one word, like one thought or feeling, can expand in many directions. Which direction clients take makes a difference in their lives and in the lives of those with whom they interact (n,.p).

2.7.4. Writing Character Sketches

Samuel Gladding and MelanieWallace argue thatcreating a character sketch is to create a colorful and vivid picture of what somebody is like. The characters may include a person the client knows, a person in history, a story character or any person who seems interesting or inspiring in the life of an individual. (14) The process for writing a character sketch is brainstorming some ideas for a given topic or character the client has in main by creating graphical physical and personality traits. This literary techniques may sketches loosen up the writing skills and the thinking processes of the practitioners. When such an exercise is finished, the practitioner may have a good chance to compare themselves with their favourite characters in a very optimistic manner.The following is an example of a brief character sketch,

He looked like a cross between Forrest Gump when the fictional character was playing for the University of Alabama, and George Clooney when he was acting as a football player in the movie *Leatherheads*. He was muscular, with chiseled features, the archetypal man. Dressed in a blue suit with a red tie, white shirt, and black Wingtip shoes, he could have just stepped out of a cover story in *GQ*. He spoke slowly, and everyone hung on his words. He was the new principal of my high school (Gladding and Wallace 4).

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2.7.5. Writing Journals

Samuel Gladding and Melanie Wallace assume that keeping a journal is a one the safest therapeutic approaches for people of different ages who suffer from trauma whether they are juvenile or adults. Thus: “journals can be used across populations, theories, and settings and are especially beneficial as a supplemental component for persons in counseling” (4). Gladding and Wallace suggestions for therapeutic writing may result to a better self-awareness and development as suggested earlier by Ira Progoff who confirmed that Journaling within this perspective may open horizons for people to be more thoughtful, meditative, and deliberate. “Journals writings’ forms can be variable, such as from an intensive and integrative to a poetic reflection or a cathartic blog (e.g., weblogs)”(Progoff 19).In fact, the increasing popularity of blogs is that they have become part of the digital landscape. In their article, *the Therapeutic Value of Adolescent Blogging about Socioemotional Difficulties*, Meyran Boniel Nissim and Azzy Barak comment that the interactive online form of the traditional journal, blogging about traumatic events is especially therapeutic for adolescents who experience social-emotional difficulties (15).

William Miller is of the view that interactive journaling is another form of expressive writing. This form is associated with group counseling settings (113). The common point between these kinds of journals is that their writings include what is called “an element of interpersonal dialogue that allows group members and readers to affirm and support each other altruistically and to deepen their understanding of self and others” (Gladding and Wallace 5).When individuals keep journals, it is essential for the written content to be reviewed regularly so as to evaluate and recheck the practitioners thoughts and insights. Commenting on this, Samuel Gladding and Melanie Wallace state:

A good method in such a review is to read journal so as to entries every two or three days and spend the time that would otherwise be used in writing to reflect on what was written.

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Journaling may be applicable for clients of any age who are not fluent in literary skills, because through journal writing, these individuals have time to reflect and edit their thoughts (7).

Through this quote, Gladding and Wallace suggested technique of writing a journal implies an idea of reading and editing what has already been written beforehand so as to reflect on previous thought and feelings.

2.7.6. Writing Six-Words Stories

A six-word story is a literal short six words story. The idea, as advanced by Samuel Gladding, allegedly germinated when Ernest Hemingway reacted to a challenge that he could not write a complete story in six words. Nevertheless, six-word stories have become well-liked and praised as a means for individuals to figure out an event in few words. Six-word stories may be about any topic or any issue in life. Six words stories may be like the following stories. Which are generally provided in the following web-site: <http://www.sixwordstories.net/about>. This website includes many smart, reflective, and sad six-word stories. Among the mentioned six-words stories, we may mention the followings: “Torched the haystack. Found the needle.” “Goodbye, mission control. Thanks for trying.” “I’m beside myself; cloning machine works” (Gladding 34).

2.7.7. Writing the Wrongs and Writing the Rights

In writing the wrongs, Samuel Gladding suggests that the individuals write out the erroneous or disturbing experiences they have had in life such as an unpredicted death of a relative one, a divorce, or a loss of physical or mental capacities. When writing the wrong things in the ripe time, people write about their bitterly lived conditions without feeling the urge to alter the facts, for they are only supposed to report what they have factually experienced. To make the wrong seem right, they are supposed to mention what they learned and how they have made

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advantage of it. Samuel Gladding mentions the following example: “my mother died unexpectedly when I was 10. I came home from school, and she was gone. I have been sad ever since but have also learned not to take life for granted. Every day, I wake up and wonder what I can do to make life better for someone and for myself as well” (6).

Writing the rights is a corresponding experience to writing the wrongs expect that it is writing out the positive aspects in life and evaluating what had been learned from these short term or long term life experiences. Worded differently, this process puts its entire focus on the bright side on one’s life and that any traumatized victim can turn any potential disaster into triumph. Lessons learned might include such things as: “I found out that hard work pays off when I won the spelling bee,” or “When a stranger I befriended returned my backpack to me, I discovered that if you treat people right, they will treat you right” (Gladding and Wallace 6).

2.7.8. Reciprocal writing

Nancy Davis and JessicaVoirin came up with a new technique named reciprocal writing. Embedded in the premises of solution-focused therapy and narrative therapy, the procedure of reciprocal writing relates to the back-and-forth writing sequence that occurs during an actual counseling session between a client and a counselor (145). In accordance with the assumptions of solution-focused and narrative therapy, employing reciprocal writing as a creative interference affirms that the client/counselor connection is collaborative, that active listening to the practitioner concerns is emphasized without uttering any judgmental comment or pointing out their deficiencies, and that respecting the client’s aptitude to author and “reauthor” his or her own story is of the utmost importance. The unique aspect of reciprocal writing is that the communication messages between client and counselor are written rather than spoken. Hence, clients who are tremendously reclusive, uneasy with eye contact and hesitant to engage orally with the counselor, they may be appropriate candidates for a reciprocal writing involvement, “The advantages of

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reciprocal writing include its versatility with clients of diverse cultural backgrounds and varying skill sets, and its adaptability to a variety of counseling modalities” (Gladding and Wallace 7). Nancy Davis and Jessica Voirin explain that reciprocal writing evokes the client’s sense of communal respect, security, and self-approval which is the very essence of scriptotherapy.

2.7.9. Therapeutic Fairytales

Certain traumatized participants may face some challenges in handling and adequately settling or even accepting their anxious situations, yet they are being receptive and open to the idea of writing about them. The most suitable way to help this category of traumatized people is writing a therapeutic fairytales. It is suggested that there are four parts to fairytales: the first one being an identification or an assimilation with the fairy tale; the second being an expansion to the interconnectedness with the fairy tale; the third is, the exposition of the conflict; and the fourth is introducing the problem resolution. To write therapeutic fairy tales, M Jhon Hoskins advises the following: “suggesting a setting that is different from the actual context, start the tale with Once upon a time, have a quandary or predicament, supply an agreeable and positive resolution by the end, even if it is disgraceful, permit timing of six to ten minutes to promote focus on writing” (67). So, those were the main ways that can be used by writers to write a fairy tale. The next is an illustration of a therapeutic fairy tale written by a client who felt trapped and in a groove,

Once upon a time, there were three men who went to work every day the same way. When asked if they would like to take a different route and see more of the world, one man said, I’m used to my routine. I don’t wish to disturb it. The second man replied: It sounds scary. The world is a big place, and I am a small man. The third in excitement and enthusiasm thought and answered: I would love to see what is out there and get out of being so predictable. He did and became a new person with a great perspective on life (Hoskins 08). Once having their fairy tales written, the participants share their stories either independently or collectively in the form of an assembly. It

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all depended on the organization of the counseling. The assessment pay special attention to how detailed the fairy tale is, the features of the major characters, the natural flow of the gratifying and optimistic ending and what it is based on (e.g., skill, likelihood, or fortune), and the special use of language or style that is used to build up the story.

2.7.10. Optimistic Writing

Optimistic ways of writing to alter negative beliefs into more positives ones by expressing them through the written communication is also another way for therapeutic healing. Terence Willson acknowledged that “writing nudges people from self-defeating ways of thinking into a more optimistic cycle which reinforces itself” (275), for instance, university students who were encouraged and motivated to change their deeply hurtful and saddened individual stories such as, ‘I am not as good as other students at this university’, to a more unprejudiced or optimistic attitudes like, ‘I am able, but I may need to study further,’ etc. These types of participants found out that by altering their personal stories’ tones into a more promising and optimistic ones had scored better grade-point averages. They were also unlikely to drop out school willingly than students who did not transform their personally scandalous stories but rather were taught and trained about better ways to learn and study. Figuring out the problem the students face through optimistic writing is the first key solution to integrate them in the learning process before uploading them with lessons and teaching techniques about how to study.

2.7.11. Writing Poetry

Samule Gladding notes that poets and writers were acknowledged by Freud as being, the pioneers to discuss the unconscious part of the human personality and bringing it into consciousness. (81) Poets had intellectual means to promote some type of catharsis, relief, or even therapy through both writing and performing. One technique to launch poetry is to have

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participants write a line of verse about what they have experienced in the group and then mingle all the lines at the end of each singular or collective session. It is a method to come up with what the individual or group had learned and experienced in the session. It is also interesting to note that the poem does not need to rely on any rules or restricted regulations. It is suggested that the poem always starts with, 'In the group, I learned...' and finishes with 'Now, I am moving on.' An example of such a poem is:

In the group I learned... People who look different from me have feelings like mine

You can't tell a book by its cover or a people by what they wear

I am scared at times to tell others what I really feel

90 minutes goes by faster than I ever supposed by listening

you get some new and better ideas

Now, I am moving on. (qtd in Gladding and Wallace 8)

2.7.12. Writing Metaphors

In her *I Never Metaphor I Didn't Like: A Comprehensive Compilation of History's Greatest Analogies, Metaphors and Similes* (2008), Mardy Grothe argues that a metaphor is a figure of speech explaining an indirect comparison articulating an object, an idea or a person in terms of something else that is considered as its counterpart (e.g., Shakespeare's All the world's a stage.) A metaphor can also be said to imply one thing in terms of another. Nonetheless, metaphors are used by people belonging to different cultural backgrounds and cultures. They are powerful as they not only embellish the language and add freshness to expression, but also can make the progress of self-awareness and intellectual reformulation of an easy problem. For example an individual

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could say: 'I need to get off this merry-go-round' which could imply going through a meaningless cycle of activities. Throughout metaphors, the individual perceptions about themselves and their situations may differ. Further, it is worth mentioning that,

Metaphors are a way of setting up expectations, such as conceptualizing counseling as a life-changing opportunity rather than a contract agreement. Thus, being aware of clients' metaphors and helping clients change them can be therapeutic in and of itself because counselors can help clients unravel, mend, or even begin to change their situations by speaking metaphorically to clarify or amplify what clients are saying. For example, a counselor might say to a client who is feeling helpless, It sounds like you see yourself in quicksand and that you are going down fast with nothing to grab onto. How do you see it?(Grothe 9)

Hence, it can be commented that metaphors are supposedly used to evoke a practical response from practitioners. So, rather than depending on adjectives or mundane expressions of daily usage, it is advisable to use metaphors for the uplifting effect they have on the emotions. Through the use of metaphors, individuals may draw a mental picture about the problem they suffer from and the needed resolution for it.

2.7.13. Writing Memory Books

A memory book can be cross generational in the sense that it transmits valuable virtues and norms from one generation to another. It may comprise many literary genres and narratives like stories, anecdotes, and poetry in addition to songs, photographs, etc. The collection of an identical memory book may create a suitable occasion for individuals "to celebrate cultural differences and engender a sense of pride in one's own heritage. The value of reviewing and recording artifacts

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unique to cultural heritage can increase self-efficacy and a sense of belonging in the world” (Gladding and Wallace 9).

Progression and advancement in technology may make electronic memory books easily formatted digitally. Not considering of the shape of the book, it may be highly important to promote the wellness of their makers by getting them energetically immersed in the approach of gathering and eliciting data and events from people’s personal experiences and communicating the material they collect in a healthy way to promote wellness to the present and the future generations. Moreover, the memory book can also supply a concrete link to the culture and may be considered as one of the most impressively written texts to cure mental and psychological distraught individuals.

2.7.14. Writing Letters from the Future

The performance of writing Letters from the Future is a way of writing that can occur in multiple manners. These genres of letters are usually stimulated by music. For example, “Brad Paisley’s popular country song⁸, ‘If I could write a letter to me, tells a story of a man listing everything he wished he had told his 17-year-old self” (Gladding and Wallace 10). It is commented that the song is instructive, entertaining, and insightful. When inquiring clients to write letters

⁸Paisley was inspired to write "Letter to Me" after his wife, Kimberly Williams-Paisley, was asked in 2007 to write for a book entitled *What I Know Now: Letters to My Younger Self*. Upon hearing of the book, he thought that the concept of writing a letter to his younger self would be a good idea for a country song. In "Letter to Me," the song's narrator is an adult who is reflecting on his youth. Now older and wiser for having lived various teen-aged experiences, the narrator uses experiences he had as a teenager to give his more youthful self advice on dealing with various situations.

Among the experiences are: dealing with the trauma of breaking up with a steady girlfriend after several months, breaking the habit of reckless driving and missing a much-anticipated homecoming bonfire rally to improve a failing algebra grade. The adult also guides his teen-aged self through dealing with older and wiser people, such as his family and teachers.

Other situations are more light-hearted, such as a first-date experience with the right girl. After a teaser about how good his wife and children look, the narrator gives his teen-aged self some final words about how the best years of his life lie ahead and that he now regrets he did not study Spanish and typing, finally noting, "*I wish you wouldn't worry, let it be.*"

The song references many aspects of Paisley's childhood such as the corner of "Tomlinson and Eighth," two streets in his hometown of Glen Dale, West Virginia. Mrs. Brinkman, whose name is mentioned in the song, was a teacher at John Marshall High School in Glen Dale until her retirement in 2007.

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from the future on issues such as; gaining strength through suffering or turning any potential disaster into a victorious personal achievement or surmounting a breakup or divorce, counselors can use songs to explain and explore such deep concerns. For instance, “Compelling lyrics often trigger deeply emotional reactions and contain a gentle reminder about the cyclical nature of life’s highs and lows. Such lyrics create an opportunity whereby clients can embrace and celebrate the reality of both joy and sadness.” (Gladding and Wallace 11) On the whole, letters from the future are considered as a medium for exploring one’s self and, hence, creating a positive change.

2.7.15. Writing Lyrics

Thelma Duffey contends that Lyrics can be used to help clients communicate emotions of pain, as well as assist them in their self- re-establishment. An agreeable and entertaining mode to write is through writing new song lyrics that mocks individual problems and societal issues. (76) Thelma Duffey mentioned Weird Al Yankovic as being one of the most well known and most popular composers and singers of humorous songs that highlight many life issues and popular cultures. Nevertheless, there are numerous contemporary mental health experts who do that too. For example, Albert Ellis has composed a number of amusingly humorous lyrics and prevalent songs. Yet, dissimilar to Yankovic, many of Ellis’s songs comprise elements of blasphemy. Two of his songs that can be “sung without causing offense to people; clients and counselors are Pound, Pound, Pound and Perfect Rationality” (Ellis 77). Another composer mentioned by Thelma Duffey is Richard Watts who is considered as counselor educator and Baptist minister who has composed entertaining and shrewd lyrics that address social interests. Generally speaking, his lyrics are pertinently used in counseling. One of the most interesting arenas in which his lyrics are being articulated are career decision making. For instance, words can be written to the American folk song, *I’ve been working on the railroad* which is about people’s hopes as it is revealed through the following example: “I’ve been working as a waiter, all my livelong days, I’ve

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been working as a waiter, but I'm wasting time away, I would like to climb the ladder to a job more secure and sound, I would like more education, so I am college bound" (Eliss 11).

2.8. Conclusion

Scriptotherapy has been used to help those who suffer of incongruous relationships, mental health disabilities, and traumatic experiences to overcome their disabilities. Ultimately, it has also supplied a means for those individuals to make their feelings and ideas heard, cope with their tough life conditions and dreary circumstances, and at the same time, resolve the adversities they face in life with outrageous tenacity. More interestingly, previous research shows that people coming from different ages and stages of life took advantage from the different types of therapeutic written communication. Equally importantly, it is advanced and proved psychologically and clinically that when sufferers express the traumatized experiences which cause them immense mental disturbances had restored the vitality of their physical and mental health. As such, when people integrate themselves in therapeutic writing, they start to have a new clear vision about themselves, their own personal environment and the world where they live and, thus, become more mature in the process. Subsequently, writing appears to endorse and hasten the progress of psychological development. From the aforementioned study, it can be concluded that writing and more specifically literary techniques of writing, to help curing people with psychic issues, proves to be empowering and efficient to any participant who felt enclosed in a shell without the potential to stretch himself or herself from pain. Some individuals were cured and still decided to make of the written therapeutic activities as part of their daily life routines.

From the point of view of Suzette Henke, trauma is supposed to have a triadic structure, both when it occurs and when it needs to be confronted (99). In the process of its occurrence, there is the victim or the traumatized character, the event that causes the mental suffering and the abnormal processing of this psychic disability which hampers the event from being cognitively

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fathomed by the brain. When facing trauma, another triadic structure is required to happen within to figure out and diagnose the traumatic experience relying on Shoshana Felman's model of textual testimony: firstly, the female literary writer can be seen as the first witness who makes herself a witness through the characters. Through the close study of the aforementioned women's writings, she could engage the reader with another layer of witnessing. The mentioning of the different traumatizing experiences the characters endured, through the use of scriptotherapy, could help the writers, themselves, to cope with their own traumas and help the reader accept and face their own vicarious traumatizing experiences.

In her book, *Trauma Survival in Contemporary Fiction*, Laurie Vickroy unites literary, cultural and psychological approaches and select literary text that develop many fictional techniques as means of scriptotherapy to help cope with trauma. She presumed that most of those literary works are testimonial writings which are regarded as a way to refuse and, hence stand firm against, cultural despotism and make the silent voices heard. (98) Suzette Henke's employment of the concept of scriptotherapy as used in literary female narratives, aims at curing and softening the symptoms attributed to traumatic experiences. (68) She is predominantly concerned with fictional or written narrative techniques that allow the character to overcome traumatic experiences. By means of women's narratives, she explored shattered mother-daughters connections, sexual and gender issues, as well as cast relationships. Hence, trauma leads to the emergence, recreation and transmission of censored or concealed experiences and hence facilitate the readers' engagement with them. Nonetheless, scriptotherapy is the means by which similar traumas are addressed and alleviated. The next chapter will be the first practical application of the techniques of scriptotherapy on Susan Abulhawa's *The Blue between Sky and Water* (2015).

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Tell me more, tell me all you can. I want to understand more about everything you feel and know and all the changes inside and out of you. Let more come out. When you are writing to save your life, your feelings must be uncensored, raw, and unfiltered by the fear of reception. No one is judging you. No one else has to read what you have written. You are writing to save your life (Weldon 67).

3. Introduction

In the postmodern age, trauma narratives appeared in the arena of literary studies with colossal issues that started to threaten the new age. Internal as well as external traumas start to penetrate the postmodern age with deep degrees. External traumas refer to the traumas brought up by outside forces ; like earthquakes, floods, wars, natural disasters, etc. For example, the increasing death toll perceived from the recent Turkish and Syrian earthquakes left the Syrian and Turkish survivors with deeply unresolved horrific traumas. On similar pattern, internal traumas occur when the victims are witnessing a set of emotionally personal traumas like rape, sexual abuse, battering, violence, serious illness, etc. Adapting trauma theory to literary texts was used in different contexts in accordance to their orientation and aims. As claimed before, the peculiarity of trauma does not only lie in its novelty, but rather in its emergency. Its emergency lies in its healing power. In other words, trauma, be it literary or non literary, requires an antidote; which is healing or survival. The main aim of trauma narratives is to sensitize the new readership by increasing the audience awareness about the importance of overcoming life difficulties and the traumas they create because pain is, but a pattern, in the cycle of life. The main remedy to trauma in this

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research is scriptotherapy. However, though writing as a means of survival from trauma is not new, its effectiveness in healing trauma has taken place in the postmodern age. Relying on the suggested eclectic approach of scriptotherapy, we will try to analyse the novel of the Palestinian American author Susan Abulhawa's *The Blue between Sky and Water* (2015). This chapter, then, serves as the first practical part of this study. The main techniques of scriptotherapy as found in the novel include; creating a character sketch, writing a memory book, writing optimistically, writing epistolary letters and writing poems and translating poems. We will also highlight the emergence of the element of writing in the story and the way Nur, the protagonist, inherits the love of writing from her great aunt and grandfather. This novel intermingles the traumas of war and its hurdles in addition to the interpersonal and family traumas. As such, we will analyse the main traumas that Nur went through, the way she reacted to her traumas and the manner by which she used writing/scriptotherapy as a means of resisting trauma, persisting and then excelling in her educational journey. In addition to investigating the proper usage of these techniques, we will also try to highlight the main traumas that the protagonist Nur goes through; like the trauma of her grandfather's death, the trauma of her mother's abuse, trauma of sexual incest, the trauma of being fooled under the label of love and finally the trauma of handling a non legitimate pregnancy. Finally, we will see how Nur overcomes all her traumas through scriptotherapy and bring herself to the shore of Gaza where she comes back as a psychotherapist herself.

3.1. Introducing the Element of Writing in the Novel

Abulhawa introduces us to the notion of writing early from the beginning. Nur, the protagonist of the story, has inherited the love of writing from her own aunt Mariam. Through this passage, Mariam's initial passion with writing appears:

When Mariam was five years old, she stole her sister Nazmiyeh eye kohl and used it to write a prayer on a leaf that she tossed into the river of building you go to when you have a pencil. What she wrote were scribbles of course, despite the presence of an elementary

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school with two rooms and four teachers, She would instead watch her brother and other schoolboys in their satchels of books flung across their shoulders as they marched up the hill to that enchanted place with two rooms, four teachers and many many pencils. As it turned out, Mariam didn't need the schoolhouse to learn, just pencil and paper. She created an imaginary friend named Khaled, who waited everyday by the river of Beit Daras to teach Mariam to write and read (Abulhawa 6).

Through this passage, we are introduced to the essence of writing. We notice that the young child Mariam was eager to learn writing early from the beginning. The mere notion of a pencil is a dream to her. Despite the adversities of life, she is still willing to learn writing. The river is her, a decent place of writing where she would meet her imaginary friend khaled who would teach her how to write. Mariam was so excited to have a real pencil and hence asked for one from the women of her village; as stated in the following passage, "Mariam's ability to see auras has lessened over time so that now, at the age of six, she only saw occasional bursts of intense feelings. But her inner world was always sorted by color. Thus, after weeks of working up her courage, she finally asked the women for a pencil, a cobalt blue pencil, the color of khaled, her friend who was always waiting for her by the river" (Abulhawa 13). At a very young age, Mariam was a special girl endowed with super abilities as she could see the invisible feelings and intense emotions. However, the joy she could sustain through the sight of simple writing tools like pencils made her real childhood ecstasy; as we see in this passage:

The next day, several women came with pencils and notebooks and erasers and sharpners tucked in carved wooden box with inlaid mother-of-pearl gratirude. It was a wooden box of dreams that Marriam.Mariam had her wooden box to take each day to the river, where khlaed taught her how to write her name and the ninety-nine names of Allah. It was not long before she has unlocked the secretes of language she has stopped watching the

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schoolboys walk to school and would leave after he chores everyday for the river. (Abulawa 13).

Through this introductory passage of writing, Abulhawa associates all positive feelings of life; like happiness, a wooden box of dreams and the like to take place in the Braka family. Abulhawa's use of magic realism ; like the existence of this imaginary character Khaled who could be seen by Mariam only, is vividly present to add fantasy to her narrative. Nur's imitative to writing paved the way to her self-taught literacy as perceived by her sister Nazmieth. The last scene of the importance of the instruments of writing for Mariam and Nasmiyeh together occurs in the midst of war before the heinous assassination of Mariam. As she hears an explosion, Mariam would gather her writing tools in her wooden box of dreams as she composes some poetic lines!

Oh find me

I'll be in that blue

Between Sky and Water

Where all the time is now

And we are the forever

Flowing like a river (Abulhawa 17).

"Enough! It's time to leave! Naemiyeh yelled. The men will stay to fight and we will return as soon as the Jews are gone. EnshaAllah, by Allah will" (Abulhawa 17). Despite the fact that Mariam and her sister have heard an explosion, she tried to console herself by composing a poem to comfort herself. A poem, here, may serve as a soothing means to calm oneself in the very troubling moments of life. The choice of the blue color that links the sky and water or the sea is by itself calming. The mere mention of "all time is now" and "we are the forever" exist to show us that Mariam shows that she will be immortal or kind of eternal as she will be always remembered through the narrative. "Flowing like a river" indicates that their lives even, if the end, they are

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perpetual and everlasting; which may also serve as a message of hope to everyone who struggles in the dire life circumstances of war. In the middle of night, Mariam went to the outskirts of the village and hid in her best hide-and seek spot. She hid in a water well with her small bag of cheese. Nazmieth looked for her sister everywhere to find her finally in their old house: She went into every room whispering Mariam's name, but there was no answer. She looked in the kitchen and bathroom, then went to the carved-out space in the wall and paused before turning the corner. It was the last place to look, "Please Allah, let her be here. And there, curled on herself, Mariam was sleeping with her wooden box of dreams, knees tight against her chest. Nazmiyeh dropped to the floor and embraced her sister. Oh Mariam, habibti! She sobbed; fear and exhaustion sliding off her shoulders"(21). Through the expression "wooden box of dreams" we can understand that the pen is considered as a protection or a safe place for Mariam when no one was around to save her life. The pen symbolizes a shield that Mariam used to console herself in the midst of the ill conditions she was trapped in.

The most atrocious trauma to appear at the beginning of the novel is that Mariam was killed and Nazmiyeh was raped by many Israeli soldiers and the only thing that was left was Mariam's notes and wooden box of dreams, "The soldier with the grey eyes laughed, excited by the scream he had so badly wanted to praise from her, and he pushed aside the other to fuck the bloodied body of this voluptuous Arab woman. Nazmiyeh's wail continued as he ejaculated in her body, then the other moved in to pollute her as she stared at Mariam in an expanding crimson puddle"(23). Aghast, weary and grueling as her situation was, Nazmiyeh "summoned a cold punctilious rage to gather her sister's papers, notebooks and pencils. She covered her breasts with Mariam's box and what remained of her ripped clothes, she stood on borrowed strength, semen and blood running down her legs, and walked away with broken steps without looking back" (23). Now that Mariam is dead, Nazmiyeh sensed the importance of her little sister's papers and pencils and would take them with her and put them in a very safe place out of the reach of children. She would check

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them occasionally wishing that she could read to fathom her sister's writings. That would be the only memory that remained from Mariam.

The most traumatizing incident in this part of the narrative is Nazmiyeh being raped in front of Mariam's eyes before she was killed:

As the soldiers handled her, ripping her clothes, forcing her onto her back, baring her flesh, Nazmiyeh ordered Mariam to turn away and close her eyes and ears as tightly as she could. She said it would all be over soon and they would go on their way. She could endure this, she thought Nazmiyeh did not understand what the soldier yelled before forcing himself into her. She clenched her teeth, biting the agony of rape lest it escape from her voice and reach Mariam's ears. He returned dragging Mariam by her hair, like a limp doll, her wooden box of dreams clutched to her chest. The sisters locked their eyes for an interminable instant, though not long enough to fit a word before the bullet to Mariam's head rang out through eternity, her wooden box of dreams falling open, its contents spilled. A wild howl bellowed from the depths of Nazmiyeh (15).

This quote denotes a trauma that falls within the scope both of the trauma of war and family trauma since Nazmiyeh and Mariam are sisters who witness the monstrous crimes of the Israeli soldiers. Both sisters are double traumatized by first being coerced by the violent soldiers. At first Nazmiyeh was raped in front of Mariam which is a double trauma for the two. Mariam is young enough to be treated with violence and then to see her own sister being forced to a sexual intercourse. Nonetheless, Nazmiyeh is also double traumatized to first being raped and to witness the incident in front of her younger sister and then, to see her little sister being killed in front of her eyes.

3.2. Mamduh Early Trauma

When his Granddaughter was born, Mamdouh had wanted his son to name her Mariam, a tribute to his beloved sister. If Yasmine and Mamduh had the good fortune to have another child

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who was a girl, he would have named her Mariam. Though Yasmine survived her first encounter with cancer, it took her womb after their only child. But words and stories and dreams remained, trying to find a place in the next generation. Mamdouh and Yasmine had tried to explain this to their son. They had told him it would mean the world to both of them to name their granddaughter Mariam, or-in desperation he had added a compromise-any Arabic name. However, their son Mhamed, was having an identity crisis. Living in the US, he chose to be addressed by Mike instead of Mhamed. Nonetheless, his Spanish wife has always treated him and his family with disdain due to his Arab lineage. This is well determined by Yasmine who states:

Mhammad is your name because I'm your mother and that's what I named you. Where did we go wrong? You deny your identity and marry a woman who looks down on us like we're filth. Straighten up, boy!" Yasmine was rarely so stern. But she had felt death creeping along the edges of her days, and that had changed everything. A man who denies his roots is not a man (Abulhawa 54).

However, Mhamed refused to argue with his mother and decide to leave complaining that all what his mother is talking about is part of "Arab drama and Arab guilt" (Abulhawa 55).His wife, a Castillian woman from Madrid, had first refused an Arabic name for her child. Both her husbandand herself sought to erase his unfortunate heritage from their lives. Everybody knew Yasmine neared her demise due to severity of the illness and despite this pain, Mhamed decided not to satisfy his frail mother thinking:

She was likely to die soon and they would be stuck calling their child by a name that reminded them both of what they would prefer not to remember. Navigating life in America was hard enough with a name like Mhammad, why would they want their child to suffer too? "Why do Arabs love to suffer? It's like it gives them more drama to guilt people," she said. "I know, darling. But you should have seen my mother. She was different this time. I think she believes her end is near (Abulhawa 60).

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This quote reveals the stonehearted son who did not care about his dying mother, but he rather thought of the pain he would live with if he named his daughter an Arab name. Nonetheless, it also shows that Yasmine's son has no sense of identity or belonging to his Arab lineage since he only longs to erase every shred of his Arab identity. Yet, a compromise was reached. "Mariam" was out of the question because it would give her in-laws too much control. However, she agreed to consider another Arabic name, as long as the child's last name would be hers. Yasmine suggested the name Nur, because that baby was the nur of her life, the light of her days, and she died a year later never knowing that her Nur's last name was Valdez. Tragically coincident, Mhamed would die in a car accident and he had to pay all he got to raise his granddaughter in the US. This is clearly displayed in the following passage:

There was a time, after his wife had passed away and his son had died, when my great-khalo Mamdouh despaired. Nur was all he had left, and her mother would surely never allow him to see her again. He pleaded with her, crying like a child. He hired lawyers and went to court. In the end, money got him what he wanted. It took all he had, everything he had worked for and saved up. But he had his Nur, and that was enough (Abulhawa 68).

It is important to note, here, that the female protagonist Nur is the granddaughter of Mamdouh; Nazmiyeh's brother. We found it interesting to bring Mamduh early trauma to the fore in this section so as to understand the story plotline in accordance with Nur's / the protagonist's traumas and the way she could face, react and then survive her own traumas.

3.4. Scriptotherapy Techniques to Heal Trauma in Susan Abulhawa's *The Blue between Sky and Water* (2015)

In this section we will introduce the main techniques of scriptotherapy that are to be found in the first novel under scrutiny. The first one is creating a character sketch.

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3.1.4. Creating a character Sketch

As stated earlier in the second chapter, Samuel Gladding and Melanie Wallace argued that character sketches are considered as tool of scriptotherapy as they aim to generate a multihued and vibrant mental image of what an important person is like. The character may be somebody famous, or simply interesting in the life of an individual. This may include a person who is known, a person in history, a story character or any person who seems interesting in the life of an individual. The process for writing is brainstorming some ideas for a given topic or character the client has in main by creating graphical physical and personality traits. This literary technique may “loosen up the writing skills and the thinking processes of the practitioners”(Gladding and Wallace 24). When such an exercise is finished, the practitioner may have a good chance to compare themselves with their favourite characters in a very optimistic manner. In the selected novel, the character sketch is the grandfather. Abulhawa depicts Nur’s grandfather as an intellectual and kind hearted man who encourages his granddaughter to do her best to learn the written word, for it is the most important task to be learnt. This is illustrated through the following passage: “Her grandfather would insure her to have an education at first, stating: “the most important thing to learn were words, her Jiddo said. Already, at five, she could read her picture books” (37).

3.4.2. Writing A Memory Book

A memory book can be cross-generational in the sense that it transmits valuable virtues, and norms from one generation to another. It may comprise many literary genres and narratives like stories, anecdotes, and poetry in addition to songs, photographs, etc. The collection of an identical memory book may create a suitable occasion for individuals “to celebrate cultural differences and engender a sense of pride in one’s own heritage. The value of reviewing and recording artifacts unique to cultural heritage can increase self-efficacy and a sense of belonging in the world” (Gladding and Wallace 9).

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Progression and advancement in technology may make electronic memory books easily formatted digitally. Not considering the shape of the book, it may be highly important to promote the wellness of their makers by getting them energetically immersed in the approach of gathering and eliciting data and events from people's personal experiences and communicating the material they collect in a healthy way to promote wellness to the present and the future generations. Moreover, the memory book can also supply a concrete link to the culture and may be considered as one of the most impressively written texts to cure mental and psychological distraught individuals. On the same line of thought, Nur and her grandfather would suggest to write a love story of their own; where they would keep all the joyful memories and beautiful moments they spent together. They entitled the book; *Jiddo and Me*. They would write about:

Nur's and her favorite things they did together. She drew pictures and dictated what she wanted to write, since she couldn't yet spell all the words. On several pages, they chronicled the highlights of their frequent trips to the duck park, featuring Nur's artwork to the two of them in a paddleboat and another of her Jiddo pushing her on a swing at the castle playground. On another page, she drew them reading a bedtime story together. Mahfuz, her bear, featured in most pictures and she wrote a special story about Mahfuz green and brown bottom eyes (Abulhawa 41).

This passage is an appropriate example of scriptotherapy as it abides by all the positive attitudes that are related with writing a memory book. The idea of writing a love story is by itself a therapy and this will be her solace after losing her grandfather. Even though Nur was young enough to scribble the words, she dictated for her grandfather to write and this alone is pacifying, quieting and lulling. She would draw all the good things she had witnessed with her grandfather; like she being pushed by her grandfather in the park, or she drawing them reading a bedtime story together. She even wrote about her beautiful bear Mahfouz whom she cherished the most. Rereading through those lines are the most narcotic activities in the toughest moments of life.

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3.4.3. Optimistic Way of Writing

Optimistic ways of writing to alter negative beliefs into more positive ones by expressing them through the written communication are also another way for therapeutic healing. Richard Ryan et al. acknowledged that “writing nudges people from self-defeating ways of thinking into a more optimistic cycle which reinforces itself” (47). As the pages grew thick with stories and pictures, Nur suggested to her jiddo that they make lists of good words for their hearts to hold. What a wonderful, wonderful idea, Nur! Her Jiddo exclaimed, his color brightening to a jubilant yellow that delighted Nur to see, for the shine colors were becoming less and less frequent. She asked what the word emotional means and her Jido had explained that emotional things “were ones that made her heart feel as if it got warmer, beat faster and were going to fly out of her chest. Nur considered all of those very emotional things now and asked her Jiddo which one she felt about her idea to make a list of words to put in their hearts for each other” (Abulhawa 42). This passage is a peculiar example of optimistic writing including a suggestion another technique of scriptotherapy bring forth a pleasurable sense of kinship that a grandfather holds toward his granddaughter. Another technique of scriptotherapy is writing the good. As stated before in the second chapter, writing out the positive aspects in life and evaluating what had been learned from short term or long term life experiences proved to be therapeutic. Worded differently, this process puts its entire focus on the bright side of one’s life and that any traumatized victim can turn any potential adversity into achievement. Though the trauma that occurred in the protagonist life is still early to occur at this stage, those written activities are the ones that remain vividly pleasant in her memory after she was exposed to detrimental side of life. The writer has implicitly alluded to the favourable state of life when her grandfather was alive, she says: “his color brightening to a jubilant yellow that delighted Nur to see, for the shine colors were becoming less and less frequent” (Abulhawa 44). The inference that can be made through this quote is that life was more and more difficult and less happy as beautiful colors were dwindling away within time. Difficulties of life in Nur life blend with the different traumas that occurred in her family through

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different generations. Nur was innocent and placid enough to understand those traumas of war that took place in her home of origin Palestine and she didn't know her father to grapple with the trauma of her father's death or her Spanish mother abandonment. Mamduh, the grandfather lived there in the US before as America presented a professional career and financial gains. Though the United States seemed to be a great country, exile deprived him of both his wife Yasmine and only son Mhamed who died tragically. Becoming a shallow foreigner at the States, Mamduh's only hope was Nur. He has always kept the spirit high and remained optimistic to endow Nur with the needed love, strength and patience. Another example of optimistic writing can appear in the following passage,

He replied, My heart got warmer and it felt like it was flying high in the sky. That's how I always feel when I 'm around you Nur. They made their lists of each other. She started but ran out of words after, nice funny, my favourite person ever, and the best. He jiddo started: "beautiful, loving, light of jiddo's life." You're those ones, too. Jiddo, can boys be beautiful? I want that one on my list she said. Boys can be beautiful of course. Do you think your old jiddo is beautiful?yeah, especially when you walk without your special shoe and cane. Smart, caring, kind, thoughtful,her Jiddo wrote them down slowly, his hand shaking. Me too, I mean you too. I want those on my list. Spell them for me please. Jiddo, You're good at this game! She beamed(Abulhawa 42).

The grandfather and his granddaughter made good lists about each other. The grandfather attributes all the positive emotions he felt when he is with Nur and this is shown in "my heart got warmer, it felt like it was flying high in the sky," On parallel lines, Nur would ascribe the most preeminent qualities with her grandfather. In the example, she writes the good qualities of her Jiddo as she dictates "nice, funny and favorite," He attributes the highly esteemed qualities to Nur as he writes: "smart, caring and thoughtful." Though frail as he was; "with his hands shaking", he could always find a way to draw smiles on his granddaughter's face. Nonetheless, the grandfather

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attempts to build up his granddaughter mind and heart to be strong and beautiful at the same time by giving her this life-giving words. He once told Nur, "Stories matter. We are composed of our stories. The human heart is made of the words we put in it. If someone ever says mean things to you, don't let those words go into your heart, and be careful not to put mean words in other people's hearts. Those powerful words would remain in her heart for what seem like an eternity (Abulhawa 45). Through this quote, we are also exposed to the importance of story creation. Mamduh explains that the human personality is hugely affected by the composed stories. In other words, humans make sense of their existence through the stories they write and the words they receive. Yet, Mamduh ensures Nur to be wise enough if she ever experience the effects of mean and malicious words. He also insists that she never utters negative words in people hearts. Attempting to link her to her true lineage, Mamduh told her the stories of her ancestors in Beit Darass. She has also been eager to listen with curiosity and "her curiosity pleased him. He wanted her to know and never forget the place that burned in his heart. He also insisted that they only speak in Arabic" (Abulhawa 43).

3.5. Nur Facing the Trauma of her Grandfather's Death

Before his death, Mamduh was planning to go back home accompanied by his granddaughter Nur. He called Nazmiyeh; his sister, to tell her he was going back home soon after he goes out of the hospital. He had a lung infection and told his sister that he is to come back home soon. The book of *Jiddo and Me* had such a great source of happiness that Mamdouh talked about it to his sister when he made a telephone call telling his sister that he will be home soon and that he is getting better; though she could not feel likewise. He told her that exile is going to end soon after it had taken the most precious people; "it had exiled his home and heritage and language from his only son. It had taken his Yasmine. Exile had made him an old man in a place that had never become familiar" (Abulhawa 88). Still, life was merciful with him as well as it granted him Nur who inherited his long ago martyred sister Mariam's mismatched eyes and skill

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and strong appetite for writing. Again he told his sister: “Nur could now return home to Gaza with him. Already, she could speak Arabic and her appetite for stories of Palestine was endless. They were making a book together, of all the things they loved. "It's called *Jiddo and Me*, " he told his sister” (Abulhawa 43) . Mamduh was proud of Nur and delighted to take her back home, but death abruptly took him away and cast Nur to a life of irreversible pain.

Before he neared his death, Mamduh's general health state started to degrade significantly and he could not take care of her anymore. So, Nur had for the first time to start life with a foster family accompanied with Nzinga; a lady from from the Department of Social Services, or "DSS," who took her to live with a foster family waiting for her grandfather to get better. She would go daily to the hospital to check on her grandfather. Though frail and weak, the grandfather worked with his granddaughter on their book and Nur made daily progress. We notice that despite the fact that Nur is going through a sort of intractable days; in the hospital especially, she is still willing to carry the project she started with her grandfather. She has even seized the occasion to share the progress of her written work with the nurses and the hospital staff. This insinuates to the vitality of writing as it brings forth wellness and well being of emotion even at dire circumstances. Concurrently, at an early age, Nur became so inclined with writing and devoted to it, for it was the only activity that brought her a feeling of joy and comfort in the midst of worry and panic. Before Nur had to face the trauma of her grandfather's death, she had first to deal with the emptiness of his absence. After he passed away, Nur was not directly told about her grandfather's departure early from the beginning. She kept going to the hospital with Nzinga for several days to hospital. The security guards tried to distract her and draw her away by providing her with chocolates stated in the following passage, “The immediate thought of chocolate mousse with whipped cream distracted Nur from the hurting thing in her chest. But, she did not smile and she wrapped her hands around Nzinga's neck. Afraid to let go. The thing in her chest now felt like a monster. Her *Jiddo* was the person in her life to make monsters disappear from under the bed and banish them from closets. He made everything softer and brighter (Abulhawa 43). Through this passage, we

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see that Nur's apprehension multiplies as she is put down whenever she inquires to see her grandfather. The hero of her life, her superman and savior is no longer there which opens the gates for all the monsters of the world to attack her now. Two months passed before Nur learned the fate of her Jiddo. In that time, she waited impatiently for permission to visit him again. When he is feeling better, her foster mother continued to say. Nur wrote letters to her Jiddo in their shared book with the blue ribbon. She added more adjectives to her list of him. Eventually, Nzinga would explain what had happened, but for now, Nur continued praying for him to get better soon, until one of the older girls who shared her room overheard Nur's nightly prayer and said; "your grandfather is dead. He ain't getting better" (Abulhawa44). While waiting for her grandfather to feel better, Nur kept writing letters adding more adjectives and keeping the faith ahead that he is getting better so soon. She would ripple the letters with a blue ribbon and kept them safe for her grandfather to see after he comes back from the hospital. But, her hopes died at their cradle when one sibling from the foster family dared to expose the news of her grandfather's death. As she heard the news, Nur was shattered:

The earth shook, the moon fell. The stars went out. And the mean girl's words would echo forever in Nur's heart. Faint moonlight seeped in. Parallel lines through the blinds and fell across the stricken child. Nur's hands were pressed together in prayers and tears streamed from her eyes. She wanted to reach for Mahfouz, her bear, but she was immobilized. She could already feel pieces inside of her loosening and falling, the way beads of a necklace fall apart when the string is broken. If she stayed perfectly, still, perhaps her Jiddo, the string that connected all the pieces of her, would not be pulled completely away. She knew the mean girl was right. Her jiddo was dead (Abulhawa 44).

Stunned by the response, Nur sense of world balance is shaken. The earth, is wobbling beneath her, the moon falls down and the stars of her life are all gone with the demise of the most beloved person in her life. Susan Abulhawa uses these hyperbolies to denote the extent to which Nur is emotionally devastated after her grandfather passed away. She would sob and wail, look for her

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bear Mahfouze to hug as it was the most mesmerizing memory she kept from the dreamy like life she had with her grandfather, but the shock would make her feel helpless. She was disoriented and shattered into small pieces. The inevitability of death can seem unfathomable particularly as it strikes Nur; a little child who is living in asylum and has no other relatives, except her grandfather. Missing his tender love, fatherly lessons and endless support appear to never cure. The agony of his loss is inconsolable and incurable. Following this eternal departure, it is likely for Nur to cope with the bitter real life experience coming to grips with her distress provoking interminable traumas across her life. The following sections on Nur's trauma will show how atrocious life's traumas were to Nur and how they caused her roller coaster of conflicting emotions.

3.6. Nur facing the Trauma of her own Mother's Rejection

Now that her grandfather died, Nur's mother came to claim her back for financial reasons. Nur would be exposed to the most intense trauma a little girl can encounter in life which is the fact of being abhorred, rejected and unsustained by one's own mother. Notwithstanding her Arab origin, the Spanish mother would start by obliterating her Arab identity. At the beginning she "didn't accept the Arab name of Nur stating:

we need to do something about your name, though. Nuria is the closest, but that's Catalan, which isn't much better than Arab. Let's call you Nubia, she said. Nur only shook her head, unsure how it was possible to change someone's name. But that will be our secret. Don't tell the lady from DSS, Okay.? I won't mommy. It was nice to say that word. Mommy. I'm a good secret keeper (Abulhawa 45).

The mother loathed the Arab name, and changed it to Nubia instead. Manipulating her little daughter, she would ask her to keep it as a secret and Nur would nod in agreement, simply because sharing the news with Nzinga displays the mother hidden malice. Unaware about her mother malevolence, Nur would add a new adjective or quality to the book she kept with her from her

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grandfather; a good secret keeper which shows in the following quote: “that night, Nur added that trait to her list: keeper of secrets. And when her mommy agreed to read her a bedtime story, she did not mention the secret book with the blue ribbon that she and her Jiddo had written. She knew, in the way that small children just know things, that her mommy would not like Jiddo and Me” (Abulhawa 45). However, her intuition was strong enough to feel that her mother would not be pleased by the memory book Jiddo and Me she kept from her grandfather.

3.7. Nur Being Exposed to the First Sexual Abuse Trauma

Not only was the Spanish mother unaffectionate early from the beginning, but she was also vulgar using groping and dirty talk and careless about acting filthy in front of her little child. Careless of her daughter’s psychological health, she purposely and intentionally exposes her to sexual acts and hence inaugurates the first sexual abusive behaviour to take place in an infant life. It is important to clarify that sexual abuse may happen through both tangible and intangible manners. This shows clearly through the following stance: “Playing daddy to my daughter is so sexy baby, her mother said grabbing between his legs. Nur squeezed her eyes shut. When she opened them, sam was smiling at her. Then, he and her mother went into their bedroom and closed the door. They made terrible sounds that Nur drowned out with the big-ass TV” (46). Adding to the previous explanation, we notice that not only is the mother vulgar and badly mannered, but so was her suitor who did not prevent this sexual abuse to happen to a very young and innocent child. Wise enough, Nur would not be shattered by her mother’s acts instantly, but would rather try to find a way to prove worthy and educated to her mother. For Nur, it was better to have a real mother and a chamber of her own. She would help her mother in the chores and she learnt how to make coffee. She made herself ready for school and prepared fresh morning coffee even when her mother was still asleep. Her assiduousness at home went hand in hand with her excellent marks at school, “Only, in first grade, she was reading and writing at a third level. She had find a way to shine, a space where she could feel love and admiration, if she worked for it. And so she worked

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and studied as much as she could” (Abulhawa 46). Through this passage, we find out that Nur’s refuge was related to the school as instilled by earlier education. School was the only place that afforded feelings of awe, happiness and love. Yet, her happiness was not complete with a deep hurt left behind the demise of her grandfather whose love was unconditional: “Suffused in this new life was a longing for something not there. An old man whose walk was a song. Bedtime stories of another world. A duck park and a castle playground. A kind of love that does not require completed chores or exemplary grades” (Abulahwa 45). This deep emotional pain would overrun the hurt and turn to be physical; as it shows in the following: “that yearning embedded in her body, and when it stirred, it felt like a bellyache that started in her tummy and went all the way behind her eyes”(Abulhawa 46). Nur was lonely in a tyrannical new world and though she did all ~~what~~ that it takes to be embraced, her efforts were useless. Unable to share her concerns and conceal her pain, the emotional hurt start to penetrate her small body.

3.8. Other Examples of the Mother Vexation

A mother is the child’s very first important connection with the outside world. When we utter the word mother, it echoes all the heavenly conditions of unconditional love, interminable care and infinite devotion to a child’s life. The mother is supposed to be the pillar of love, the founder of cheerfulness and the giver of hope. While a mother is expected to be caring, affectionate and kind; Nur’s mother represents a dangerous poison as it fills her daughter with incredibly painful vexations whenever the opportunity arises. Short before they celebrate their wedding, Sam would give the mother a fancy catalogue to order whatever she needed for the wedding. Nur waited impatiently for her role to select certain items from the catalogue, but her mother shoes her away:

At last the catalogue, marked throughout with circles and notes, pages folded at the edges, was on the coffee table. Nur opened it to the selection with models who looked her age. There was much to choose from: Dresses, shoes, socks, skirts, shorts, sandals, bows, dolls,

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toys. But, she knew to be responsible. Not greedy was already on her list of good traits. Her mother had gone out and Nur spent her time home alone ruminating over what to pick. Before falling asleep with the catalogue in her arms, she has chosen four items: a blue and white striped dress with a red sash that tied into a big bow in the back, red patent leather shoes she already named Malcolm, to be a friend to Mahfouz, her bear. It occurred to her to call them M&M, and she imagined taking them to school for show and tell (Abulhawa 45).

Through this example, we see how the forementioned writing the positive along with optimistic writing techniques of scriptotherapy could help Nur tame her greed. It was already written in her list not to be greedy, but rather moderate. Yet, the day when the catalogue orders reached home, all the items that she selected were not there and only her mother's chosen items were delivered : "Nur waited as her mother pulled out one item at a time. She unfolded each article of clothing, inspected each pair of shoes and each tube of lipstick. Nur, fidgeted, craned her neck to peek inside the open box, each time hoping an item would be for her. Yes, it's beautiful," she said when her mother asked if Nur liked the matching baby hat, gloves, and booties. The same scene repeated as the boxes were slowly emptied. Nur did not despair, not even when she realized all the items had been taken out. She began looking through the new clothes; perhaps she had accidentally missed her new dress. "Where are the things I circled, Mommy?" "Oh, sweetie. I forgot to tell you!" her mother said. "When I called to place the order they said they were out of the items you picked" (Abulhawa 46). Through this passage, we feel the pain and the deep disappointment of the little Nur. The cold mother was highly selfish as she probably did not even order the items for her daughter. Despite this dismay, Nur could handle her apprehension and manage to stop her tears as she remembered the newly written quality; not a cry baby". Again, this shows the role of positive writing in lulling out Nurs anger and misfortune; which paved the way for the therapy of Nur's trauma and also helped her to walk away from its bitterness. This is clearly revealed through the next illustration:

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The hard thing that lived in Nur's belly stirred. It moved upward and started clumping in her throat, pushing behind her eyes. The last time Nur had cried, her mother had told her to stop being a crybaby. She had written "Not A Crybaby" on her list. Now, as her mother left the room and Nur stood alone with three empty boxes and the new things strewn about, the memory of that undesirable trait helped to stop the tears (Abulhawa 47).

As stated before, we can see through this stance that even when she handles her deep emotional pain, Nur, starts to suspect her mother's love as she hesitates to ask if she could order the same items again. In this example, the emotional pain would become a sharp physical pain. Only, when the pain is violently raging that Nur allowed herself to sob her tears out. Again, the mother's ruthless attitude and negligence shows once more when she reveals no attention to her daughter's illness, but rather accuse her of being an attention seeker; ". She kept crying out, even though the pain had dissolved, until eventually, her mother came in. Mommy, my stomach and my head hurt really bad," she said, relieved to stop crying."Nubia, how much attention do you need? You do this kind of stuff every time I make plans"(Abulhawa 47).

In many occasions, Nur is being Dishertened by her Mother, Even when Nur shines at school to please and satisfy her mother; her mother always finds a way to maltreat and dispirit her as displayed in the following example:

Nur's Third-grade report card arrived studded with gold stars. Sam read it aloud. "It says, 'Nur is a remarkably bright little girl. I am impressed by her reading and writing skills, which exceed her grade level. I would like to propose that she move into the fourth-grade reading class.Pride danced on Nur's face, but then something else immobilized it when her mother reacted. That's nice. I was a good student in school, too. So you must get that from me. You don't need that fancy school anyway. I went to public school and so can you. Won't that be nice? You can be just like me.The thing that lived in Nur's belly moved. Now that the tuition from the trust is coming to me, we can put that money to better use, for things we really need," her mother added (Abulhawa 49).

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We can see that the harsh mother kept on her vexing and intimidating attitude not paying attention to her daughter's emotion. Instead of bouncing with pride and honor upon hearing such news, the mother would simply claim that her daughter's success is something natural as she inherited that from her. And hence, it is not extraordinary and that she would rather go to a public school instead of that expensive one. As she was the tutor of Nur's trust fund, she claims to put her money in better use instead of spending it on a private education. We notice also through this passage that Nur's mother was merely interested in claiming Nur back after her grandfather's death just because of the inheritance she had from her grandfather. Later in the novel after all the incidents happen to Nur, Nzinga the social assistant would meet Nur's mother and as she meets her, she would recognize why Mamdouh made sure "that Nur be sent to her family in Gaza. The mother had little interest in her daughter, claiming to be financially unable to care for Nur, until Nzinga was obliged to inform her that Nur's grandfather had a significant life insurance policy put into a trust fund for Nur's sustenance and education"(Abulhawa55). The mother tyranny, greed and humility lead Nur to be emotionally shallow. Nur became an empty-spirited girl even if she were a shining student at school.

Another example of the mother's neglect and cruelty appear when Nur's puzzling sickness utterly raises and her mother's wrath would be amplified as well. As the school nurse emergently called on to take her daughter, for she had a severe fever, the mother expresses a shared concern. Yet, as long as Nur got to the car "her mother grabbed and squeezed her arm with an unnatural ire." Saying:

There's nothing you won't do for attention! Is there?" Her mother burrowed those words with her nails into Nur's flesh. I'm sorry," Nur shrank. Shut up and get in." Nur climbed quietly into the car, dragging the heavy furnace of her body. She knew better than to cry, but she couldn't stop the tears. Her eyes felt heavy and her heart cowered somewhere in a depletion spreading through her. I said shush. You're not fooling me with your tears. On top of everything, now you wanna act like the victim?" Her voice rose and words sprayed a

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now familiar random rage. THIS IS MY FUCKING WEDDING. I WILL NOT ALLOW YOU TO MAKE IT ALL ABOUT YOU!" (Abulhawa 50).

This passage reflects the tyranny and cruelty of this outrageous mother who shares no humanity for the frailty of a little creature who has no one, but her. Her outraged fury transgresses the emotional pain and she dared stitch her nails into Nur's flesh and then order her to stop crying and stop pretending being a victim. This hurt is most shattering for a young child like Nur. Nur's case, indeed, was the worst of the cases of the exiled Palestinians. She was left without a family in a very distant place where her identity along with the tender feelings she developed from her grandfather started to dissolve and be merely replaced by numbness, and freezy cold reaction to trauma. Commenting on this, the writer states that, "it was ironic that her life reflected the most basic truth of what it means to be Palestinian, dispossessed, disinherited, and exiled" (Abulhawa 49).

3.9. The Second Trauma of Sexual Incest

In her research entitled, *Emotional Incest, 'the Elephant in the Therapeutic Room'* (2014) Deborah Kaplan argues that the subject of incest, being physical, emotional or moral, in literature was considered as taboo during the eighteenth, nineteenth, and near the beginning of the twentieth centuries. Accordingly, it became a focal issue of the postmodern literature (65). In her turn, Ann Sokhanov, in *the Encarta English dictionary*, defines the term sexual incest as a sexual act "between two people who are considered, for moral or genetic reasons, too closely related to have such a relationship" (Sokhanov 34). So, it is a sexual relationship between two people among whom marriage is a baned. The incest in Nur's case starts as an emotional incest at the beginning. It was not directly between a parent and a child as it did not involve a clearly direct sexual contact. The parent-child relationship that relates Sam to Nur seems a perfect one at the beginning. The emotional incest differs in that it specifically describes the relationship between a child and their parent or primary care giver and does not include siblings or extended family. Angela Brown and David Finkelhor perceive Child Sexual incest as a social ill stemming from a misbalance in power

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differences. The discrepancy lies in the fact that the powerful abuser is a man, for the vast majority of victims are female children.

Feminists firmly accuse the performer instead of focusing on the acts or reflections of blameless female child, "Incest is detrimental for victims. Usually, the process starts as accidental touching and fondling under the auspices of "love." It progresses to premeditated acts of coercion" (Brown and Finkelhor 48). The first type of sexual incest to take place in this chapter, concerns Sam; the cold mother's groom since he acts as a step father. Sam would start to manipulate Nur by feigning a fatherly love. One night when Nur woke up to find Sam sitting next her bed asking her about her belly ache saying:

Let's see here." Sam lifted her gown. "Poor belly." He rubbed her skin. "It's a very pretty belly." He leaned to kiss it, on her belly button, then above it. Then, around it. "And you have the most beautiful and unusual eyes I've ever seen." He put her gown back, covering her. "Do you think your mommy is mean sometimes?" Nur shook her head no. "Come on, tell the truth." He tickled her slightly, making Nur laugh. "Oh, so you're ticklish, too? I'll have to tickle you silly soon." Nur decided that she loved Sam. "So, tell me," he asked again. "Yeah, sometimes Mommy is mean," (Abulhawa 48).

The deceitful stepfather aimed to fake his true intentions by earning first Nur's trust. To prove his fake love, he stopped accompanying Nur's mother as she went shopping just to stay with Nur, [T]he first such evening, as they played checkers and Nur tried to cheat, Sam began tickling her. When she could catch her breath between fits of laughter, she begged him to stop. But as soon as he did, she taunted him to provoke more tickling. "I know a special tickle spot you've never even thought of," he said. "It's a little spot that you tickle and then you feel it all over your body." "No, you don't! Where?" "It's a secret. Do you know how to keep a secret? Or are you the kind of little girl that tattles?" "No way. I never tattle. I'm the best secret keeper." She remembered her list. Keeper of Secrets (Abulhawa 48-49). At the beginning, it is not made explicit that Sam had made any kind of sexual incest, but the writer has made hint to that through the aforementioned

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expressions; "it's a pretty belly, then he turned to kiss it the belly button, then around it, then above it, tickling silly soon, a special tickling spot that you feel it all over your body, Keep it a secret and; the best secret keeper. It seems like the way Sam kisses Nur is no that of child-father relationship, but that of an abusing manipulator. Assuming that this kissing and tickling was innocent, then why would Sam keep it a secret?The day of her mother's wedding finally came and Nur was immobilized by fever. Yet, she did not dare to mention the awful hurt in her tummy or the burn in her urine. The next morning, she worke up to shouts downstairs to hear a strange voice saying:

Sir, we have a court order. If you don't get out of my way, you will be arrested."The source of those words came into Nur's room. "Nzinga!" Nur yelled her name, but no sound came out. Nzinga rushed to her bedside, "Jesus lord! Nur?" Then she turned and yelled in her wonderful accent, "Call an ambulance. She's burning up.Nur blinked, feeling the warmth of her lids slide over her eyes. Jesus lord, she's soaking in sweat and urine. What's wrong with you people (Abulhawa 55)?

Nzinga came in again to save Nur from the acrimony she was trapped in. Nur had to stay in the hospital for two more days in the hospitals so that doctors confirm that the infection had dispersed. The doctors stated that it was a deplorable situation and that Nur was lucky enough to have the infection gone from the tushie right to the kyndyes. However, they added, that,

Her "vagina was bruised inside," like someone had "done something to it." Could she tell them "how that happened?" She mustered an emphatic "No!" when they asked if her Tio Santiago had hurt her. "It was Sam!"They didn't make her tell everything. She was allowed to draw pictures to show what Sam had done to her. She thought she had to draw what she had done to Sam, too, so she did, and it made Nzinga cry (Abulhawa 55).

It is just through this passage that we get to know the sexual insect that has been perpetrated by Sam. Nur has a sort of genital injury due to Sam, but at the age of eight she had no idea about being sexually abused by the one who was going to be a stepfather. Still, Nur cannot utter a word

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about what happened though. Rather, doctors make her draw pictures to reveal that heinous crime.

The drawn picture made Nziga cry in sorrow.

3.10. The Aftermaths of Trauma and Nur's Reaction to the Trauma of Incest

When experiencing any type of traumatic experience, people tend to react differently. For example in *Emotional Reaction and Behaviour of Incest Victims (2010)* Nor Shafrin and Rohany report that the emotions revealed by the victims were poignant, disgracing, amiss, agitating, steady and disenchanting (22). They categorize the victims' reactions into three main types; the first being a melancholic crying victim, the second being a coldly firm victim and the third being a frustrated victim who is not sad but rather emotionally disturbed. Tower and Dreyden advocate that the victims of sexual incest would have low self-confidence, apprehension and panic, disgrace and culpability, annoyance, depression and intricacy in social contexts (78). In reminiscent conditions, the wounded female victim, especially, would be reluctant to expose the incident orally with the therapist like the case of Nur who would rather draw the incest instead of talking about it with the doctors. Nonetheless, Tower and Dreyden add that scholars in the field ascertain that a number of victims did not display any emotion like they were numb or heartlessness, and hence, it becomes hard for experts to determine their psychological state at that instant (67), "The freeze condition is due to the subject's attempt to prevent from remembering the incident" (Resick 190). Yet, not reacting, or what is deemed 'the freeze condition' to this sexual incest, does not imply that the female victim will not go through trauma as inferred by Young (92). Rather, there is a possibility that the aftermaths of trauma are postponed short after the sexual abuse. Moreover, the sexual abuse results may show on the victim afterwards.

Tower and Dreyden assume that delayed aftermath of the trauma of the sexual incest may make the rehabilitation process tougher" (1020). Similar to the female victim whose condition cannot be uplifted by talking or group discussion and similar to the freeze, steady and stable condition, Nur would not be affected by her trauma right after the incident and becomes numb instead as shown through the following passage, "Nur turned her head to look out the

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window, sucked in one long breath, and there were no more tears. Just like that. At the age of eight, Nur's tears dried up and they would not form again until she was an adult standing on Gaza's shore, the Mediterranean caressing her feet, a folded and refolded letter in her hand” (Abulhawa 50). Through this quote, we see that Nur’s reaction to trauma is the freeze condition since she contains the pain inside and does not show any reaction. As she was exposed to trauma Nur subside the pain without shedding a tear. She would retrieve her emotions back when she sets her feet for the first time in Gaza’s shore with letters in her hands. Through this, we can assume where the rehabilitation of Nur lies. As long as she left the hospital, Nur refused to go to a new foster family until Nzinga brought her book; *Jiddo and Me* and her bear Mahfouz. Soon it was time to leave the hospital. This time, at the ripe age of nine, she refused to go until someone brought her secret book and Mahfouz, her bear, “Staring at the cover of her book, contemplating the words *Jiddo and Me*, trying to remember the tenderness that had been. She thought of an old shoe and sensed inside her body there littered so many islands of crusted uncried tears” (Abulhawa 51). Through this quote, we confirm that Nur goes through the freeze condition is considered as a post traumatic stress disorder since it causes her to mute her sorrowful emotions for a long time. Roberts et al. state that post traumatic stress disorder, PTSD, is a mental disorder that is intrigued short after experiencing a remarkably intimidating or horrendous occurring. Among the proposed techniques to survive PTSD is the exposure therapy. Roberts et al. (2009) suggest the exposure therapy which aims at assisting patients to encounter their traumatic memories and experiences via written or vocal narratives.

After Nur’s recovery Nzinga thinks of making a compelling case to send Nur to live with her paternal family in Gaza, but Nur could not travel outside the United States as she is a ward to the court. and since she is young, she is, thus, incapable of managing her own concerns. So, Nzingeh has no other choice but to send Nur to her mother again. However, Nur finds herself with another foster family again. Over the course of two years, Nur has to go through six different foster families and six different schools to find a permanent dwelling in Southern Baptist

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children's home in Thomas ville, North Carolina, called Mills Home. This indicates the sense involuntary dislocation that Nur had to live and which would cause a psychic disruption that could only be driven away through being excellent at school. Though Nur's educational life and good grades seemed to make her life glamorous for Americans; she had absolute freedom and golden opportunities for a promising career, yet, "she the most devastated person we knew. There was no place in the world for her to be" (Abulhawa 56). There was no place for her; as she was an outsider after all. As long as she was good-natures, compliant with others, she could be tolerated, but in case she was the opposite then she would be drifted away and alienated, "for that reason, she is always trying to be good, submissive, and she panickes when someone ge upset with her. Life burrowed holes and tunnels in her. It filled her with an immense silence that grew teeth and claws that cut her from the inside" (Abulhawa 56). Through this quote, we notice that Nur is also trapped in another psychological condition besides; the post traumatic stress disorder; which is an emotional dependency. As stated before, emotional dependency happens when we get one's good feelings from the outside world and not from within. It means one needs to get filled from outside rather than from within. Nur, in the previous example, feels comfortable only when pleasing others. Additionally, the silence, in this passage, indicates a symptom of the freeze condition of the post traumatic stress disorder that Nur went through. Nevertheless, what could not be uttered verbally could only be replaced by written words. For example, when Nur was twelve years old and it was time for Nzinga to take her to the new abode; the Mills home; she noticed that Nziga is becoming overweight since the last time she saw her. She was about to call her fatty, "but words always got stuck in her throat. She could write them down later on paper she could tell herself how much she hated Nzinga for moving her from one shitty foster home to another"(Abulhawa 56). This implies that silence was the voice of her trauma which, ultimately, means that her silent attitude and the emptiness in her heart are the culminations of earlier traumas. As truly endearing as she was, Nzinga feels the pain in Nur and says: "Nur, I know there is terrible hurt inside of you," Nzinga broke the cold silence. "And it didn't help that it has taken so long to find a permanent

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placement for you" (Abulhawa 56). Thanks to Nur secret relief with words, "she was fluent in the jargon of Child Welfare." Nur welfare, on the other hand, could only took place when her grandfather was alive and now long after she has been deprived of it, she knows exactly what a child well being means. She was a case of "neglect and sexual abuse without possibility of reunification"(Abulhawa 56). Commenting on Nur's state, the narrator considers her situation irredeemable and incurable.

3.11. Nur's Overall Reaction to Trauma

The way people react to a post traumatic stress disorder vary from "freezing, flight or fight" (Fraghaki et al.1). Reinforcing the freeze condition and coldness of the victim, it is argued that freezing is a habitual result measure in human research after the fights and flight reaction. They add that researches conducted about the way a victim responds to a traumatic experience "focused hugely in the fight/flight behavior and research on human freezing is still in its infancy" (Fraghaki et al .2). This indicates that only few researches are made about this rare condition. Freezing is a self defense mechanism response that is characterized by mitigated bodily movement. Maria Lojowska et al. see that emotively intuitive feelings and conscious perceptions of the victim are heightened. This is the case of the protagonist in the novel (78). Subsequently, we notice that the flow of psychological emotions and thoughts of the main character Nur are told by a narrator who is telling the story from a third person point of view. This narrator plunges us into the psychic life of the main characters by shedding light on meticulous details of their emotions and ideas. Linking psychology to literature in this accordance, the third omniscient narrator excavates the freeze condition as a post traumatic stress disorder to trauma.

The following example is an interesting illustration to the aforementioned. On her very first day as Nur comes to the Mills home, some naughty older kids peed in a cup and poured it in her bed as she was asleep and accused her to have that done. As s somebody who is coping with the silent syndromes of post traumatic stress disorder,

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everything inside of Nur, words, rage, humiliation, even joy would try to find a way out, but it all got stuck. In her throat, her belly, behind her eyes. Nothing made its way out. Clots of unuttered words and uncried tears formed and took root, spawning a silence that spread to all her parts, such that everything about her seemed quiet. She breathed and ate quietly. Her eyes were remote, without language. That's how she was the first day she arrived at Mills Home(Abulhawa 57).

Through this example, we see that the third omniscient narrator peers inside Nur's tumultuous thoughts and emotions to show that it is all taking place inside. Teeming with an outraging anger and feverous emotions, Nur reacts by saying nothing. Just like the freeze condition indicates, Nur is stuck in this cold condition of post traumatic stress disorder; which is as stated previously the most dangerous condition to heal from or grapple with. This perilous situation is referred to as a risky one; as it occurs after threat detection" and hence leads to the freeze condition" (Blanchar 03).Just like Nur does not react to any sort of bully, Nur does not also react to any sort of compliment. Even when Mrs. Whitter, her latest housemother, delightfully received her saying,

Praise Jesus!" that the "first Muslim child on campus" had been delivered to them. We love and accept everybody here,". Nur didn't react. She plopped her sights on something insignificant and waited for the greetings, the introductions, the rule readings, the importance of God and Jesus in each cottage, the formalities of yet another "family," to be over. And when Nzinga left, Nur didn't say good-bye (Abulhawa 57).

Through this example, Nur does not react or care about any word or benediction, praise or admiration. This can be interpreted as a situation of loosing one's trust in every people. Nur had been once fooled by Sam's fake benediction and now it seems to her that the world is hostile and hypocrite, for all try to shine at the beginning before they show their real murky side. She was numb, silent and without emotions waiting for the new family and school regulations to be over so

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as she retreats to her solitude again. Frozen enough, Nur would not even bid farewell to the only person who truly loved her; Nzinga.

Nonetheless, Nur would not even be proud and happy as a fourteen year old girl be upon hearing the news of her good grades and high flying success. When asked about her good grades, she would simply say “Fine.” “Yeah, I know,” Nzinga winked at her. “Mrs. Whitter said you were the best student they had in their cottage.” “Whatever,” Nur said, and Nzinga laughed” (Abulhawa 58). Nur reacting to her good grades by using the word “whatever”, here, shows that for Nur, her success is but a trivial thing and it simply cannot bridge the void left inside. Nzinga was the harbinger of hope in Nur’s life. She had always tried to make her smile as she felt the deep chaos inside Nur. Through this instance we can see how Nzinga tries to make Nur smile,

Still laughing, Nzinga tucked her lips under her teeth, imitating Mrs. Whitter. "Praise Jesus!" And they both laughed. "Laughter looks good on you," Nzinga said. "That's how you were when I first met you. The way you and your grandfather were together was probably one of the best love stories I've ever seen. Maybe that's why you're one of the few cases I can't let go of." Nur looked down, moving food around on her plate. "I can hardly remember what he looks like," she said. "He doesn't even seem real. Like it was all a dream (Abulhawa 58).

Nur would for the first time in the novel speak again about her grandfather after Nzinga reminded her about the happy short time she spent with him. For Nur, the grandfather Mamduh seems to be just a dream as she can hardly remember his physical appearance. Nzinga also shares her story with Nur telling her that she also came from a very lovely family and had five brothers who simply quitted her, «Nur smiled and said, "We're cursed." Nzinga smiled, too. These warm discussions with Nzinga brought some tender feeling to Nur’s heart. Now, that Nur started to speak about her emotions, the freeze condition as a sign of post traumatic stress disorder started to mitigate. Letting go of her freeze condition would pave the way for Nur to utter her true emotions and feelings.

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Describing her emotions, Nur declares, "That's kind how I feel, Nzinga. Like there's nothing holding me together. Like I'm just made up of a bunch of pieces from different places and it's all taped together and is gonna rip apart if I move too hard or talk too loud or something," Nur said" (Abulhawa 59). Through this extract we come to know the real reason behind Nur's silence. Nur feels like she is scattered and broken into different pieces and that if she dares speak out, she will simply fall apart. Yet, speaking about this is in itself a release. Mesmerized by Nur's own words, Nzinga responds: "I have never met a fourteen-year-old who recognizes the details of their own feelings the way you do. And I have never met a fourteen-year-old who can put language to those feelings the way you just did. In fact, I don't meet too many adults who can do that, either"(Abulhawa 60). More than that, Nzinga makes a hint at Nur's therapy telling: "Some day, you're gonna make your own family, Nur. I hope you will find your way to the world in your grandfather's heart. He wanted you to know Arabic and know your people in Palestine" (Abulhawa 61). The mention of the grandfather, Arabic and homeland Palestine probably turn Nur back to normal and stop her from succumbing to the freeze condition.. Indeed, she rather finds a solace in writing again. Years after, Nur grew up and majored in her education to be, ironically, a psychotherapist herself. She embarked on projects of helping children walking out of their traumatizing experiences. This is made clear through the following quote, "When Israel began a devastating assault on Gaza in December 2008, Nur had been working as a psychotherapist for the City of Charlotte, helping teens confront histories of rape, incest, abuse, neglect, drug use, and inconceivable traumas (Abulhawa 89). To save cases of sexual abuse, rejection, neglect, rape, etc, Nur worked extensively continual hours, paid or unpaid helper, "perfecting the habits of loneliness and escape by rescuing others" (Abulhawa 89).

Keeping a written correspondence with Nzinga along the course of years is what made Nur and Nzinga friendship last for a long period of time. After Nur became a psychotherapist, she was loyal enough to her old friend Nzinga, who got married and had kids of her own now. They maintain their bond of friendship and they kept a good link; "they still talked. Even after Nzinga

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married and had kids; after Nur aged out of the child welfare system, graduated from college, then graduate school; the thing between them remained. Its parts were made of motherhood, sisterhood, womanhood, comradeship in struggle, political activism, mentorship, friendship” (Abulhawa 89). Nzingeh was close enough to Nur to understand well the reason behind choosing the field of psychotherapy. She writes on skype,: “All us wounded women make a career of trying to put other people back together” (Abulhawa 89). The results of her infancy trauma made her compassionate enough to feel other’s pains and try her best to solve cure their traumas. Soon after after Israel's attack to Gaza, Nzingeth massaged a video link of a little boy from Gaza who suffered of Locked-in syndrome⁹ to Nur. Hoping that Nur finds her family in Gaza, Nzinga would always forward her similar cases to relate her to her place of origin and lost identity. Yet, the family name of this boy was not identical to her grandfather. The aftermath of the Israeli attack is what made Khaled diagnosed with LIS. His mother refuses to believe that her son was comatose, because he could blink when asked to.

Just like writing was of therapeutic ends for Nur as she was a toddler, being a psychotherapist made her write scientific papers to help children walk out of their traumas and this is made explicit when Nzinga advised her to work on Khaled case saying: “Here's the video I told you about. I remembered you did a paper on Locked-In Syndrome in college and thought you might want to take a look at this”(Abulhawa 89). From this quote, we realize the outcomes of prior writing on Nur and the community she chose to help overcome trauma. The phrase “you did a paper on locked in syndrome” implies that Nur is using her scientific knowledge to help children with psychological disorders overcome their traumas.

3.13. Writing Epistolary Correspondence as a Mechanism of Scriptotherapy

Another possible mechanism to therapeutic writing can be exhibited through the written correspondence of letters. According to Emilia Soroko, this form of writing is a type of narrative

⁹ Locked-in syndrome (LIS), also known as pseudocoma, is a rare neurological disorder characterized by complete paralysis of voluntary muscles except for those that control the eyes. People with this condition are conscious and can think and reason, but they are unable to speak or move. Vertical eye movements and blinking can be used to communicate.

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therapy of communication (87). Through this mechanism, the traumatized may write letters where they communicate profound and deep emotions to the persons they love and admire. In addition to corresponding through tangible letters, electronic correspondence is also common. This is referred to as “on-line counselling, text-based counselling and psychotherapy using the Internet, which has been developing in the past few years, use therapeutic writing to a significant extent especially if the contact is kept by e-mail” (Soroko 26).

On the light of the aforementioned, Nur starts to correspond with Jamal and meanwhile had positive emotions of love, awe and admiration; the likes of which had never existed before in her life. Nonetheless, Jamal is the only link that may relate her to her lost family and relatives in Palestine. After, she was informed from the organizing committee for the Palestine Children's Relief Fund fund-raiser that a Palestinian psychologist will be their next speaker, Nur chanced to meet Dr. Jamal Musmar. In the conference room, Nur would meet Mr. Musmar and they exchanged an introductory talk with each other's where Nur introduced herself as a mental health clinician in the DSS. She adds, “I work with teens transitioning into the foster care system from difficult circumstances” (Abulhawa 91). Exchanging letters after their first meeting in the US. Nur and Jamal got to know each others and they were both open to be friends. Their first correspondence was filled with optimistic words like: “ I will be a happy man to know you”, “ you were delightful and charming,”” I would really like to correspond wit you more” (Abulahwa 93). The second letter from Jamal entails an optimistic promise of a probable upcoming link of friendship and this is made clear when Dr. Mustmar asks Nur to address him so familiarly without the use formalities and positive adjectives like: delightful, charming and happy. These are adjectives that have only been used by Mamduh ; Nur's grandfather. Futhermore, Jamal is considered as a hope that would reunite with her with Palestinian family.

Filled with positive energy and love, Jamal and Nur kept a daily written communication which turns to be “a daily construction of an epistolary refuge where Nur went for a sense of

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purpose” The epistolary narrative of letters in Nur case is considered as a refuge which proves the therapeutic ends of writing. At this stage of heavenly correspondance, Nur is processing normal cognitive feelings of love and feels like she has a target in life; which is inferred from the phrase I am having “a sense of purpose”(Abulahwa 93). Before when Nur was suffering of Freeze symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder, she did not seem to care or react about her outstanding success, but, now she comes to realize that life has got a purpose.Exchanging epistory letters helped Nur to surpass the post traumatic stress disorder of the freeze condition she was trapped in over the course of her adolensent life. Nonetheless, Nur would stretch the horizon of her imagination linking it to the voice of her grandfather who once told her that she inherited his sister’s eyes, “She imagined finding an older woman in Gaza with her eyes; being surrounded by her big family; finding the place where she belonged”(Abulhawa 93).Keeping a daily correspondence wih Jamal made Nur feel elated and filled with hope for a better future.

3.13. Writing Poetic Verses and Translated poems as A Means of Scriptotherapy

In his ‘*Principles of Poetry Therapy*’ (1963), Felie Griefer argues that poetry articulates the writer’s deep emotions, opinions and ideas. Being rhythmical; following a rhyme scheme or none rhythmical; based on free verse; poetry is helpful for novice and budding writers alike (4).Christina Bracegirdl contends that poetic and creative writing can communicate deep emotions; “A poem gives shelter to and can contain what it evokes, such as strong emotion; the poem can be a place of safety” (50).To bring forth the effectiveness of therapeutic writing, the forerunning feeling of safe internal space qualifies poetry as a healing technique or mechanism of scriptotherapy. Likewise, the feeling carried by the writer is then transmitted to the reader. The readers are considered as “ground on which text grows” (Hunt & Sampson 149).Additionally, Dori Laub dvocates that writing poetry made her able to accept his “life narrative” (78). In deed, it was only through writing poetry that Dori Laub realized that she can write about the murder she witnessed in her life and overcome the trauma of such an event afterward.

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According to van der Hart et al., the action of writing poetry provides a chance to mend the shattered emotional pieces in one's chest, for they,

explain the sense of being in a bubble where a person experienced and observed as if out of body and the external world. My experience was that these parts create a split between function and self-perception. There was a divide between how I perceived myself and how I found myself behaving. In other words there may be potential for parts of the self to be discovered out of such powerful traumatic experiences. Even if such parts are not new, they are experienced as new, for self perception may feel changed beyond recognition (88).

The intense traumatic experience may lead to a split of emotions between what we are experiencing personally and how we act and behave. When we relate this example to Nur, we find out that though split-off and shattered, Nur's behavior was always respectful and appropriate in society. Yet, the recovery was not made overnight, but through a course of life dedicated to writing and studying.

In accordance with this claim Meltzer Donadl, in *Genesis of the 'aesthetic conflict'* by Meg Harris Williams (2021) posits that this split is mandatory for creativity. Hence, overcoming trauma through expressive writing is interesting. Importantly, the paradox adduced through the oxymoron of emotions between self and function would generate the harmonious oppositions that exist in prosperity through trauma which may be envisaged through the functions of figures of speech like symbolism, irony, etc. Furthermore, poetry exposes unconscious forces to consciousness and organizes them into understandable forms. This is a therapeutic process which makes "arrangement out of derangement, harmony out of disharmony, and order out of chaos" (qtd in Bracegirdle 57). This quotation shows the curative ends of poetry as it conjures up order out of disorder, array from disarray, and steadiness out of unsteadiness. This quality of therapeutic utility visualized by is a formal therapy of trauma and hence can be used as means of scriptotherapy (Osamnia and Djafri12). It has also been shown that the translation of poems from the original language to the target language may have a soothing affect just like Felie Griefer

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suggested earlier when he argued that, “the translation of poetry can act as a healing attempt for people with post traumatic stress disorder” (459).

As far as the literary translation of poems is concerned, it is one most complicated task a translator may undertake. The basic factor that intrigues this adversity is the atypical characteristic of the poetic language. Unlike prose, poetry is well known for its “musical quality and poetic essence” (Tisgam 38). Translating poetry is essential, for it is a medium of contact between world’s languages and cultures. While translating poetry, the translator most challenging role is to maintain and replicate “the poetic effects because the written word appeals not only to the eye, but to the ear as well” (Tisgam 54). Hence, as a translator, one must be creative and work by instinct. Endorsing the same idea, Khalida Tisgam concludes that a poetic translation must articulate to the readers the exact interpretation and the implied connotations of the original texts. It should convey to the receptors all and only the explicit information and all and only the implied information that the original was intended to convey. The significance of a translated poem is “the set of assumptions” texts planned to express. To construe the intention of the poet of the original text, the translation should go beyond the linguistic level and should focus on more other levels like the contextual, cultural, metrical, etc. Accordingly, in ‘*Relevance and the Translation of Poetry*’ (1998), Martha Thorsell states: “in poetry there is the vital component of rhythm, verse, line length, predominance of sounds - all sorts of phonetics-dependent features” (32).

The examples of the poems that we will analyze are stances of covert translation since they have not been analyzed as translated texts separately. They have been grounded as source texts within the novels to have a therapeutic effect as we claim in our study. For this reason our aim is not to focus on the exact aesthetic and artistic value of the original text, but rather reshuffling the intended curative ends of the implications of these poems in the narratives under scrutiny. As far as the covert translation of literary poems is viewed, it generally takes place when “there is a functional equivalence” (Washbourne 14). The equivalence that we target, in our study,

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is that of a therapeutic function which goes hand in hand with the function of scriptotherapy in mitigating trauma and restoring peace and inner happiness,

[T]he poem is recognized as a poem, but meaning transfer is not necessarily included in the bargain - and the original is often not considered, and if it is, it does not matter if the comparison shows divergence, because the translation has achieved the status of an original in the target culture. Texts that are crucially dependent on the source language original would be interpreted and read differently depending on whether they were presented as works in their own right or as representations of source language originals (Walter77).

Additionally, Benjamin Walter claims that “there is something "gained" by the birth of a text which will not be mere a replica of the original but will have the ability to achieve a sort of equivalence to the SL” (65). The equivalence, to our sense, does not only tackle similarity in terms of linguistic or cultural rapprochement, but also a similarity in terms of functionality. The function of the poem as it is claimed before is pleasing and also therapeutic in its ends. Equally, translated poem should have a curative effect on the traumatized person who writes it. Hence, translated poems are supposed to find that intended effect upon the language “into which he is translating which produces in it the echo of the original” (Walter 77).Poetic translation works in tandem with the very essence of poetry when used as mechanisms of scriptotherapy. Fatiha Dani postulates that poetic translation is “an art of speech intended to create an emotion and a style of its own that does not exist in other verbal combinations of language” (253.)Moreover, she adduces that poetry may lead to a “dual-valued language unit” which, simply, denotes two functions; one which can be considered as dennotative or figurative value construing an image and another which has a communicative value, or conveys a message that can usually be transferred from the outside to the inside, transmitting a poetic idea.(254)Linking this premise to the objective of poetic translation in our study, we claim that poetic translation serves as means to uplift the spirit, which is the inside word, from the healing effect of the outside world which is the translated text. The

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nature of poetic language leads us to relate two units of poetic language; the first being the stylistic unit and the second being the referential unit. Working together closely by dint of creativity, the stylistic and referential units render the poem a creative entity with curative ends as it changes to become a unit of scriptotherapy.

Linking this notion to scriptotherapy, we suggest that a poetic translation may intrigue an original cure only if it is highly creative. Penetrating the same arena, Ludmila Braniste guilds reason for poetic translation in the sense that it has to come with writing the text anew. Otherwise said, the translated poem should include a replica of the same text, but rather a poetic translation should be done with intelligibility (Braniste 87). Underlining the idea of creativity, it is declared: “This bilingual personality has the courage of a unique, creative nature, with an exceptional intelligence” (Dani 254). Again, relating this assumption to the core of our study, reaching the inference of psychological redemption through a poetic translation, the writer who embeds the role of the translator must be intelligently creative in translation. Fatiha Dani certifies that poetic translation may create imagery making the readers reflect on their memories, prompting their emotions, and stimulating their responses. The value of poetic translation resides in the hidden value it carries within its folding which, ultimately, hints to the effectiveness of poetic translation as it brings forth a soothing feeling of relief. Regarding this, it is assumed that “in fact, poetic translation is an art of re-creation, where each word, each group of words, takes on its true meaning according to its contextual position. It is not just about transferring from one language to another a thought or a feeling, but also to implement an aesthetic value but with a specific thorough character” (Dani 76). Boase-Beir and De Beaugrand believe that translation of poetry can be successful only if both style and content are transferred (qtd in cited in Connally (19). In the upcoming sections, we will analyze poetic verses that serve as means of scriptotherapy to alleviate Nur’s traumatic situations.

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3.14.1. Nur being Shocked by Djamal and the Writing of Poetry as a Means of Scriptotherapy

When she arrived to Palestine, the only person she knew there was Jamal. Jamal was waiting for her there in Gaza's border. Looking tidier, Jamal warmly welcomed Nur. Remarking the difference that shows in his outlooks, Nur state: "you look different" Responding to her Jamal would say: "Ah. Well, yes. My wife doesn't tolerate my tendency for shabbiness. When you saw me, I had been on my own for a month while my wife was in Canada visiting her family. The word wife stepped gently into the space that Nur had made from words and letters and longings" (Abulhawa 93). After her first disappointment, Nur is trapped into the frozen symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder by showing no reaction. She made a recovery through writing words and letters of love and longing. However, again though Jamal had endeared himself to Nur promising her of a hope that was always lost in her life; he comes at this stance to ruin it when uttering the word wife. Despite the pain left inside after that word, Nur writes a poetic verse stating:

Hope is not a topic,

It's not a theory.

It's a talen (Abihawa 93).

Attempting to explain the potential significance of the poem, it is noted that these poetic lines are a kind of antidote to the new disappointment that appears in Nur's life. Though life kept dissatisfying her, Nur did not surrender immediately due to Jamal's response. Another potential interpretation to hope may relate to Gaza; the home she was promised by her grandfather. Hope in Nur's perception is not a theme or an approach to be discussed, but it is rather an attitude, a style of life or way of thinking. The mere act of reading the poem may provoke a feeling of consolation which is the aim of scriptotherapy.

Nur swiftly forgets the pain caused behind this sort of betrayal and get focused on her job as a psychotherapist by studying the case of Khaled. The main interactions with Jamal turn to be about Khaled mainly. Nur inquires whether Khaled had a history of Schizophrenia and Jamal

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answers that the grandmother used to speak to the Djinn which may ultimately mean that Khaled inherited the illness from his grandmother. Intuitively, Nur inquires whether the name of the grandmother was Sulaman and Jamal simply answers by confirming that only few psychologists exist to deal with the case and that her presence is massively needed. Nonetheless, he adds; “You might be the miracle the family is looking for after all” (Abulhawa 94). Through these lines we find that Khaled became the hope that would link Nur to her true lineage.

Just like life offered a new hope, Nur would write some lines of Darwish’s poetry:

Our coffee cups, the birds and green trees with blue shade, and sun leaping from wall toward another wall, like a gazelle, and water in clouds of endless forms spread across whatever ration of sky is left for us, and things whose remembrance is deferred and this morning, strong and luminous-all beckon we are guests of eternity. Mahmoud Darwish poetry (Abulhawa 98).

Feeling an authentic sense of belonging for the very first time in her life, Nur brings forth some poetic verses of the Paestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish. Nur was talented enough to turn any potential debacle into hope. Inspired by a hope that would link her to her real paternal family, Nur anticipates the near union writing about all the beautiful things that she found in her motherland including; the special coffee cups, the birds which symbolize a renewal of hope and promising opportunities, green trees which are associated with a prosperous and flourishing life, the blue shade representing a sense of new trust, sincerity and a stability that have never existed before, the gazelle implying a sense of feminine beauty and a morning which is strong and luminous indicating the appearance of light after the long gloomy days of Nur’s previous life. The morning light seems to be so bright that it may lead to positive events, and an overwhelming happiness that awaits Nur. The writer’s use of this translated poem reveals the core of scriptotherapy and the constructive psychological effects it produces when utilized.

The use of writing as a redemptive activity is not only personal, but also interpersonal-, Nur tries to use notes and charts when dealing with Khaled who was a new hope that may link Nur

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to her family. He was Alwan's son and Nazmiyeh grandson. Destiny had sequenced Nur to a diasporic life, but then brought her back home. Unaware that she is ironically home, Nur looks closely in Nazmiyeh's face looking for her grandfather's Palestinian stories investigating her grandfather's heritage and the mismatched eyes she had inherited. To help Khaled overcome the lock-in syndromes, Nur asks Khaled to blink if he could hear her and he did. Happy by the gleam of hope, his mother affirmed that her son can hear. Rhet Shel's is Khaled's little sister who would now be Nur's assistant and new little friend. Nur narrates her the stories she was told long ago by her grandfather, "Together they are making charts with letters and common words for Kaled"(Abulahwa 98). Khaled's condition progresses a little bit thanks to Nur and Rhet Shel who suggests questions to be asked to khaled. Declaring Khaled improvement, Nur call Jamals telling him that he would stay listening carefully for almost half an hour and answered simple questions by blinking only, "One blink for yes, two for no," Nur said excitedly into the phone. That's excellent, Nur. It must be gratifying to see improvements so quickly, Jamal replied"(Abulhawa 99). Words like excellent, gratifying improvement anticipate a new hope for the improvement of Khaled's comma like condition. Just like Nur in her early infancy; Rhet She showed signs of shrewdness and witty smartness. She even suggests to Nur that they play some music to Khaled to provoke any slight physical movement. Retschel "was sure that he was trying to dance when his cheek twitch.

That small muscle spasm dropped Alwan to her knees with tears" (Abulhawa 98). The mere cheek movement overwhelmed Alwan and made her drop tears of joy. Being overjoyed by Rhet Shel's ecstasy, though Khaled was still immobilized, they allowed themselves to celebrate this triumph,

"The pop music of Nancy Ajram and Amr Diab leavened the air in Hajje Nazmiyeh's home, giving rising form and lyrics to a day transformed by Rhet Shel's charm. She tied her mother's scarf around her narrow child hips and danced. Her young friends were there, having followed as the matriarchs did. They too danced as their elders clapped encouragement (Abulhawa 98-99).

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It is the slightest hope of this twitched cheeks that made them feel happy. So, they danced and rejoiced and were fully joyful. The consequences of earlier writings, education and true love led to this slight improvement which seems to mean the world to this family. They danced “in spontaneous cheer, fueled by Khaled's alertness and blinking on cue. Nur played the songs Khaled chose by blinking for the options Rhet Shel presented. “Five songs, through which Rhet Shel's happiness restored and repaired them, lifted Israel's siege, ended the military occupation, and returned them to their home in Beit Daras” (Abulhawa 99). This new shared happiness brings them back to their happiest days when life was normal without stress and melancholy. This shared happiness seems to mend their broken souls and allude to a future jubilation. The outcome on Nur is feeling an “effection for surroundings edged against the walls of their merriment. She smiled silently, watching ordinary love unpack itself, hoping its splash would land on her” (Abulhawa 99).The reasons why we bring these details to the analytical part is concealing the psychological gains of scriptotherapy on Nur, especially, as it always proved the power of healing through writing, especially and education generally. Without the two, Nur would have never reached home or feel this elation of family love; a love that she had never felt in the States except with her grandfather or Nzinga. Detailing this moment of special joy, Nur writes again some poetic lines by Darwish saying: “I have walked far enough to know where autumn begins: there, behind the river, the last pomegranates ripen in an additional summer and a beauty mark grows in the seed of the apple, Mahmoud Darwish” (Abulhawa 106).Abulhawa’s inclusion of these translated lines taken from Darwish’s *The Traveller*, was translated from the Arabic first by Sinan Antoon, as being said through the interior monologue of Khaled. Khaled is the third person omniscient narrator who narrates most of the hidden and magical events in the story. Through the use of interior monologue, Khaled made the readers realize the reality that Nur is back home. The following passage clarifies this better:

Now, Nur is here and I stay tethered to Mama's candles longer. She is no more the little girl by the river with me and Mariam, but an American woman with a purpose. She talks to

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Rhet Shel, telling her stories of a grandfather from Gaza, and when I return to the river, I see it was my great-khalo Mamdouh. He had been with us all along there. Nur does not know she has come home. When Teta pulled her close, Nur was also searching Teta's face for traces of her jiddo's stories of a sister whose mismatched eyes Nur had inherited. I want to tell all that I know(Abulhawa 99).

Abulhawa's use of magic realism in the novel to add fantasy to the story. For instance, Khaled could see Mamduh though he died long time ago and now though he knows everything he cannot utter a word. This element of fantasy makes us wonder whether Khaled is grown up or little. Whether he was sane, insane or probably possessed like his great grandmother Ummaamduh who used to talk to a Jin called Sulaymane. This incertitude goes along with mentioning the word autumn, through Darwich poetry, which, ultimately, indicates a double connotation; one is that of profusion and reap and the other being that of downturn and perishing. Talking to himself, in a form of interior monologue, Khaled's use of Darwich poetry reveals his own happiness. Again, the writer Abulhawa uses the poetic verse from Darwich's poetry to reveal the elated feelings of Khaled by using words like pomegranates, summer, river, beauty etc.)

It is asserted that pomegranates may have various symbolic representations socially and religiously as it has been mentioned in more than one religion like the Koran and Torah. As it may represent fertility, pomegranates may also present the persistence of life. We assume that the use of pomegranates in this stance, may be associated with the persistence of life in the sense that khaled clings to life and is willing to make effort to ameliorate his condition and get out of his coma like condition (Lebo 5). The word river is an all-inclusive literary motif and an everlasting symbol in various religions. The river may symbolize energy, life, fertility, freedom, strong emotions and prosperity. Relating this possible interpretation to Khaled's situation, we conclude that it represents flowing of Khaled's joyful emotions. The river, in this example nourishes Khaled's heart and endorses an aptitude of a perpetual flow of elation. Nonetheless, it is like it is suggested "it is a meeting place where people come together in joy and prosperity."(Chris p, n.d).

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Accompanied by Nur and the matriarchs of the household, Khaled rejoices silently. In similar way, the word summer in the poem may allude to Khaled's heat of emotions, and hope for new warm and happy beginning to start taking place in their home with the arrival of Nur and the departure of the lengthy dark reverberating days of winter that seemed to dwell in Gaza permanently. Putting it in a nutshell, Though Khaled cannot utter a word; the narrator presents a detailed description of his flow of thoughts. Just like Nur, Khaled also consoles himself by remembering a poem by Mahmoud Darweech.

3.15. The Therapeutic Outcomes of Scriptotherapy as Used in the Novel

Before he died, Mamduh worried that his personal belongings would be lost forever so he asked his friend who was always successful in delivering things to Gaza to transmit them to Nazmiyeh. The possessions consist of a book Mamduh wrote with Nur, his watch, photos, "worn Quran, his and Yasmine's wedding band, and what remained of their shabka-a braided gold bangle, which had been given to her by Nazmiyeh at her wedding" (Abulhawa 108). Mamduh's old friend was afraid not to live long to deliver the book to Nur saying:

this book sounds like it should always belong to Nur. I don't know how I will ever get it to her," Mamduh's friend had reported to Hajje Nazmiyeh. He feared that he could not live up to the duty of amana, a sacred promise to safeguard something for another person. In the end, he gave the book to another friend who was traveling to Gaza and who would find Nazmiyeh and take it to her" (Abulhawa 109). In this way Mamduh's belongings return to his sister and became the key that link Nur to her family. In one evening Nazmiyeh puts the wooden box of Mamduh aside allowing Nur to see what it contains. A recognizable watch and many papers with an undecipherable toddler's writing. When Nazmiyeh removed the papers,

Nur reached for the book she wrote long time ago with her Jiddo. Nur reached for the book, touched its cover, caressing the words written by her so long ago. Jiddo and Me. A drawing of her (a smiling little girl with black hair), her arm (a line) stretching her hand (five small lines) to reach

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the five small lines connected to a straight line drawn to a smiling old man with gray and black hair. Nur lifted the book from the box; its dusty frayed ribbon was still tied in a bow. She opened her eyes, the book clutched to her chest, and said to Hajje Nazmiyeh, "I can't remember my jiddo's face (Abulhawa 109).

Through this passage, we come to see that the written book was the key that turned Nur to her real family and for the first time Nur has the chance to have a healthy connection and deep affection to her family. It is evident that we see the positive and optimistic outcomes of scriptotherapy. As stated before, among the numerous benefits of writing is enhancing happiness and opening up social communication. Therewithal, thanks to writing the memory book *Jiddo and Me*, Nur was reunited again with her family. For Nur, writing has always served as a healing tool for grieve as it was stated before, "Not only can writing offer a distraction but it can be used as a form of therapy or way to overcome issues or grief and provide support in difficult times (Grab, p.n.f).

Expressing her extreme happiness, Nazmiyeh's bursts into tears of joy and laugh wildly saying: "Allahu akbar!" She repeated her praise loudly and powerfully and began speaking with her long ago departed sister Mariam;

I know you have a hand in this, Mariam. I know you are here. You never left. Oh, Allah is merciful. To Him all there can be of gratitude. Our child is home." Then she looked into those mismatched eyes, held Nur's face in her hands, lifted it closer to her own. "Our Nur is home. I never stopped praying for you. I never stopped asking Allah to bring you home. You've been here all along! Allahu akbar. Look how Allah is all-knowing. Look how He brought us together. You see, my child? You see how wise is Allah?" Hajje Nazmiyeh kissed Nur's face, rocking their bodies by the force of this grace. "Oh, how the scents of Mamdouh and Yasmine waft in this house now. Oh Allah, my Lord. How You are merciful (Abulhawa 108).

This passage details the feeling of happiness that Nazmiyeh had felt as she recognized that the American Nur is her own niece. Thereby, we see that all that is written down is saved and the

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effect of the written book brings one of the most wonderful love stories one can read as it creates awe, marvel and tremendous happiness and felicity.

3.16. Nur Being Traumatized by Jamal

When it came to love, Nur is not sly enough to love accurately. Rather she loved in a way that was adamant, persistent, and reckless. “Her heart wasn't smart enough to set limits on its generosity. Maybe that's what rejection by one's mother does. It retards the heart. Makes it love wrong, love too fast, without limits” (Abulhawa 88). Her earlier condition of having no adequate motherly love made her cling to Jamal even after knowing about his concealed marriage. In the midst of happiness that she is witnessing with her family, she receives an email from Jamal asking her to meet in the shore of Gaza at night. At that night Jamal declares his love to Nur and at the very same night they loved each others in the most tangible and intimate ways, “the darkness panted and Nur was breathless; the taste of his skin, the moisture of his lips moving down her neck. Their breathing grew jagged and hungry. She felt her bare breasts pressing against him and inhaled the air off his skin as deeply as her lungs would allow”(Abulhawa 118). This passage denotes the immoral act made by Nur against her community. Yet, the matriarch of the family did not think Nur immoral, but rather selfish or as narrated by khaled:

Mama thought Nur selfish, simply because she did not think about the culminations of such act on the entire family in general and female youngsters in particular. A similar act may ruin the entire's family reputation and “their home would be dubbed a house of whores and her brothers, though they lived their own lives nearby, would be blamed, stigmatized, and pressured to correct the offense against the honor of the women under their masculine purview” (Abulhawa 119).

Aghast enough, Nur would receive a more offending email from Jamal the day after where he told her that what they did was a huge mistake and that he was married to the only woman he ardently loves and he had to commit himself to his family only. Nonetheless, he would ask her to gather

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her stuffs from the office where they used to work when he is not there during the hours between noon and two as he was home with his wife.

3.17. Nur Reaction to her Nonmarital Pregnancy through Poetic Verses

After this appalling message, Nur goes frequently to the internet cafe with her secret disgrace eager to find a message from Jamal or, at least, seize Nzinga on skype. She writes in an imploring way to cause a reply and then starts insulting to provoke any sort of response. But, it is all in vain. She, indeed, wrote,

hoping to provoke some response-anything to mitigate the sprawling wasteland of her heart. What a fool she was. How could she expect a man to love her when her own mother could not? She could not blame him. There was nothing to love. A fat home-wrecker with tree-trunk legs even Jesus couldn't save. She went to the bathroom, knelt in front of the toilet, and stuck her fingers down her throat, but she stopped herself, hugged her belly, and got up (Abulhawa138).

As always, a simple “act of discourse” from Nur part helps to diminish her highly provoked anxiety. Whether writing in pleading way, or in a ruthless way, the simple act of uttering words out help to mitigate her tense feelings as stated earlier by James Pennebaker: “the mere act of disclosure is a powerful therapeutic agent that may account for a substantial percentage of the variance in the healing process” (162).She wrote, but no response was received. Though she felt like “a discarded old shoe, bewildered and pregnant, she sat once again by the water. Thank God for the water. Nur thought she might cry, but she didn't” (Abulhawa 138).This quote may probably show Nur’s strength to manage her out of wedlock pregnancy. In similar contexts, nonmarital pregnancies may ignite ambivalent feelings of self-loathing, abortion’s attempts or even suicidal ideas, but it was not the case for Nur.Nur thought she could cry, and then composed a poem instead:

Then, she composed the following lines:

O find me

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I'll be in that blue

Between sky and water

Where all time is now

And we are the forever

Flowing like a river

O find me

Where it's always day

And always night

There are no hours here

In the blue

Between sky and water

There are no countries here

No soldiers

No anguish, or joy

Just blue between sky and water (Abulhawa 139).

In the midst of her tragedy, Nur would write poetic lines about the most relaxing earthly entities which are the sky, water and the blue colour which conjoin the two in perfect serenity. She would probably think about herself being in the blue of the sky and water to feel a sense of tranquility which is an urgent catalyst that a pregnant woman needs. Like water can revive dry plants, it also incites Nur's distraught soul. The indication of the blue colour may be a feeling of joy and happiness that is about to emerge in Nur's life after being traumatized in many possible ways. The blue sky may also imply a sense of immortal happiness that is driven by a divine power. The righteous divine power of the sky may give Nur her right reward after all the hardship she went through in life. The elation of emotions and the view of sky and water set her free without boundaries held by soldiers, countries and anxiety intrigued by fake happiness. A potential interpretation of without anguish or joy is Jamal as he is possibly the representative of a fake joy

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or a painful happiness. He does her nothing, but adding insult to her injuries. Enjoying her solitude, Nur comes to realize that life provides a new hope and new reason for living which is the expectant baby.

Though an illegitimate baby is not supposedly a source of joy for any woman, Nur does not think likewise. The interpretation, in this stance, is beyond evaluating whether Nur is moral or immoral after getting pregnant outside wedlock, but rather to see how she would bring herself together after the calamity happens. The act of writing makes Nur able to describe her feeling again after being frozen before. When Nzinga came online, she writes her immediately:

There is something extraordinary about being rejected by one's mother. It impoverishes the soul. It leaves holes everywhere and you spend your life trying to fill them up. With whatever you can find. With food. With drugs and alcohol. With all the wrong men you know will leave you, so maybe they will replicate the original hurt you felt. You do it to feel abandonment over and over because that's the only thing you know of your mother. And it's all you know to do to bring her close (Abulhawa 149).

Nur reaction about her status is related to her mother's dismissal. Being dismissed by her own mother, made her soul poor and deprived of love and affection. Thus, this sentimental deprivation would leave emotional voids that cannot be filled with any kind of inclination; be it food, alcohol or even men; as they would just reproduce the same hurt inside. Nzinga felt sorry about Nur and Nur writes again: "It's okay, Zingie. I've made whatever peace I can with it. The biggest part is a commitment to being the kind of mother I always wanted to have myself. I have no choice but to have and love this baby, no matter what it means (Abulawa 150). Adducing that she accepts her trauma, Nur writes that she has made peace with this unmarital pregnancy and starts to think that she would probably be an exemplary mother to give the love she never has before. Instead of surrendering to trauma, Nur starts to think of ways to handle her current situation writing:

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Maybe so. I keep thinking about Rhet Shel. I don't know how long Alwan will be around and Aunt Nazmiyeh is too old to take care of her. She has a big extended family. Uncles, aunts, cousins. But Rhet Shel will just get lost in the shuffle. They all have so many kids. I had trouble in the beginning remembering names and who was whose kid. There isn't room for Rhet Shel to get the same love and attention. And she deserves that (Abulhwa 149).

Nevertheless, Nur not only accepts her trauma and works upon it to raise the baby, but she also thinks of taking care of her little kin who would be disorientated without a mother to take good care of her in case Alwan passes away due to her serious illness. Though bruised enough inside, Nur was always on her way to redemption and well being. The way she lived, the heavy burden she had, the sense of dislocation and “impermanence of foster care made her always on her way; on her way to herself; on her way to redemption; on her way to language; or something heavy enough to weigh her against the wind(Abulawa150).the writer ends the quote by mentioning that Nur has always been on her way to language; which implies that she has always managed the inhibition of negative traumatic experiences through scriptotherapy when she said “she was on her way to language”; which similiary means that she was always ready to write herself to hope no matter how bruised and traumatized she was.

3.18. Conclusion

The theoretical techniques of scriptotherapy are deployed in Abuhawa's narrative to prove the positive effect of writing in Nur's span of life. Consequently, scriptotherapy forces Nur's self-determination, and self-discovery. Nur has always been at the verge of pedestal, yet she has never fallen down there. Whenever, trauma arose in her life, she is ready to write about it and, thus, forsake it in her notes and papers. A noteworthy breakthrough, throughout the analysis of this chapter, is that it includes the highest degree of using scriptotherapy techniques. Nur experienced multiple traumas in her life when still a toddler and as an adult. This can be a justification to the highest degree of the use of scriptotherapy techniques in this novel. Moreover, Nur's style of life was set in the uproarious turmoils of diaspora and homeland, peace and war, a Palestine and the

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US. All together, these factors amplified Nur state of psychological orientation and trauma conditions. Consequently, we suggest that the writer used more than one technique of scriptotherapy to meet the extent to which Nur is affected by the traumatic events. Nur traumas also fall within the scope of cultural trauma. That is to say when an event traumatises not only one individual, but also all members of a collectivity or gathering, the trauma is referred to as a cultural trauma or collective trauma” (Wardah Navid et al.91). Nur is entangled in a subset of collective traumas, in addition to the personal traumas that she went through. I argue that the high degree of the use of scriptotherapy is related to the multiplicity of traumas; collective traumas of war, double cultures, state of unbelongingness, cultural shocking and the private traumas that Nur experienced in the narrative. In this context, Wardah Navid et al. justify that :

The tale of Nur's life in the novel, *The Blue Between Sky and Water* is a collision of two worlds, two distinct nations, even two distinct looks and customs. She is an American, is financially stable, but getting adjusted to that particular environment is challenging. She goes through some cultural problems in most of the times she can manage with it, but in many places she becomes unable to avoid the reality of the foreign culture (93).

The phenomenon of cultural shock occurred with Nur when she was first adopted by a Christian family. In an incident after being caught smoking, the family rebuked and punished her for religious beliefs. However, in other occasions in the novel, she went to the church's father and accepted their religion. Khaled narrates the story of that day as; “So, one Wednesday at Chapel Service, she walked down the aisle to accept Jesus. She was baptized that Sunday and they all rejoiced. —You're saved now, they said. Though the family's punishment was lifted, in private, Nur worried for her soul and prayed to Allah” (Abulhawa 200). When Nur reunited with her relatives in Palestine, she has also witnessed a cultural shock when she could not simultaneously adapt with the Palestinian conventions in Gaza because she was brought up differently. Nur's affair with Jamal was not tolerated by her great aunt Nazmiyeh who stressed the need for Nur to conform to the Palestinian Islamic rules and conventions which Nur found difficult to adhere to, “She has

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been used to American culture, so dealing with Jamal in an Islamic country has been challenging”(ward Navid et al. 98).Nur’s cultural turmoil was intensified when she could not adhere to Nazmiyeh rules and behaved according to her American grooming, “Nazmiyeh could not accept such approaches and she could not see Nur being too much American”(ward Navid et al. 98-99). Subsequently, she advises Nur to behave according to the social codes saying: “This is one thing I will teach you. The other thing is that here, in your birthright land, culture, and heritage, what you do affects your entire family. And protecting the family must come before your individual fancy” (Abulhawa 201).These extracts are used to give us insights about the cultural trauma that Nur had to grapple with through the course of her life. The overuse of scriptotherapy, I claim, is employed to help Nur conquer her internalized and externalized traumas.

Chapter Four: Scriptotherapy as a Means to Survive Trauma in *Push* by Sapphire Romana

Lofton (1999)

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Lofton (1999)

We are cups, constantly and quietly being filled. The trick

is knowing how to tip ourselves over and let the beautiful stuff

out (.Ray Bradbury 7).

4. Introduction

Recent research shows that the aftermaths of traumatic memories are the hardest to resolve. Expressing one's painful trauma in a written way has proved to be a golden opportunity to uplift the emotional wounds left behind. The main trauma tackled in the novel of Sapphire's *Push* (1999) is that of family trauma. Occurring in the familiar sphere, this interpersonal trauma can be viewed as a harmful relationship that is distinguished by the use of aggression, violence, brutality, incest, illtreatment and the likes. Similar traumas tend to happen in domestic relationships and are prone to develop learned helplessness, immobilization, frustration, fear and similar symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder. The aftermaths of these relationships generally lead to dire consequences as they "shatter the group's sense of safety and stability as well as damage the bonds of the familial community" (Shonfelger 19).

Narrated from a first person point of view, the novel is told by the protagonist herself; a young black teenager who was illiterate, overweight and pregnant; a fact that made her inevitably a subject of bully at school. At the age of sixteen, Precious is expelled from school due to her pregnancy. She, indeed, is impregnated twice by her own biological father who started to sexually abusing and raping her at the age of three. Hence, this incident sequenced her to a lifetime of rape and shame. The trauma of sexual incest is not the only one to take place in Precious' life, but she also has to outlive the trauma of motherly mistreatment, rejection,

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repetitive oppression and physical hitting. Precious is living with her offensive and rude mother Mary who was also beating her and abusing her ceaselessly. Mary considers her own daughter as a potential rival to her, for she accuses her of wanting to take her husband, instead of considering her a poor sexual incest victim. She, in fact, keeps her home to collect welfare. The journey of Precious survival starts when she joined an alternative school, named Each One Teach One. There, she finds a compassionate community and made acquaintance with a group of girls who grappled with similar traumatic pasts. The alternative school offered her the opportunity to meet Ms Blue Rain; the teacher who teaches her how to read and write. The journey of Precious revival starts when Ms. Rain encouraged her to write a daily journal to practise writing and mitigate her diurnal hardships. The process of scriptotherapy starts at school to be well deft later on at home. The techniques of scriptotherapy used are mainly journaling and reciprocal journals. The latter are employed to write about Precious' pain, traumas and poignant memories to be shared with her teacher and school community. The outcomes of scriptotherapy start to appear in Precious' life soon after she starts writing. As she starts to have a balanced life, trauma appears in Precious life again after she learns about her contamination of HIV. After she is tested positive to HIV, she is about to fall apart. At that very incident, Ms. Rain advises Precious to write all that pains her. Working on her advice, Precious writes letters, diaries and poetry in her reciprocal journal to strengthen herself. Precious has to handle multiple traumas, deal with an inadequate physical condition and raise her own children while she is a child herself. Nonetheless, Precious can manage her traumas and carry on her education while taking care of her own children. The ramification of scriptotherapy will lead Precious to be an empowered woman after she obtains full custody of her own children, faces up her mother and makes an international Journal of Child, Youth and Family Studies. Then, she heads on out of the public welfare gloriously determining a better beginning for her children.

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4.1. Precious' Trauma of Sexual Incest

The early trauma of sexual incest occurred to Precious from the outset of the novel where she exposes the harsh experience of a second pregnancy from her own biological dad. Her first pregnancy resulting from rape as well brought a daughter with Down syndromes. Precious dire trauma conjures up emotional disruption and causes her bedwetting. Similar to Nur, the protagonist in *The Blue between Sky and Water*, Precious also starts bedwetting at night as a result of brutal abuse be it physical or emotional. Nevertheless, the damage that this trauma brings affected her education and intrigued a lowered self-esteem. Offensively though, she is suspended from school due to her pregnancy; an act Precious think to be unjust. The following passage reveals the earliest trauma:

I was left back when I was twelve because I had a baby from my fahver. That was in 1983. It was out of school for a year. This gonna be my second baby. My daughter got Down Sinder. She's retarded. I had got left back in the second grade too, when I was seven, 'cause I couldn't read (and I still peed on myself). I should be in the eleventh grade, getting ready to go into the twelf' grade so I can gone graduate. But, I am not I am in the ninth gradeI got suspended from shool 'cause I'M pregnant which I don't thik is fair. I ain'did nothing (Sapphire 1).

Through this passage, we notice that Precious command of English is not excellent and will progressively improve through the novel. A potential interpretation of that may be the fact that it is an intentional act from the writer, herself, as she intends to display a sense of linguistic redemption along with the psychological wellbeing. This similarly means that the more Precious deftly sharpens her written skills, the better person she becomes and this can be envisaged on the way she uses language throughout the last part of the novel. The father kept raping his daughter while manipulating her. Precious describes the scene, "he climb on me. Shut up! he say. He slap my ass, You wide as the Mississippi, don't tell me a little bit of dick hurt you heifer (Sapphire

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23).The first manipulation happens when he tells her that having intercourse would not harm her and then he would manipulate her claiming that he would marry her saying: "I'm gonna marry you," he be saying. Hurry up, nigger, shut up! He mess up dream talkin' 'n gruntin'. First he mess up my life fucking me, then he mess up the fucking talkin'. I wanna scream, Oh shut up! Nigger, how you gonna marry me and you is my daddy. I'm your daughter, fucking me illegal"(Sapphire 24).

Yet, forcing Precious to fornicate cannot justify his bad deed and Precious was mature enough to tell him that it is illegitimate to bed his own daughter.The irresponsible father could only cared for his dirty lust without paying a heed to the aftermaths of his several rapes. After being acknowledged about his daughter's pregnancy, he withdrew from the scene and left her alone lost and uncertain about what to do. This is manifested through the following quote when Precious proclaims;"It why my father ack like he do. He has forgot he is the Original Man! So he fuck me, fuck me, beat me, have a chile by me. When he see I'm pregnant the first time he disappear"(Sapphire 33).This state of agitated unrest caused by the father's rapes, impregnation and irresponsibility goes in tandem with her mother unmerciful violence and untamed greed. Frail as she becomes, Precious is brutally beaten by her mother, who only adds the new baby to the family to gain extra welfare benefits, after Precious gets out of the hospital. This is well explained through the following quote: "I think for years, for a long time I know that much. After my baby and me come out of the hospital my muver take us down to welfare; say I is mother but just a chile and she taking care of bofe us' es. So really all she did was add my baby to her budget (16).Crippled by this stipulation, Precious could hear an inner voice urging her to flee and save her skin: "I could be on the 'fare for myself now, I think. I'm old enuff (Sapphire 16). She realizes that she is old enough to take care of herself. But, inward echoes of self-doubt get her under their grip: "But I'm not sure I know how to be on my own" (Sapphire 16). Thinking that she is unable to cater for her own well-being leads her to submit to the depressive dreary life she has to bear with

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her abusive parents. Dissatisfied with her own parents, Precious feels nothing but loathing to her mother: "I have to say sometimes I hate my muver. She don't love me. I wonder how she could love Little Mongo (thas my daughter). Mongo sound Spanish don't it? Yeah, thas why I chose it, but what it is is short for Mongoloid Down Sinder, which is what she is; sometimes"(Sapphire 34). Precious can verbalize her feelings of self-contempt and puts them in written words: I feel I is. I feel so stupid sometimes. So ugly, worth nuffing. I drawed, watching Tv, eat, watch Tv, eat. Carl come over fuck us' es. Go from room to room, slap me on my ass when he through, holler WHEEE WHEEE! Call me name Butter Ball Big Mama Two Ton of Fun. I hate hear him talk more than I hate fuck (34). These examples show the direct outcome of trauma. As she comes to experience the physical and emotional violence, Precious develops some of the aforementioned symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder; like self-hatred, self –contempt or self-denigration. She thought of herself stupid, dumped, unattractive and unimportant and when similar symptoms occur they may lead to suicidal ideas as will be displayed through further analysis.

4.2. Layers of Oppression and Family Trauma

Being in Harlem, Precious was bullied, humiliated and vexed deeply at school due to her pregnancy. Her teacher goes on: "this is your second baby. She says. I wonder what else it says in that file with my name on it. "Your attitude Claireece is one of total uncooperation (Sapphire 8). Unable to tolerate Precious pregnancy, the teacher calls her mother for a parent-teacher conference, yet for Precious it just multiplies her pain as she is only going to be insulted in every possible ways by her mother who used to verbally hurt her screaming: "slut! Nasty ass tramp, you fuckin cow, whore" (Sapphire 9). More than the verbal violence, the mother beats her ceaselessly,

I was standing at this sink the last time I was pregnant when them pains hit, wump! Ahh wump! I never felt no shit like that before. Sweat was breaking out on my forehead, pain like fire was eating me up 'N she standing there screaming at me, "Slut! Goddam slut! You fuckin' cow! I don't believe this, right under my nose. "Mommy please, Mommy please,

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please Mommy! Mommy! Mommy! MOMMY!" Then she KICK me side of my face!

"Whore! Whore!" she screamin'" (Sapphire 17).

This passage displays the physical coercion exercised on Precious by her cruel mother who has no pity or mercy for her daughter who pleads in moaning and pain while she beats her savagely casting her to floor. From this, we get to understand that Precious sense of being germinates from the intoxication of verbal and physical abuse. This gives her bunch of negative emotions, lowered self confidence and strong sense of self-contempt. The deprivation of the motherly love and affection made the story of Precious even more poignant. More poignantly is the trauma of having a baby girl with Down Syndromes. After the delivery, the nurse comes to console her saying: "I'm so sorry, Ms]ones, so so sorry." I crying for ugly baby, then I forget about ugly baby, I crying for me who no one never hold before. Daddy put his pee-pee smelling thing in my mouth, my pussy, but never holds me. I see me, first grade, pink dress dirty sperm stuffs on it. No one comb my hair (Sapphire 18). In this quote, Precious demonstrates her melancholic feeling for having an ugly baby with down syndromes; but soon after she was hugged by the nurse she started to cry for her poor self for have never been hugged compassionately and innocently by one of her parents. Her father forced her into molestation in the most hideous ways and her mother had ignored her and ill-treated her verbally and physically with immeasurable cruelty.

The following scene may also show the violent behavior of the mother against her child:

After I come home from hospital baby go live over on 150th and St Nicholas Avenue with my grandmother, even though Mama tell welfare the baby live with us and she care of it while I'm in school. About three months after baby born, I'm still twelve when all this happen, Mama slap me. HARD. Then she pick up cast-iron skillet, thank god it was no hot grease in it, and she hit me so hard on back I fall on floor. Then she kick me in ribs . Then she say, "Thank you Miz Claireece Precious Jones for fucking my husband you nasty little slut!" I feel like I'm gonna die, can't breathe, from where I have baby start to hurt (19).

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Family trauma was practised on in its most heinous ways on Precious. Practised in the most horrifically atrocious manners, the unmerciful mother uses corporal and emotional violence to hurt her daughter in the worst ways. Beating her daughter using iron skillet straight to the head, she slapped her roughly while Precious is still in a poor physical condition after the delivery. This scandalous offence on the body is not sufficient, and the mother would opt for mortifying humiliation through insults like: “Fat cunt bucket slut! Nigger pig bitch! He done quit me! He done left me 'cause of you. What you tell them mutherfuckers at the damn hospital? I should KILL you!” she screaming at me. I'm twelve, no I was twelve, when that shit happen. I'm sixteen now”(21).

In addition to this dreadful humiliation, the mother accuses her daughter of being a possible opponent to her, for she thought her wanting her husband and that these pregnancies are intentional. This show women's powerlessness and invisibility from both the cruel mother and the helpless Precious. The mother is cruel but also powerless, for she has never dared to face her husband about his wicked attitudes but rather kept blaming and harassing her daughter instead. It also demonstrates Precious powerlessness and invisibility because she cannot help but submit and succumb to both parents' abuse and never thought of escaping or at least resisting. Precious invisibility is embedded in the following passage: “I big, I talk, I eats, I cooks, I laugh, watch Tv, do what my muver say. But I can see when the picture come back I don't exist. Don't nobody want me. Don't nobody need me. I know who I am. I know who they say I am-vampire sucking the system's blood. Ugly black grease to be wipe away, punish, kilt” (Sapphire 31). Through this passage, we notice that Precious is living aimlessly just doing her daily routines as her mother ordered her to. But, she does not realize the reason of her existence. She feels a deep feeling of worthlessness and self-disgust. Such emotions emanated from an inner voice which kept echoing the bullies heard before like; nigger, black, fat, etc she self-loathed herself, for she thought that nobody truly loved or wanted her in life. However, she starts to believe deep inside that she is

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worthy enough to be heard and seen. This is displayed in the following: “I wanna say I am somebody. I wanna say it on subway, Tv, movie, LOUD. I see the pink faces in suits look over top of my head. I watch myself disappear in their eyes, their tesses. I talk loud but still I don't exist (31). The inclinations to positive change will only happen when the writing process starts at the alternative school as we will analyse in the upcoming parts.

Precious desires to be treated with dignity and self importance. At first, she thinks that the colour of her skin is the source of her sufferings when comparing her appearance to the fit and charming appearance of white people on Tv. Then, she realizes that not all white people are living a decent life and even white people do have troubles and problems but the difference is that they are visible and valued which can be seen from the following passage where Precious asks herself:

Do all white people look like pictures? No, 'cause the white people at school are fat and cruel like evil witches from fairy tales but they exist. Is it because they white? If Mrs Lichenstein who has elephant stomach and garbage smell from her pussy exist, why don't I? Why can't I see myself, feel where I end and begin. I sometimes look in the pink people in suits eyes, the men from bizness, and they look way above me, put me out of their eyes (Sapphire 31).

A possible interpretation to Precious' inability to view her own self-worth is the fact that she is seeking it through the eyes of others and not her own eyes. Yet, self-esteem starts from within which Precious comes to realize when she starts learning how to write the permanent sores and scars left by the trauma caused by her parents degrading attitudes and physical abuse doubled her feelings of invisibility. In a form of interior monologue, Precious keeps questioning herself why her father never saw her in her true light stating:

My fahver don't see me really. If he did he would know I was like a white girl, a real person, inside. The complex of being fat and blackI ax my muver for money to git my hair

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done, clothes. I know the money she got for me from my baby. She usta give me money; now every time I ax for money she say I took her husband, her man. Her man? Please! Thas my mutherfuckin' fahver! I hear her tell someone on phone I am heifer, take her husband, I'm fast. What it take for my muver to see me (Sapphire 32) ?

Precious feels inferior enough and invisible due to the colour of her skin and she thought that if she were white she could have been treated better by her father. Then, she would imagine an ideal mother asking herself the question what if her mother saw her in her true light giving her dignity. However, in addition to her cruelty, her mother only uses Precious and the baby she got to collect financial benefits from the welfare.

The post traumatic stress disorder amplified to give suicidal ideation and desires for death. Regarding this, Karolina Karynska and David Lester in their paper '*Post Traumatic Disorder and Suicide Risk: systematic Review*' (2009) state, "A meta-analysis of 50 articles that examined the association between PTSD and past and current suicidal ideation and behavior was conducted to prove that PTSD was associated with an increased incidence of prior attempted suicide and prior and current suicidal ideation" (1). Highly effected by the post traumatic stress disorder symptoms, we notice that Precious is coming from so much damage and all the damage she went through impoverishes her soul and gives her no reason to live. She even starts to doubt her own existence, could not stand it any longer and, then, desired to die; "sometimes I wish I was not alive. But I don't know how to die. Ain' no plug to pull out. 'N no matter how bad I feel my heart don't stop beating and my eyes open in the morning (Sapphire 32). Yet, the end of the quote, *no matter how bad I feel my heart don't stop beating and my eyes open in the morning* can be considered as a foreshadowing element in the novel, that may allude to an impending positive change to occur in the life narrative of Precious.

In the midst of Precious poignant dilemmas, she thinks of her daughter who is never breastfed and wonders if she could possibly go to breastfeed her. To multiply the swellings and

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scars, her mother would simply tell her that the baybe is mentally retired with Down syndromes and it would just be in vain; as if she were trying to suppress any feeling that could bring the slightest hope to Precious. This may sound like an intentional reminder of helplessness to Precious, "I hardly have not seen my daughter since she was a little baby. I never stick my bresses in her mouth. My muver say what for? It's outta style. She say I never do you. What that child of yours need tittie for? She retarded. Mongoloid. Down Sinder" (32). All in all, the mother always finds an opportunity to put her child down and, thus, intensifies Precious' feelings of disempowerment.

4.3. The Emergence of Scriptotherapy in Sapphire's *Push*

When discussing twentieth-century women's trauma narratives, as we mentioned already in the second chapter, Suzzte Henke expounds that testimonial life-writing permits the author to:

share an unutterable tale of pain and suffering, of transgression and victimization, in a discursive medium that can be addressed to everyone and no-one—to a world that will judge personal testimony as accurate historical witnessing or as thinly disguised fiction. No matter. It is through the very process of rehearsing and reenacting a drama of mental survival that the trauma narrative effects psychological catharsis (xix).

Regardless of the manner by which literary critic or readers value a work of testimonial writing, the very act of "enactement" as stated by Suzette Henke is a "mental survival" (7). Whether it is about pain, suffering, transgression, or victimization, the performance of writing and uttering the unspoken is therapeutic. Moreover, these therapeutic effects may lead to life's transformation, from disempowerment to empowerment in Precious case. This is advanced, further, by Gillian Whitlock who pinpoints that testimonial narratives of trauma can "thrive and trigger powerful and transformative cycles" (67).

On similar pattern, we will notice the transitional transformation that Precious will undergo after she learns how to write her own distorting pain story in form of diaries and

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journals. The early mention of scriptotherapy in the novel *Push* is presented just after trauma was plainly dealt with. After being excluded from the initial school, Precious moves to another school where hope starts to radiate. At the very beginning, Precious introduces the first day of school saying: "I got to get dress for school. I got to be at school by 9 a.m. Today is first day. I been tessed. I been incomed eligible. I got Medicaid card and proof of address. All that shit. I is ready. Ready for school. School gonna help me get out dis house. I gotta throw some water on my ass and git up (Sapphire 35). The words "ready", "git u meaning" get up and get out dis ous proceed an implication of change. Precious is, now, ready for a new meaningful beginning; the like of which had never existed in her early life. Leaving the house implicates the fact of departing from pain. This stylistic interpretation will be reinforced by the main literary tools of scriptotherapy which will lead to the impressive transformation of Precious. Along with describing her emotions, Precious describes the written material found on her table. She reports: "on top my dresser is notebook. 01' Cornrows say bring self, pencil, and notebook. I got self, pencil, and notebook. Can I get a witness! I'm outta here" (Sapphire 36). The angelic teacher Ms. Rain is the instiller of a new hope. Being a watershed, Ms Rain attitude is the clue to a differently optimistic future. At first, Ms Rain asks the whole class to sit in the form of a circle and they sat in rows. Then, she asks them to introduce themselves saying:

OK," she say, "let's get to know each other a little bit uummm, let's see, how about your name, where you were born, your favorite color, and something you do good and why you're here." "Huh?" Big red girl snort. Miss Rain go to board and say, "Number one, your name," then she write it, "number two, where you were born," and so on until it all on board: name 2. where you were born 3. favorite color 4. something you do good 5. why you are here today? (Sapphire 42).

The first step made by Ms. Rain is getting to know the students closely. Afterwards, she introduces the subject being taught. Starting with a humanistic approach provides the teacher with a sort of

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savvy to know about her students' uniqueness and potential. She adds that sitting into circles will be done occasionally to talk and work together. After disposing her teaching style, she presents writing and reading for beginners as being the subject being taught in her calss and then asked the students wheteher or not they fit in the right place advocating:

Well, first thing, this is a basic reading and writing class, a pre-G.E.D. adult literacy class, a class for begining readers and writers. Well Precious, how about you, do you feel you're in the right place?" I want to tell her what I always wanted to tell someone, that the pages, 'cept for the ones with pictures, look all the same to me; the back row I'm not in today; how I sit in a chair seven years old all day wifout moving. But I'm not seven years old. But I am crying. I look Miz Rain in the face, tears is coming down my eyes, but I'm not sad or embarrass. "Is I Miz Rain," I axes, "is I in the right place?" She hand me a tissue, say, "Yes, Precious, yes (Sapphire 48).

Through this passage, we notice, the repressed emotions of Precious. She feels like she has never belonged to her previous school class, for the pages were all identical since she could not fathom a word in them and was only sitting there in vain. This simple act of gentle asking overwhelms Precious and drops her to tears for she has never been asked whether she fits or not in a particular place. The introduction of the practice of reading and writing alike is directly stated when Ms. Rain proclaims: "Every day," Miz Rain say, "we gonna read and write in our notebooks" (49). Yet, the students inquire about how they would read if they can not even write. Then, the teacher answers: "he longest journey begin with a single step"¹⁰(Sapphire 49). When the teacher mentions the fact that they will write ad read, Precious panicks, for she does not know how to read or write. Then, the teacher completes her explanation by mentioning the Chinese saying: The longest journey begins with a single step. This can be considered s a turning point in Precious' life meaning that

¹⁰"A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step" is a common saying that originated from a Chinese proverb. The quotation is from Chapter 64 of the Dao De Jing ascribed to Laozi,^[1] Lao Tzu". *BBC World Service*. Archived from the original on 2006-10-27. Retrieved January 12, 2020..

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whatever adversity that a man may be exposed to in life, every shred or difficulty will wither and dwindle away if we just start working on it. The real turning point, in this stance, is writing. Holding a notebook, Ms. Rain instructs: "You are going to need one notebook like this"-like what I already got"and another notebook-loose-leaf or spiral, to keep your notes and class work in (Sapphire 49). Proceeding with the writing process:

she writes A on the board, she hand the chalk to J ermaine. J ermaine write B. Jermaine hand it to Consuelo, she write C. Consuelo hand it to Rhonda she write D. Rhonda hand it to Rita. Rita take a step and start to cry. Miz Rain say we all in this together. All us say E real loud, Rita go up 'n write E, hand me chalk 'n I write F and so it go. Then we sits back down all at once, that make us laff (Sapphire 50).

Though it seems hard at the beginning, once the process of studying the alphabet started, things start to feel better for the whole class. Writing the alphabet letters by taking turns interchangeably on the board, the class of female students start to feel better about themselves and this is shown through "that make us laff" . Relating laughter to writing in this example introduces Precious for the first time of a feeling of comfort that is intrigued by writing in the school community. This feeling of contentment is but the beginning as promised by Ms. Rain who says: "this is the beginning, there are twenty-six letters in the alphabet, they all have a sound. These letters make up all the words in our language. Please open your notebook, write the date, October 19, 1987, then write the alphabet in your notebook (Sapphire 51). Mentioning the number of the alphabet is a vow that their feeling of awe is going to reach its complete happiness when they link the alphabet together and produce a language. The direct effect of this earliest lecture on writing can be seen on the following quote when Precious declares: "I feels little music in my head. I know I'm tripping" (51). The rhyming alphabet letters germinate a musical echo in Precious mind and made her feel graceful about.

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Stepping back to herself, Precious reflects upon herself and “feel the baby in her bell I know she ain't gonna get money for me I ain' in school; she gonna always get money for my daughter 'cause she retarded. Maybe somethin' gonna be wrong wif this baby too. I don't care, maybe if new baby Down Sinder I can get my own check. But I don't know if I want check. I wonder what reading books be like “(Sapphire 51).

Apprehended by the thought that she might have another baby with Down Syndromes, malevolence is about to strike Precious again; a feeling that Precious suppressed by the thinking about the way reading books feels like. Now that Precious had a little idea about writing, she is eager to start the reading process. The positive effect she had when she commenced the writing process intrigues her to know about the reading skill. Yet, the beginning of reading was emotionally difficult for Precious. The pressure felt by Precious when asked to read for the first time increased her intensity and made her struggle for air as shown through the following part:

Precious! Are you alright! Breathe! Relax and breathe. Should I call an ambulance? Nine-one-one? Your mother-" "NO!" "What's wrong Precious?" I struggles for air, "I ... the pages look alike to me." I breathe in deep, there I said it. Miz Rain sigh sad like. "I think I understand you, Precious. But for now, I want you to try, push yourself Precious, go for it." I reach out my hand for book. "Just do the best you can, if you don't know a word skip-" She stop (Sapphire 52).

The attitude shown by the teacher, as a facilitator, asking Precious to feel at ease and relax made Precious feel well again to better integrate herself in the reading process. The teacher gently instructs saying:

Just look at the page and say the words you do know." I look at the page, it's some people at the beach. Some is white, some is orange and gray (I guess thas spozed to be colored). "What do you think the story is about Precious?" "Peoples at the beach." That's right." Miz Rain point to a letter, ask me what is it. I say, "A." She point to some more letters. I don't

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say nuffin'. "Do you know that word?" No, I don't. "Do you know the letters?" Umm hmmm. She point D, then A, then Y. She say do you know that word? No I don't but I say silence. She say, " 'Day,' that word is 'day.' " She point back at A, then "DAY," then point at A, T, say, "What's that word?" I say, "Ate (Sapphire 53).

Getting to understand the process of reading, the teacher points to the letters and asks Precious to read, then she asks her to link the letters to come up with words like, day and say. Surprisingly, Precious does pretty well after several trials and the teacher keeps encouraging her even more through promoting positive responses like: good, and very good. Positive reinforcements from the side of the teacher eased Precious thoughts and drop her in overwhelmed feelings of happiness. Reading for the first time in a lifetime made her want to cry and cry at the same time. She wanted to express her happiness and kiss her teacher. Retreating back to her poignant memoires, Precious feels bad again to have been raped by her dad and been impregnated by him. She goes on:

I try to forget I got baby in me. I hated homing the first one. No fun. Hurt. Now again. I think my daddy. He stink, the white shit drip off his dick. Lick it lick it. I HATE that. I start to tell her don't, don't call me that, but all, everything, is out me. I jus' want to lay down, listen to radio, look at picture of F arrakhan, a real man, who don't fuck his daughter, fuck children. Everything feel like it is too big for my mind. Can't nuffin' fit when I think 'bout Daddy. "I'm tired (Sapphire 57).

The image of her dad always wanes in comparison when compared to the image of her idle actor. The atrocious mother is no less abusive than her devious husband. She uses Precious as a servant, a cook and a source of collecting welfare benefits as displayed through the following: "Fix us some lunch, it's way pas' lunch. You done ate?" "I had some potato chips." "Thas all?" I remember ham 'n chicken, don't say nuffin', ax her, "What you want?" "I don't know, see what's in there. If not nuffin' in there, get stamps out my purse and go to store 'n get us'es somethin' to eat" (Sapphire 57). This reinforces the inhuman attitude of Precious mother.

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The positive effect of learning the alphabet appears to Precious in the dream. The night she had finished memorizing the alphabet and read *A Day at the Beach* story, Precious had a dream. In the dream, she starts to fantasize about her ideal mother; sweet, affectionate and soft mother. She has that kind of sweet mother who suddenly turns to become a monstrous woman choking little Precious. "I walk to my mother's room but it looks different, she looks different. I look like little baby almost. She is talking sweet to me like sometimes Daddy talks. Her hand is like a mountain pushing my head down" (Sapphire 58). Then, a baby appears to her. Precious asks the little baby to come to her. After being choked by her mother, Precious took the baby and they both start to sing the English alphabet. Singing the English alphabet had a lulling effect on the little Precious in the dream and the grown-up Precious in reality. This revelation is assumed to be a call for Precious to embrace herself, make peace with herself, accept her own trauma and work on it for a better sense of self. This can only happen through the alphabets which implicate writing.

4.4. Writing a Journal as Means of Scriptotherapy in Sapphire's *Precious* (1999)

Writing a journal as a means of scriptotherapy is referred to by Shilagh Mirgain as therapeutic journaling. The critic puts forth that therapeutic journaling is the method by which we record our traumatic personalized experiences, painful thoughts and deep emotional wounds (12). The objective of a therapeutic journal is reaching a deep sense of self or a new sense of self-realization. This new sense should be different from the one that ruled before. The main difference that exists between a therapeutic journaling and conventional diary is exhibited in the fact that a diary involves recording the details of daily events. In contrast, "therapeutic journaling is an internal process of using the written word to express the full range of emotions, reactions and perceptions we have related to difficult, upsetting, or traumatic life events. Along the way, this can mean writing ourselves to better emotional and physical health and a greater sense of well-being" (Mirgain 3). This, equally, means that a diary is used to record the daily life events which

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are not necessarily poignant, but rather a therapeutic journal it is used to describe daily events that are difficult to deal with. Just like a therapeutic journal, which is used to write down feelings that are fueled by depression, trauma, apprehension, fretfulness, etc,

Correspondingly, Ms. Rain suggests that Precious keeps a therapeutic journal. The premise is that writing about the pain is by itself a remedy. In this concern, James Pennbaker advances a significant writing protocol that is implied as a research method in clinical analysis. This writing procedure heads towards improvements in physical and psychological health alike. Thus, he advises patients to keep a therapeutic journal where they write about their mental and physical state and, share it with their doctor. In transit with that, Zencare Team develops the idea that therapeutic journaling is a diving into inner thoughts and individual experiences, “in order to gain new self-perspective” (1). The team has equally shed light on the main discrepancy between a therapeutic journal and a diary. On similar thoughts with Shilagh Mirgain’s statement, the difference is hinged on the method used. As for the diary, it is used to put down every day events which is familiar to the vast majority of people who keep daily dairies. Whereas, therapeutic journaling is “about delving a little deeper; writing in a way that helps us to make sense of our internal experiences, learn, and gain new perspectives on our challenges; writing about our thoughts and emotions enables us to express them in a way that can help work through difficulties and move forward” (Zencare Team sc 1).

Ms. Rain tells her class that each student is going to write a journal and the writing process was going to take place on a daily pattern. Surprised enough, the students find it weird to start writing on a journal while they have just learnt how to spell. Yet, Ms. Rain make it clear that they have to try by “pushing themselves”(Sapphire 60) to recall the letters that represent the words. This is well discerned through the following passage:

This is your journal," Miz Rain says: "You're going to write in it everyday." She jus' tell us we gonna write in our journals for fifteen minutes everyday. How, I wonder. "How,"

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Rhonda say out loud, "how we gonna write for fifteen minutes if we can't spell?" What we gonna write if we could spell, I wonder. Miz Rain say, "Write what's on your mind, push yourself to see the letters that represent the words you're thinking. She turn to me ax real fast, "Precious what's on your mind?" I say, "What?" She say, "What you was thinking just then." I go to open my mouf. She say, "Don't say it, write it." I say, "I can't." She say, "Don't say that." She say, "DO what I say, write what you was thinking." I do: li Mgo mi m (Sapphire 60).

The beginning of the writing of the therapeutic journal is inaugurated through this passage. Though Ms. Rain does not really bring up the notion of therapy or healing, the healing will take palce after repetitive practice. She insists that it is a journal and not a diary, since she asked them to write about what they were thinking of instead of recording their daily details. The fact that those female students came from similar traumatic pasts invoke a sort of cognitive disruption that can be improved mainly through writing their thoughts down. Putting it differently, the choice of the therapeutic journal was convenient enough for their category. Afterwards, Ms. Rain restores the classroom's quietness so that everybody starts writing for fifteen minutes. Precious wrote:

Little Mongo on my mind." Underneaf what I wrote Miz Rain write what I said in pencil. li Mgo mi m (Little Mongo on my mmd) Then she write: Who is Little Mongo? She read me what she wrote, tell me to write my answer to her question in the book. I copy Little Mongo's name from where Miz Rain had wrote it. Miz Rain read, "Little Mongo is my child?" She have question in her voice. I say, "Yes yes." Miz Rain know Little Mongo is my child 'cause I wrote it in my journal. I am happy to be writing. I am happy to be in school. Miz Rain say we gonna write everyday, that mean home too. 'N she gonna write back everyday. Thas great (Sapphire 60).

Through this passage, we directly see the positive effects of the therapeutic journal which is seen through "I am happy to be writing." Writng on the journal seems to produce an overjoyed emotion

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that enchants Precious and make her feel better about herself in general, and hence approves the effectiveness of scriptotherapy. Nonetheless, Precious is having a new sense of her being that she had never discovered before and this is clearly seen when she said, “But now since I been going to school I feel lonely. Now since I sit in circle I realize all my life, all my life I been outside of circle. Mama gives me orders, Daddy porno talk me, school never did learn me (Sapphire 63). Through this we notice that Precious feels properly about her life, for the first time. Recalling the dreadful abused practice against her by her own two parents or the ignorance she carried from the first school, she felt that her life was out of control, out of order and out of meaning.

The new reflection and feeling came forth after she starts acquiring an appropriate education that opened her to the world of writing. Another positive effect of writing can be seen in accepting herself and her own pregnancy. This is well illustrated when she says:

I don't pretend I'm not pregnant no more. I let it above my neck, in my head. Not that I didn't know it before but now it's like part of me; more than something stuck in me, growing in me, making me bigger. I sit in my room. I know too who I'm pregnant for. But I can't change that. Abortion is a sin. I hate bitches who kill they babies. They should kill them, see how they like it! I talk to baby. Boy be nice. Girl might be retarded, like me? But I not retarded (Sapphire 63).

This notion of self acceptance is on parallel lines with the main purpose of scriptotherapy as intended by the use of therapeutic journals. In the example provided before, we see a new Precious who is no longer afraid of who she is now, she makes a new kind of personal peace with herself and does not even think of killing the baby she carries inside like whores do. The feelings of shame, disgrace and self-doubt are no longer persistent. When Precious ‘trauma was tackled at the very beginning of this analysis, we notice that she had suicidal ideas, but now that the writing process is launched all those negative feelings and ideas start to disappear. Likewise, she thought herself retarded, and now she comes to understand that she is not. The positive effect of

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scriptotherapy extends to reach the growth of Precious mental capacities in processing and evaluating prior attitude shared by her mother. She, in fact, realizes that her mother behavior and reaction was false and this is clear when she questions her mother's reaction against her father's several rapes declaring:

This my baby. My muver took Little Mongo but she ain' taking this one. I am comp'tant. I was comp'tant enough for her husband to fuck. She ain' come in here and say, Carl KenwoodJones-thas wrong! Git off Precious like that! Can't you see Precious is a beautiful chile like white chile in magazines or on toilet paper wrappers. Precious is a blue-eye skinny chile whose hair is long braids, long long braids. Git off Precious, fool! It time for Precious to go to the gym like Janet Jackson. It time for Precious hair to be braided. Get off my chile nigger! No, she never say that. Miz Rain say value. Values determine how we live much as money do. I say Miz Rain stupid there. All I can think she don't know to have NOTHIN' (Sapphire 64).

The positive outcome of scriptotherapy through this passage appears when Precious realizes that she is not worthless and that she has a value. Though her parents deprevied her that value, she is determined not to do the same to her new born baby when she said : "It's 26 letters in the alphabet. Each letter got sound. Put sound to letters, mix letters together and get words. You got words. "Baby," start wif B, b for "baby," I says in nice soft voice. Soon as he git born I'ma start doing the ABCs. This my baby. My muver took Little Mongo but she ain' taking this one" (64). This passage disposes the positive cognitive outgrowth of initial writings. We notice that Precious is on her way to herself. The notion of reflection and evaluation start to emerge in the novel after she starts to write. She, indeed, is so much aware of the importance of writing in improving her state of being to the extent that she decides to teach her newborn baby the English alphabet just after his birth. Then, she starts to assess reflectively on the behavior of her mother. Now that Precious achieves a kind of reflection, she questions her mother neglect. Precious is flabbergasted that her mother

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remained passive and had simply no say about her husband's several rapes, misuse of power and inappropriate behavior towards his child. She did not stop his coercion like a normal lovable mother was supposed to do. Moreover, she imagined little precious being a blond fair hair with a light skin that should be treated decently like a white girl should be. Later on, Precious will come to realize that her judgment about white women is just biased and that even white women are abused sexually. Nonetheless, she feels it was right time she started taking care of her physical appearance like losing weight, doing her hair, etc. At this point in the analysis, we assume that scriptotherapy does not only provide a feeling of redemption, but it also inscribes a kind of resistance. After making reconciliation with herself, she starts to subdue her mother's discouraging comments. This is postulated through the following passage:

Mama say this new school ain' shit. Say you can't learn nuffin' writing in no book. But Mama wrong. I is learning. I'm gonna start going to Family Literacy class on Tuesdays. Important to read to baby after it's born. Important to have colors hanging from the wall. Listen baby, I puts my hand on my stomach, breathe deep. Listen baby (I writes in my notebook): A is fr Afrc (for Africa) B is for u bae (you baby) Cis cl w bk (colored we black) Dis dog Ei s el Vm (evil lzke mama) F is Fuck G is Jerm bt]er j (Jermaine but Jermaine J) ok Gis gunn Hhm (home) I I somb (somebody) J Jer (Jermaine) kk l (kill) llv (love)(Sapphire 65).

The mother belittles the importance of the new school and tells her daughter that it would bring her no good. This demeaning attitude shown by the mother does no longer put Precious down. On the contrary, she is determined to learn and she even starts teaching the baby in her uterus the alphabet letters and their related words. Additionally, Precious would report that letters make words and, then, words make up everything as stated through the example: "Listen baby, Muver love you. Muver not dumb. Listen baby: ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ. Thas the alphabet. Tw enty-six letters in all. Then letters make up words. Them words everything"

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(Sapphire 66). The phrase “Words make everything” may imply that they make up the mess in her chest, sweeping away the traumatic experience and instilling newly positive thoughts. Words implicitly refer to scriptotherapy meaning that words are the therapy for trauma. The phrase your Mover not dumb” implies that she has obtained a strength that started to challenge the invisibility intrigued by a silence that existed long time ago.

Concentrating on this newly acquired perception, as a result of therapeutic writing/scriptotherapy, Precious thinks about her new move. After she lived a passively aimless life, Precious’ living is becoming more intentional. Assessing her own situation she claims:

I don't know what's going to happen next. I know I gonna get my own money, but what that ifl still in my mama's house? I need my own place, welfare don't give you that much. But main thing above everything else I want to go back to school Thas all I think about- what they doing? What they reading? Did I miss the feel trip? I think I did.. November was my birthday, I don't tell nobody so don't nobody know. But I light a candle for myself. I. glad Precious Jones was born. I like baby I born (Sapphire 68).

This passage detects the positive effect of earlier writings on both Precious ‘mind and soul. Precious is aware of the necessity of having a home of her own; a home that separates her from the traumatizing experiences she has witnessed at home. She is in urgent need of a new beginning. More importantly, she is now conscious that school is of paramount importance. This may indicate that she is now valuing her own existence and she has a reason for it. The sentences; ‘I was glad Precious was born and I like baby I birn’ reveal a sense of self reconciliation and acceptance that Precious is making with herself.

4.5. Reciprocal Journaling as a form of Scriptotherapy

Like it is mentioned earlier in chapter two, reciprocal writing, as categorized by Nancy Jessica Davis and Voirin in their research on *Reciprocal Writing as a Creative Technique* (2016), is concerned with the mutual writing sequence that happens during a counseling session between a

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client and a counselor. In harmony with the premise of “solution-focused and narrative therapy”, utilizing reciprocal writing as an original interfering aims that the client/counselor association is collaborative (Davis and Voirin 267). Reciprocal journaling takes place in the narrative under discussion between the Ms. Rain and Precious with the objective of bringing forth a strong emotional and mental health. Concomitantly, K Haq affirms that this connection between herself as a teacher and her students promote an acute mental health. Strengthening her claim, she justifies:

I would argue that building that relationship through shared journaling is reciprocal, as it allowed me to work through our shared trauma and immerse myself in the lives of my students, resulting in the betterment of my own. One veteran teacher narrates how building relationships through journaling allowed a classroom to work through trauma, connect via mutual experiences, and grow as writers (Haq 365).

On parallel thought, keeping a mutual journal where Precious and Ms. Rain maintained a mutual written correspondence helps Precious connect better to school and learning in general. Viewing the issue of trauma counseling through reciprocal Journaling in a teacher/learner situation shows that traumatized students who feel a deep emotional interconnectedness to their teachers have a better academic performance (Haq 87). Applying this theory to the narrative, we will investigate the written correspondence through the reciprocal therapeutic journal where Precious exchange form of letter with her teacher as will be illustrated in the following examples.

4.5.1 Quibbling about the Dilemma of Motherhood and Writing/learning through Reciprocal Journaling

After she gained a new sense of self-awareness and self actualization, Precious finds herself incapable of forsaking her newly born baby like she did with her first one to focus on writing. At the same time, she had to pursue her educational journey which seems to be only at its cradle.

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This dilemma will be only resolved through writing forth and back in a reciprocal journal with her teacher. This is well clarified in the following examples:

I love Abdul. He normal. But I ain'? I want to go back to school. Abdul in my way. Abdul can not go to Higher Education/Each One Teach One. What I'm gonna do? I love my baby but he ain' mine, he is but I didn't fuck for him. I was raped by my fahver. Now instead of life for me I got Abdul. But I love Abdul. I want go school love abdul schoolabdulschoolabdul. I write Miz Rain in my journal (Sapphire 68).

Perplexed by the emotions of postpartum period, Precious gets entangled in the swing of deplorable emotions. The dilemma of loving the baby and loving school made her feel acute mystified emotions and she would write this to her teacher in her journal. After her teacher visits her in the hospital, she writes back to her:

Dr Miz Ms Rain, all yr I sit cls I nevr lrn (all years I sit in class I never learn) bt I gt babe agn Babe hi my favr (but I got baby again Babe by my fa ther) I wis i had boy ___ but I don (I wish I had a boyfriend but I don't) ws i had su me fucks a boy lke (wzsh I had excuse me, fucks a boy like) or girl den i fel rite datI have to qk skool (other girls then I feel right that I have to quit school) i lv baby abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz (I love baby (Sapphire 69).

The feeling of doubt starts to emerge one more time and she writes to her teacher again about her inability to come back to school due to her current situation. She mentions that she reconceived another baby by her father and that she wishes to have had loved somebody with whom she had Abdul. Albeit these tumultuous thoughts and feelings, she writes that she loves her baby. Returning to school after the delivery of Abdul seemed to be impossible for Precious who starts to think of dismissing the entire idea of school. Ms. Rain, on the contrary, tries to convince her of the emergency of going back to school as soon as she got out of the hospital saying: "Dear Precious, Don't forget to put the date, 18/11/88, on your journal entries. I am glad you love your baby. I

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think a beautiful young girl like you should get a chance to get an education. I think your first responsibility has to be to yourself. You should not drop out of school. COME BACK TO CLASS. WE MISS YOU. Love Ms Rain (Sapphire 70). Ms. Rain tries to convince Precious of the ample importance of carrying out her studies through writing adjectives like; young, beautiful and that her urgent responsibility is to pursue her education. Yet, Precious objects writing: “Ms R Ja 19, 1988 S __ wrk as mi i want to gv Litt Mong Abdul up adopsus (Social worker ask me if I want to give Little Mongo and Abdul up for adoption) I fel ki her (Ife el kill her) Nnevr hep now wnt kiz way (Never help now want to take kids away) tsak Abdul i don notin (take Abdul I don't have nothing)” (Sapphire 71). This example clearly manifests Precious fear of losing her second child and having nothing in return. For Ms. Rain, it is the other way around; meaning that if Precious keeps the baby, she will have nothing in return. This is well declared in the following passage:

Precious, it seems the opposite to me. If you keep Abdul you might have nothing. You are learning to read and write, that is everything. Come back to school when you get out the hospital. You're only seventeen. Your whole life is in front of you. Ms Rain 1120 Gr __
erne vit sa onle dog dro babee an wak off (Grandmother come visit say only a dog will drop a baby and walk off) say lat ndog (say later not fJdU! a dog) (Sapphire 71).

Confused by her grandmother voice echoing the phrase only a dog will drop his baby, Precious mystification and uncertainty increases. Trying to inspire her of the necessity of going back to school, Ms. Rain remind her that she is young and will have a potential at school and that she must consider her to return to school. Then she adds,

Dear Precious, Don't forget to put the year, '88, on your journal entries. Precious you are not a dog. You are a wonderful young woman who is trying to make something of her life. I have some questions for you: 1. Where was your grandmother when your father was abusing you? 2. Where is Little Mongo now? 3. What is going to be the best thing for you in this situation? Mss, Rinas lot qu __ u ask (lot of questions you ask) Hoo (Sapphire 71)?

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Ms. Rain proceeds with her persuasion's attempt to open Precious eyes to see the reality. This reality is made clear that Precious is in a frail position to take care of her son. To influence her strongly enough, she inquires about where her grandmother was when she was being abused, or what she did to uplift her situation and what good will she do to Abdul if she ever go back home. Ms. Rain left her in state of complete bewilderment which is clearly exhibited in what follows:

Nbi (nobody) aln (alone) no Frknm (no Farrakhan) no mmam (no mama) no gr muver fthet fucktz me€) (no grandmother fa ther fucks me JNll.) lii Mongl with my gr __ (Little Mongo with my grandmother) bes four mi tostop breev i sm tim tik (best for me to stop breathng I sometimes think) aso i want to b god muvther (also I wants to be good mother) Precious Jones (Sapphire 72).

Felling lonely and afraid at the same time, Precious feels helpless, but the strong bond of motherhood kept her under its way. This is why she feels guilty to abandon the second baby. Perplexed enough, she sometimes helpless and powerless to wish death as she it is mentioned when she said " best for me I stop breathing).yet, the teacher keeps corresponding in the same journal in positive tones, and she replies:

Dear Dear Precious, Being a good mother might mean letting your baby be raised by someone who is better able than you to meet the child's needs. Ms Rain Mz Rain Dan frget rite day Ms R (Don't forget to write the date Ms Ram.) I is be bt meet cldls ed. (I is best able to meet my child's need.) Ms Precious. Dear Ms Precious, 1/22/88 When you are raising a small infant you need help. Who is going to help you? How will you support yourself? How will you keep learning to read and write (Sapphire 73)?

On the same pattern, Ms. Rain keeps trying to change Precious opinions about bringing up the child by her own. She tries to prove that raising the child by her own is hard and it is better to hand him to somebody who is better placed to supply him with the needed care, love and attention. She adds that taking care of the baby will not allow her to pursue her learning journey in

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the new school and hence, deprive her of the marvelous promises that writing and reading bring forth. Precious answers back claiming that just like the welfare helped her mother, it may help her as well; “Dear Precious Miss, When you get home from the hospital look and see how much welfare has helped your mother. You could go further than your mother. You could get your G.E.D. and go to college. You could do anything Precious but you gotta believe it. Love Blue Rain “(Sapphire 74). In this time of dilemma, Ms. Rain keeps ropping Precious up continuously. She writes to Precious using in an objectively logical way to make Precious seriously consider rejoining the school. However, Precious seems to grow weary of all those tumultuous thoughts. And she writes back to her teacher saying: “I’m tired tinJJ ”(Sapphire 74).

When back home from the hospital holding her baby in her arms, her mother insulted her in every possible way by accusing her of being the slut who wanted to snatch her husband. Precious defends herself for the first time in confrontation saying: “Nigger rape me. I not steal shit fat bitch your husband RAPE me RAPE ME!” Her mother was about to beat her or even kill her: “Holding her baby’s stuff, Precious vowed to good back to the maternity where they may offer a better help. Her mother discouraged her again saying:”they not spozed to let you up without hassle 'cause of baby snatchers. But bitch see I got Abdul. She must know if anything I be dropping little homeboy off” (Sapphire 75). Now that her evil mother pushed her away again, Precious is certain that she only wants to have an improved and qualitative life; the like of which can be achieved only through pursuing her writing journey. This is seen clearly in the following quote:

What I gonna be, queen of babies? No, I gonna be queen of those ABCs-readin' 'n writin'. I not gonna stop going to school 'n I not going to give Abdul up and I is gonna get Little Mongo back one day, maybe. PRECIOUS BECAME CURAGEOUS AGAIN I hardly even know what she look like, aside from retarded, I know I got a purpose, a reason, and according to Farrakhan I got a almighty allah god I think I might be the solution. Mr

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Wicher had told Mrs Lichenstein I got maff aptitude, and ABCs. How Miz Rain say I'm moving faster through the vowel 'n consonant sounds than even (Sapphire 75).

Through this passage, we notice that Precious is going through an important transformative phase in her life. After the delivery of her son, she was quibbling about the dilemma of choosing writing and learning over motherhood. Bemused by her predicament, she has this moment of epiphany when she realized that she has to be the queen of those letters in addition to being a real mother to her own two children.

The outcome of the early process of writing/scriptotherapy is a burgeoning strength, personality development, a self-realization and an emotional maturity that Precious gained after the several traumas she is exposed to. To wrap it all, Precious realized that she is a woman with purpose and that God is by her side. Feeling strong and empowered, precious is determined to pursue her educational journey while maintaining her child:

I don't feel shamed-Carl Kenwood Jones freak NOT me! I am Precious
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNQRST UVWXYZ My baby is born My baby is black I am girl I
am black I want house to live Help nurse, help me Miz Lenore. Say no shame. No shame.
Most time it seem like hype, 'cause she say it so much. But that why she say she say it-to
reprogram us to love ourselve. I love me. I ain' gonna let that big fat bitch kick my ass 'n
shout on me. And I ain' giving Abdul away. And I ain' gonna stop school (Sapphire 76).

When the first epiphany occurs to Precious, she gains strength and becomes tenacious enough to maintain both the baby and the newly acquired education at school. She becomes aware of the emergency of reprogramming herself, which also depends on, quitting the old home, looking for a house of her own and believing in a better tomorrow. Awarded a house like she wanted, Precious dwelled in the Langston Hughes House. Precious dubbed the place “the Dream Keeper's house” (Sapphire 82). We also notice from the previous passages that the mere writing of the English alphabet makes Precious feel good about herself in general,

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Day after that, we come here, where I been ever since. Here, at Advancement House, main good thing is they got somebody we can trust to take care of our babies while we go to school for four hours a day, three times a week. Queens, no Ms Rain, no school. I like my room here. Better than home, Mama's house, I mean. I got bed for me, crib for Abdul. Dresser drawers, desk, chair, bookcase for my books and Abdul's books (Sapphire 82).

Being advantageous, Precious manages to be in a house where she can go to study while someone else takes care of her baby. Making benefits of such an achievement, Precious made a deep progress in her educational journey in general and writing journey in particular. After this progress, Precious' life will enormously and positively change. The new advancement place is a place of hope where Precious is "pretty settled" and where she studies hard to be a better person as she state:

So I work all spring, memorizing letter sounds, writing in journal, reading books. I have read Pat King's Family 'bout white woman whose husband abuse 'n abandon her. I have read A in Nobodi Gon' Tu rn Me 'Round 'bout civil rights". I made so much progress I won award. Literacy Award. I get it September of 1988. So I get award from mayor's office, money (\$7 5) from Each One Teach One, and class have a party for me. Things going good in my life (Sapphire 85).

The previous passage is a direct example where we see the salutary and constructive results of scriptotherapy and earlier writing on the life of Precious. After being ignorant, invisible and traumatized, Precious starts to gain a recognition and, thus, a visibility. She won a literacy award and a money reward from the school. The direct result of scriptotherapy is revealed when Precious confirms: "things going good in my life"(85) ; implying that Precious is focusing on strength rather than weakness, on the future other than the past and she also focuses on developing her personality and character instead of mortifying her own painful adversities and deep weaknesses. She starts reading books which helped her change her ideas about people in general and white

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people in particular in earlier passages, we notice that Precious was feeling down due to the black complexion of her skin and she would have fantasized of being a white pretty girl who should be treated with dignity. In her early primitive thoughts, if you are white enough nothing bad happens to you, nobody will rape you or harm you. However, after she read *Pat King's Family*, she realized that, just like black women, even white women can be raped, abused and harassed.

At this stage of the novel, we notice that along with the improvement of Precious psychological state and constructive behaviour, the language used by Precious is elaborate. The writer could have used an elaborate English early from the beginning, but she did not opt for it. Rather, she delayed it for the upcoming chapters. Thereupon, we notice that the early chapters of the novel were written in a sort of Creole English¹¹ and then when Precious starts attaining an education, the language used in the narrative emerged in the novel is more sophisticated.

Another important result of scriptotherapy particularly and Precious educational journey generally is that Precious is becoming a self-confident mother who not only accepts her child, but also tries to raise him well by reading to him a bed time story and giving him a qualitative love; the kind of which she has never received before. This is clearly explained in the following quote: “Abdul nine months old, walking! Smart smart. He smart” (84). She adds, “That is good proof to me I can do anything. Already Abdul know ABC. Plus he knows his numbers. Barely talk and he counting. I

¹¹Creole languages, vernacular languages that developed in colonial European plantation settlements in the 17th and 18th centuries as a result of contact between groups that spoke mutually unintelligible languages. Creole languages most often emerged in colonies located near the coasts of the Atlantic Ocean or the Indian Ocean. Exceptions include Brazil, where no creole emerged, and Cape Verde and the Lesser Antilles, where creoles developed in slave depots rather than on plantations.

Most commonly, creoles have resulted from the interactions between speakers of nonstandard varieties of European languages and speakers of non-European languages. Creole languages include varieties that are based on French, such as Haitian Creole, Louisiana Creole, and Mauritian Creole; English, such as Gullah (on the Sea Islands of the southeastern United States), Jamaican Creole, Guyanese Creole, and Hawaiian Creole; and Portuguese, such as Papiamentu (in Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao) and Cape Verdean; and some have bases in multiple European languages, such as two creoles found in Suriname, Saramacca (based on English and heavily influenced by Portuguese) and Sranan (based on English and heavily influenced by Dutch). Papiamentu is thought to have also been heavily influenced by Spanish.

retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/creole-languages>

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did that. One day I going back for Little Mongo. Maybe I make the daY sooner than I had thought” (Sapphire 85). This quote reveals that Precious is moving from self-paralyzing hurdles imposed by the cracks of trauma family and society to an autonomous mother who is proud of her educational journey and the binging up of her little child who already knows his abcs and who is starting counting.

4.5.2 Brazing out the Trauma of HIV Contamination

Precious becomes sturdy enough to make a quantum jump in her journey, when life abruptly takes the wind out of her sail. After, she gains a sense of stability and psychological steadiness, her happiness is tempered by her mother, the harbinger of misfortune who comes to deliver the news of her father death which is, obviously, not the reason of Precious new trauma. More significant, yet, is the fact that her father died of the HIV virus. This is clearly seen in the following: “She look down say, "Your daddy dead" She come out the house to tell me that! So what! I'm glad the nigger's dead. No, I don't mean that, but so what. Mama quiet. Mama say, "Carl had the AIDS virus” (Sapphire 85). After this swift sensation of joy, Precious’ calamity is deeply felt when she realizes that she herself could have the virus as she was repeatedly raped by her father; “Then oh! No! Oh no, I get all squozen inside. Carl fuckes me. I could be done have it. Abdul could be-oh no, I can't even say nuffin'. A long time I don't say nuffin', jus' look at Mama. This what I come out of” (Sapphire 86). At this moment, Precious is teeming with ambivalent feelings of puzzlement, stupefaction and perplexity. She starts to question the reason why she has never been loved by her mother or father, and why she had to grapple with all those traumas. She recalls all the bad memories she witnessed with her family. Afterwards, she brings about the most ironic thing in her tale; which is that her father gave her the most lovable thing in her life; her son and brother Abdul; “my daddy. I want to hate him but it's funny I, he, give me the only good thing in my life aside from Ms Rain, ABCs, and girls at school; Abdul come from him, my son, my

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brother” (Sapphire 87). Her thoughts start to clash again and she starts questioning the reason why god’s justice is not establishes.

Then, she wondered if there ever exist any kind of worldly love and affection; “Where my god most high? Where my king? Where my black love? Where my man love? Woman love? Any kinda love? Why me? I don't deserve this. I not crack addict”(Sapphire 89). Feeling the overloads of injustice and oppression, Precious claims that she really does not merit all the miserable experiences she had to go through in her life. Then, she starts questioning why she would have her evil mother as a mother, why she is not white skinned and she felt down again; “why i get Mama for a mama? Why I not born a light-skin dream? Why? Why? It's a movie, splashing like swimming pool at Y, in my head. I can't breathe! ”(Sapphire 88). The news is suffocating and Precious feels venomous. To outshout this rancor, she plays a song;

sing loud now real loud. I stop running. It's grass green all aroun' It's Aretha. I always did wish she was my mother or Miss Rain or Tina Turner; a mother I be proud of, love me. I breathe in, lay down on my bed. Heart hurt. I don't know what to do. If not for Abdul ABDUL! Mama, Carl, me, Abdul Abdul Abdul, he my angel, my little angel. Do Abdul got it? I don't know what to do. I ask Ms Rain tomorrow(Sapphire 90).

This passage shows the intensity of the uproar faced by Precious. She tried to console herself through listening to a song which is made clear as she said, “It's grass green all aroun' It's Aretha”. The song made her feel a little bit better, but her heart is broken. She feels a deep hurt inside wondering if her son got the virus,

Mr Wicher say I got aptitude for maff. Where I gonna go when I leave Yzway house? I got AIDS? HIV? What's the difference? My son got it? Lil Mongo? How I gonna learn and be smart if I got the virus? Why me? Why me? Maybe virus don't get me? Maybe, I, jus' 'cause Carl have it don't mean me and Abdul have it. I gotta go upstairs to the nursery to

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get Abdul. I think about this later. It make me feel stupid crazy, I mean stupid crazy
(Sapphire 91).

The passage confirms the feelings of doubt, uncertainty and animosity that Precious is going through. In her delusional thinking, she blames destiny of making her a victim with multiple shortcomings, like stated before; being black, fat, poor, etc and several inferiorities and inadequacies. The HIV became the new burden that Precious is holding in her chest. Seeming out of her way, Precious appeared with a dejected look. Ms. Rain would ask her to speak about her pain, but she prefers not speak of it and rather writes in her journal. She writes:

Jan 9, 1989 One year I been school I ltk school I love my teacher, I learn. Books I read, child care, work computers) (Ms Rain I would like to get a good job learn work computers, (get apartment me and Little Mongo and Abdul) Ms Rain I ask you why Me? (Ms Rain I ask you why Me?) Precious. Precious writes to her teacher and expresses her desire to have a job of her own and an apartment where she can settle down with her two children and then inquire why it was her who suffered enormously. In a corresponding letter, Ms. Rain writes back to Precious and tells her that she is proud of her and that she will surely find a decent job as long as she has her degree. Yet, she asks her to clarify what she meant by saying: why me: "I don't know what you mean by your question, "Why me?" Please explain. Ms Rain (Sapphire 89).

At the very beginning, it was hard for Precious to tell her teacher verbally about the new quandary that appears in her life. She could only speak about it through a written poem:

Apome (a poem)

Blu Ran Blue RAIN Rain IS gr ___ (gray) but saty (stay) my ram

that all i hav to say rit now

111189 Precious Jones the poet 1113/89 I talk to s ___ wrk tody she gonn get tess for me (I talk to social worker today she gonna get test for me)

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or

or

an Abdul (servant of God) to see (and Abdul (servant of God) to see) see the i ey see (eye) see me

liv (Live)

die poslv (positive)

negv (negative) wh? wh? (why? why?) must I li (lie) to misel (myself) I must no (know) the truf (truth) (Sapphire 90-91).

Though this free verse novice poem seems to be unstructured, Precious manages to out write the new trauma that arises in her life. The act of writing about this new trauma is by itself releasing. Responding to her, the teacher writes back in an encouraging tone and we can see throughout this analysis that the teacher shares an optimistic approach where she keeps inspiring her students in an empathetically passionate manner as she unfolds: "Dear Precious POET Jones! Precious P. Jones ;Awesome! I love your poetry and your drawings. What are yc;m and Abdul going to see? How did you like the poems we read in class? Early." To detail her newly arisen trauma, Precious goes on: "Ms Rain Mi an Abdul got a scrit (Me and Abdul got a secret) I tell yo latr promois (I tell you later promise) no i tell yo now Love Ms Blue Rain IV HIV HIV U an Mi coold hav HIV (IV HIV HIV You and me could have Hlv) mi sun God Allh (my son God Allah) Alice Walk pra o IV VI YWXYZ (Alice Walker pray oh IV VI YWXYZ) lahVIIHIIHIV Hrv: Precious.p.Jones" (Sapphire 92).

In different instances, Precious mentions Alice Walker, for she is highly inspired by her story; *The Color Purple*, due to the resemblance that exists between the two stories. *The color purple* tackles the trauma and the ongoing survival of Celie who managed to walk out of the constraints imposed by others. Just like Precious, Ceilie was also raped and impregnated twice by her own father. Precious took Celie as her model and Alice Walker as her inspiring author. Exchanging news about HIV contamination, Ms Rain replies Precious:

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Dear Precious, 1/23/89 Are you saying you and Abdul need to take an HIV test? Well, tell me as much as you feel comfortable. Ms Rain Bluewmon who tech mi who hep mi I don no whut (who teach me who help me I don't know what) to sa it hard to xplxn i nver tel mi hole store. Yes I (to say it hard to explain I never tell my whole story. Yes I) need tess four AID I skred thas ALL four nov (need test for AIDS. I scared that's ALL for now) pane (pain) Precious Pane (Pam) 2/1189 (Sapphire 93).

Through this passage, Precious writes to her teacher telling her about her fears and insecurities; “I scared” But, to face her fear, she needs to learn more, writes more and be even more intellectually qualified. This is made clear when she confirms, “ I gotta learn more than ABCs now. I got to learn more than read write, this big BIG. This the biggest thing happen to Precious P. Jones in her life. I got the AIDS virusz Thas what tess say (Sapphire 93).

After being profoundly perplexed, Precious is willingly determined to face her trauma and proceed her intellectual journey with a zealous power. She gathered the girls in her class, sat in a form of a circle and kept inspiring them about the essence of writing/scriptotherapy:” keep on keepin' on!” to new girls. I show them how the dialogue journal works. You know how you write to teacher 'n she write back to you in the same journal book like you talkin' on paper and you could SEE your talk coming back to you when the teacher answer you back” (Sapphire 94).Precious reveals the regulation of writing that took place in the classroom; like having a phonic game¹², building vocabulary list and more importantly sharing a reciprocal journal where

¹²to make the connection between the sounds of spoken language and graphemes - the letters of written texts. Children are taught how to identify all the phonemes in a word and match them to a letter, to be able to spell correctly with this method.What is a phonics game?

By playing these synthetic phonics games, **children learn how to make the connection between the sounds of spoken language and graphemes - the letters of written texts.** Children are taught how to identify all the phonemes in a word and match them to a letter, to be able to spell correctly with this method.

<https://readingeggs.com>

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both the students and the teacher are going to write in correspondence. This reciprocal writing as a form of therapeutic journaling is also considered as a means of scriptotherapy which is implied for its remedial effects on this group of traumatized females. Precious mentions the importance of writing in correspondence to her teacher in extenuating her tense feelings and finding a resolution to her complex emotions. To promote a better psychological rehabilitation, the teacher launches a life story project which aims at sharing all the female students' painful traumas in written document entitled a life story. The aim of documenting all those stories is also a form of scriptotherapy aspiring to bring forth a better emotional relief. The main premise of scriptotherapy while writing a story life book is alleviating the burdens of one another trauma. Stating this differently, listening to another's person pain makes one forget about his own pain. This is well explained through the following quote, "When I hear Rhonda's story, Rita Romero's story, I know I not the worse off. Rita's daddy kill her mother in front her eyes.. Then Rhonda's brother raping her since she was a chile, her mother fine out and put Rhonda, not brother, out. (Sapphire 94). Knowing that her mates went through bitter traumas; like that of rape, witnessing the assassination of one's parents , etc lessened Precious' self-victimization and made her story less than being the worst of all.

4.5.3. Healing Trauma through Writing a Collective Journal Life Story as a Means of Scriptotherapy

Keeping a global journal is another technique of scriptotherapy suggested by Ms Rain for the female students where they share their stories of pain. Writing a journal life story that encompasses all the veridic traumatic life experiences of the students is sustained to bring therapeutic results. This goes hand in hand with Samuel Gladding and Melanie Wallace who argued that "Journals can be used across populations, theories, and settings and are especially beneficial as a supplemental component for persons in counseling"(4). Gladding and Wallace

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technique for therapeutic writing aims at reaching better self-awareness and development as agreed earlier by Ira Progoff who established that journaling within this standpoint opens horizons for people to be more thoughtful, meditative, and deliberate (77).

Ms. Rain designed the project of writing a collective journal where all the students write their stories. Subsequently, all the female students would work through their troubling traumas and crippling anxieties by writing on the same journal. The announcement of the project emerged after Precious gathered the girls in the circle and told them about her new predicament as it emerges below:

But I look my friends in the circle and I tell them, test say I'm HIV positive. And all the tongues dead, can't talk no more. Rita Romero hug me like I'm her child and I cry and Ms Rain rub my back and say let it out, Precious, let it out. I cry for every day of my life. I cry for Mama what kinda story Mama got to do me like she do? And I cry for my son, the song in my life. Is life a hammer to beat me down? Jermaine jump up do boxing dance (she think she Mike Tyson!) say fight back! I laugh, a little. Ms Rain say we got to write now in our journals. Say each of our lives is important (Sapphire 96).

Through the passage, we see that the teacher advises her female students to keep a written account where they can share their own concerns and advise them all to put those emotions into a written word. Precious feels blank due to her newly developed trauma and has no capacity to write. HIV shook her confidence and she starts to daunt her written skills as she says "I don't have nothing to write today-maybe never". She felt like words fled her once and forever. As the teacher insists on her to write. "Ms Rain say, You not writing" she went on: "My head all dark inside. Feel like giant river I never cross in front me now" (Sapphire 96). Yet, the teacher urges her to write saying: "If you just sit there the river gonna rise up drown you! Writing could be the boat to carry you to the other side. One time in your journal you told me you had never really told your story. I think telling your story git you over that river Precious. I still don't move. She say, "Write."" (97). The

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most pertinent example of the importance of scriptotherapy is revealed in the statement: "Writing could be the boat carry you to the other side. The teacher uses a metaphor where she compares writing to a boat that will save Precious from drowning. This implies that Precious' safety can happen only when she is able to write down her sorrows and let the pain part in papers carrying her to the other safe side. To explain further, Precious uses a metaphor "drowning in the sea" to express her desperate sorrow, profound heartbreak and overwhelmed state. She seems to plunge into a chaotic position from which there seems to be no way to flee. As the teacher insists on her to write she replies: "I am tired. Fuck you!" I scream, "You don't know nuffin' what I been through!" I scream at Ms Rain. I never do that before. Class look shock. I feel embarrass, stupid; sit down, I'm made a fool of myself on top of everything else" (" (97). Through this passage, we see that Precious fierce fury went out of control and she started cursing her teacher like she never did before. Yet, her teacher kept encouraging her saying "Open your notebook Precious." "I'm tired," I says. She says, "I know you are but you can't stop now Precious, you gotta push." And I do" (98). Instead of harassing her back, the teacher tries to focus on the positive instruction and she shakes Precious to understand that after she reached this point, she cannot give up and go backward and settle to a life of slackness. Ms. Rain statement "push" means that Precious must test her limits and go to the extra mile striving to achieve the best of her educational journey. The teacher asks Precious to write everywhere and evrytime.

She insists that she takes "journal, write stuff in journal. She asked her to jst write and "later she will fill in rite spelling for me. But my spelling is impruv. Way way improve. Ms Rain say I seem dpress deprssion is she say anger turn in" (97). The writer scrutinizes the process of the acquirement of the writing skill. At this particular stage of the process of writing, Precious is learning about homophones; which are words that consist of the same sounds but with different spelling; like to, too, and two. It is worth noting that whenever the writer wishes to take us back to the stages where Precious was still in the process of learning how to write, she uses sort of

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distorted English to make us experience the process underwent by the protagonist. Accordingly, she refines the language again whenever she wishes to take us to further stages where we behold of the aftermath of the process of writing. The direct result of scriptotherapy is exhibited in through the words of Precious and Ms.Rain: “Rite wRite write more. I am a difrent persn anybuddy wood be don't u think (Shapshire 99) ?To put it differently, this means that the more Precious writes, the better she becomes. Henceforth, writing made of her a different person and she comes to see this difference. The advent of HIV has destabilized Precious as she feels most of the time worry and anxious. Ms.Rain, on the other hand, kept encouraging her to come to school and keep writing. Yet, Precious spelling tends to even worsen when she is anxious like exhibited in the following passage:”I think I AM MAD. ANGERREEY an gerry very mi life not good i got dizeez. Ms Rain say NOT dizeez I say whut is it then. I Talk angr to Ms Rain she say u notice yr spelin change wen yu hav feelins not tal bout in book she say i am nt dyslx nune that say its emoshunal disturb lets talk bout it”(Shapshire100).Precious felt down again due to being infected by the HIV virus. The latter arose all the post traumatic memories she maintained from the life she held with her parents; “I was fine til HIV thing she ,say i still fine but prblm not jus HIV it mama Dady” As she writes about her past memories, Ms Rain responds writing :

we can nt escap the pass. the way free is hard look Harriet H-A-R-R-I-E-T i pratise her name. Rita say keep tinkin whut you got to bee thankfill for” t. i gt two bee thankfill four: Ms Rain seeel school girlz in class Abdul Toosday Rita take me VILLAG Sat we go muzeum r ' sun day chuch MONDY we gonna read HarrietT. book I feel btretter glad I write my book Precious (Shapshire 101).

Through this passage we notice that whenever Precious is tracked down by the traumatic memories of her past and loss, she is advised to rather be thankful for the privileges she gained through her educational journey and writing particularly, Ms.Rain, her son, and even the shining day she witnesses is a blessing she needs to be thankful for. Being grateful, she feels also

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overjoyed for the book/journal being written. The outcome of the written process is also beheld in the newly acquired personality trait that Precious gained; for example Precious describes her earlier situation when she was needy and broke for money saying: “in shop she got books, cards, blak stuff I hardley ever have mopey to buy stuff. I DIE for I steel. Nver will Precious jones steel (no more) or shute dope”(Shapshire 106). This, subsequently, means that Precious is becoming a better peron; since she no longer steals and is no longer stupid. Precious changes to become more punctual and she even arrived before the others for she was so eager to start school as it is displayed through the following quote: “When I get to school early sometimes I just sit in front part on the black plastic couch that need tape where it cut and the yellow foam pads show through. School start at 9 o'clock. The secretary gets here at 8:00 a.m. I don' get here before that 'cause the door locked and I would have to wait in the lobby downstairs (Shapshire 106). The positive effect of scriptotherapy also shows when Precious describes her classroom in an enchanting manner saying:

Our room is nice. Nicer since we have one day where we come in "raggedy" and bring our own cleaning stuff 'n posters, pictures, 'n plants from home 'n fix up our room. Ms Rain say bring something of YOU! I bring picture of Abdul and plant from Woolworth on 125th Street. It growed. Leaves big. birds good to go! Room quiet sunny. We just open our notebook, Ms Rain usually say something like, You got 10 or 15 minutes 'fore the "rabble" get here. Me, I, just look at the sun coming in through the front window. I like the routine of school, the dream of school. I wonder where I be if I had been learning all those years (Shapshire 107)?

Commenting on the previous extract, we notice the abiding link that connects Precious to her school and how positive and optimistic she is becoming. Again, she uses an elaborate English to describe her newly beautiful learning environment, the way they embellish it and the way her teacher breaks the ice every morning. She is simply in love with her learning environment/school.

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The phrase “the sun coming in through the front window. Pretty soon it move around and come in through the side window” symbolizes the shining future that awaits Precious. Nonetheless, Precious would be so happy to be going through the writing of her story in the global journal. Prior to this stage when Ms. Rain asks them to write at the first stance, Precious was befuddled and found it impossible to write, but now writing seems to be easy with every step she makes forward in her written journey. This is made clear through the following: “maybe it's our book, the big book with all our stories in it. Not mine yet. I'm just putting stuff in my journal now. Telling time is easy. Fractions, percents, multiplying, dividing is EASY. Why no one never taught me these things before” (Sapphire 108). The effect of writing/ scriptotherapy shows when Precious ambitions for the future start to appear when she asserts that she wants to become a poet, an artist or rapper, “what I care about is: notebook, writing poems “ think about being a poet or rapper or an artist even”(Sapphire 109).

4.6. Writing Poetry as a Means of Scriptotherapy

In his ‘*Poetry and Therapeutic Communication: Nature and Meaning of Poetry*’, (1974) Jules Barron argued that writing poetry is a form of safety because it provides shelter to the disorientated distorted soul and, hence, can simply contain the shattering traumatic strong emotions that were provoked (5). This perceived safety is a means of scriptotherapy due to the feeling of comfort it provides. Being a means of scriptotherapy, poetry helps to accept one’s life like it was advanced by Dorri Laub before, who made it clear that writing poetically about the trauma of witnessing a murder could uplift his trauma (58).

Through the following example, Precious brings out a poem written earlier by Langston Hughes¹³. At this stage of the research, we suggest that bringing forth the poem of Langston Hughes is a form of intertextuality. Identified by Van Zoonen, intertextuality points to the fact that all texts

¹³Langston Hughes, in full James Mercer Langston Hughes, (born February 1, 1902?, Joplin, Missouri, U.S.—died May 22, 1967, New York, New York), American writer who was an important figure in the Harlem Renaissance and made the African American experience the subject of his writings, which ranged from poetry and plays to novels and newspaper columns. Retrieved from: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Langston-Hughes>

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whether documented or verbal, conventional or unconventional, creative or ordinary, are somehow connected together. Van Zoonen adds that most literary critics recognize the Russian literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin as being the former to pinpoint the way texts exist in accordance with earlier texts. This idea is premised on the fact that “texts never have meanings in themselves but are the product of relations with other kinds of texts (2). The concept is traceable to the literary critic Julia Kristeva who advanced the concept stating that: “any text is a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another” (37). In this sense, the upcoming intertext serves as a tool of scriptotherapy used by Precious to pursue her journey of survival. On similar lines, Precious attempts to rewrite Hughes’ poetic lines where she postulates her own experience. Inspired by others poems, Precious stands up in the class, introduces herself, dedicates her poem to the light of her eye Abdul and she utters the poem:

Mother to Son

Well, son, I'll tell you: Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.

It's had tacks in it, And splinters, And boards torn up,

And places with no carpet on the floor Bare.

But all the time I've been a-climbin' on,

And reachin' landin's, And turnin' corners,

And sometimes goin' in the dark Where there ain't been no light.

So boy, don't you turn back.

Don't you set down on the steps '

Cause you find it's kinder hard.

Don't you fall now For I've still goin', honey,

I've still climb in', And life for me ain't been no crystal stair (Sapphire 112).

Sapphire uses this poem through Precious as a means of scriptotherapy to show that despite all the hurdles of pain she was put in, Precious finds a way to shine and thrive; which goes along with the

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intended aims of creative writing; scriptotherapy. Initially, The Mother to Son's poem by Langston Hughes was published in 1922 in *The Crisis*, a magazine dedicated to sustain civil rights in the United States, to become later included in Hughes's first book *The Weary Blues* (1926)¹⁴. The original poem tackles the adversities that Black people dealt with in a racist context. The poem made reference to the main stumbling blocks set in the face of black people living in the United States. Nonetheless, the poem highlights the possible overcoming of these difficulties by dint of perseverance, resistance and tenacity. Generally, it aims to empower the black community who goes through similar difficulties. Yet, In Sapphire's novel, the poem is presented in a form of an advice that a mother offers to her son to handle life in a racist society. On similar path, Precious, in this stance, uses the poem to empower herself and her son alike. The use of the metaphor of climbing a set of stairs which is not a "crystal stair" is employed to show that Precious' life was not a rosy colored and smooth one, but rather it was perilous teeming with gloomy and poorly set stairway. The use of words; tacks, splinters and boards torn up refer to the sharpness of the life she had lead. She uses the original poem to show her son that life was tough for her, but she has been climbing all the time meaning that she did not give up and so was he supposed to do when life shows its snarly adversity. The mother shares this hard-won knowledge to show her son that there is always a way to prosper and go beyond despair. Equally, the poem is used to encourage and support, in this perspective, the community of female students who went through dire traumas and who were all gathered in the same learning environment to keep going in life despite all the painful scars left behind their traumas. In this way, the poem is a means of

¹⁴*The Weary Blues* is Langston Hughes' first published book of poetry. It was published by Knopf in 1926, with a preface by Carl Van Vechten. Alongside Alain Locke's anthology, *The New Negro: an Interpretation* (1925), the publication of Hughes' collection of poems is one of the defining moments of the Harlem Renaissance. *The Weary Blues* contains several of Hughes' best known poems, including "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," "Dream Variation," and the Epilogue ("I, too, sing America..."). It celebrates the emerging Black expressive culture in Harlem, but also reflects Hughes' considerable travels in the early 1920s, in Mexico, Europe, and the Caribbean (see "Water-front Streets," "A Farewell," "Port Town," "Natcha," "Soledad: A Cuban Portrait" and "Mexican Market Woman" for more of Hughes' internationalism). calar.lehigh.edu/african-american-poetry-a-digital-anthology/the-weary-blues-by-langston-hughes-1926#:~:text=The%20Weary%20Blues%20is%20Langston,moments%20of%20the%20Harlem%20Renaissance.

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scriptotherapy since it alleviates and uplifts the broken souls of the traumatized Precious and her female mates who were sailing in the same boat.

Another poem that Precious writes to show the positive effect of scriptotherapy is the following:

In my journal I write:

bus wheel

turn me

through time past a Mama mama

first you see

the buildings like watching (fantasizing about how should childhood be)

a cartoon backwards

seem to be getting putted

back together

it's weird.

but from our red bricks in piles

of usta be buildings

and windows of black

broke glass eyes.

we come to buildings bad

but not so bad

street cleaner

then we come to a place

of everything is fine

big glass windows

stores

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white people

fur

blue jeans

its a different city

I'm in a different city

Who I be I grow up

here?

where a poodle dog

is not on tv

but walking down the stree

t on skinny whiteP 127

bitch lease.

This whose ass

they want

me to wipe?

Push wheelchair for

I kill 'em first.

TYGER TYGER

BURNING BRIGHT

That's what in Precious

Jones heart-a tyger.

Bookstores

Café

Bloomy dales!

Bus keep on rolling end(Sapphire128).

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Precious writes another poem about her ability to move on in life. The first lines of this poem; bus wheels turn me through time past a “Mmama mama” implies that she wants to move beyond the painful memories of the past of her spiteful mother. Then, she, supposedly, fantasizes about a normal childhood based on watching cartoons. Yet, the past consists of cracked buildings like the adjectives black and bad imply. But, life shines after the storm is gone and “we come to a place where everything is fine; big glass window, white people, blue jeans, fur, stores, etc.” Now that she straddles the world of writing, Precious feels like she belongs to a better world which is dissimilar to the world she used to belong to when she was illiterate. Through the poem, she also reveals how she is determined to not do any degrading occupation because she is worthy of having and doing a better job. She criticized the white racist social worker who suggested that she works as a social assistant doing the most debased kinds of job for white people. To prove her dignified fury; she writes: “I will kill them first”. We notice through this poem to what extent is Precious changed. She values herself and her existence and she feels better, resolute and unwavering when she says ‘Precious jhones heart a tiger’. She closes her poem by writing “ Bus keep on rolling” meaning that she simply does not want her education journey to come to end and hence, she is willing that her life will keep improving.

4.7. The Positive Effects of Scriptotherapy as Shown on Precious

The positive effects of scriptotherapy made Precious more self-confident and wiser. She earned a new sense of self-acceptance and according to her teacher she becomes a “phenomenal success, having made strides so tremendous! in the past year she was given the mayor's award for outstanding achievement. She seems to be actively engaged "in all aspects of the learning process (118)? Now that she learnt how to self-respect and self-esteem herself, she is highly esteemed by her teachers who cherished and encouraged the marvelous advance she made in her educational journey. Additionally, She managed to have her G.E.D degree, an occupation and a dwelling to settle with her little son as revealed in the following quote “Jermaine hand me the file. "No way!"

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I scream. "I'm getting my G.E.D., a job, and a place for me and Abdul, then I go to college"(Sapphire 120). Precious gained an elevated sense of self-growth and self-value and importance. After she got an education, she refuses to accept to work as a house attendant six days a week which she finds a form of slavery, she claims: "Why I gotta change white woman's diaper and then take money from that and go pay a baby sitter to change my baby's diaper? And what about school? How would I keep up with my reading and writing if I can't keep going to school" (Sapphire 124)? The racist white social worker Ms. Weiss aimed to harden life for Precious when she suggests that she works as a social attendant. But, Precious protests: "I cannot just talk it to white social worker. She look at me like I am ugly freak did something to make my own life like it is. And she is trying to make me go to wiping old white people's ass"(Sapphire 124). Precious becomes engaged more in writing when she starts spending more time on writing and her teacher claims that she is becoming: "intellectually alive and curious" (125). Precious reached a point in her life when she starts to self-reflect upon her life experiences and the traumas they brought.

Evaluating the overall trajectory of her life, she starts asking questions about what happened to her how could it happen in modern days? She, even, starts to question the reason why social justice was unjust when her father was not jailed after he raped her at the age of twelve. "Why no one put Carl in jail after I have baby by him when I am twelve? Is it my fault because I didn't talk to polices" (Sapphire 125)? Then, she starts blaming herself for being silent back then. Then, she questions her teacher how her life would have been different if somebody helped her at that age. Yet, her teacher answers her that "if and "but" might be two of the most useless words in the language, at times" (Sapphire 125). She starts to feel of herself as being better and beautiful in the inside in spite of the fact that people, in the former school, treated her with disrespectful disdain. This is clearly stated in the following, "I always thought I was someone different on the inside. That I was just fat and black and ugly to people on the OUTSIDE. But, I am not different on the inside. Inside I thought was so beautiful is a black girl too" (Sapphire 125). The quote

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shows the difference that appears in Precious' thoughts before and after writing. Now that she becomes a writer, she realized that the colour of skin is no longer a complex, that she is beautiful as she has always been, and that she was just the victim of her own ignorant society.

Another trait of personality appears when she attends an incest survivor meeting. In the meeting she was amply surprised to listen to the sexual incest story of a pretty white woman and was left staggered due to her old thoughts that made her believe that only black women are the ones to experience such incidents. She describes her as follows: "She look like a movie star! Slim, long hair, eyes like stars, red lips. "My name is Irene. I am an incest survivor." My mouth fall open. Someone like that "It started when I was, oh, about four or five years old with him fondling me" (feeling her up). "By the time I was twelve he was having intercourse with me three or four times a week" (Sapphire129). At this point, Precious realizes the idea that white girls are not hurt is but false and she felt overwhelmed to know that saying:

everything is floating around me now. Like geeses from the lake. I see the wings beating beating hear geeses. It's more birds than geeses. Where so many birds come from. I see flying. Feel flying. Am flying. Far up, but my body down in circle. Precious is bird. Someone is holding my hand. It's Rita. She is massage my hand. I come back from being a bird to hear beautiful girl crying. "Thank you for letting me share" (Sapphire129).

After the white girl shares her story, it was time for so many survivors to share their owns. Upon hearing the different stories, Precious realizes that the world was unfair to so many women: "all kinda women here. Princess girls, some fat girls, old women, young women. One thing we got in common, no the thing, is we was rape (Sapphire 130). An irony that takes place in Precious' story is when her mother came for a counseling session with Precious at Ms.Weiss office. Ms.Weiss asked the mother to tell about how the abuse started. The mother records that it all started when Precious was three. The "psycho maniac fool" as Precious describes him states was always

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obsessed with sexing his little baby. Strange is the fact that the mother was more interested in him sexing her instead of hurting her little babygirl as she declares:

So he on me. Then he reach over to Precious! Start wif his finger between her legs. I say Carl what you doing! He say shut your big ass up! This is good for her. Then he git off me, take off her Pampers and try to stick his thing in Precious. I wanted my man for myself. Sex me up, not my chile. So you cain't blame all that shit happen to Precious on me. I love Carl, I love him. He her daddy, but he was my man (Sapphire 134)!

Precious' mother testimony does not change her foremost opinion about her. The mother seemingly guilty testimony does not stir Precious or shake her anymore even when the mother handed her money, she refused to stay or even cry. She argues: "She got in her pocket get out and hand me three dollars. Something tear inside me. I wanna cry but I can't. It's like something inside me keeps ripping but I can't cry"(Sapphire137). This part shows the frozen symptom of post traumatic stress disorder that happened before with Nur after being addressed with strong emotions. Other positive traits to appear in her personality after she writes journals and poems is that she became alive as if the life she had before was meaningless, deadly and dull. To express how she is becoming more validated she declares: "I think how alive I am, every part of me that is cells, proteins, neutrons, hairs, pussy, eyeballs, nervous system, brain. I got poems, a son, and friends. I want to live so bad" (Sapphire 137).

After this transitional phase, Precious got a total understating of her essence of being after she valorizes her existence, felt happy in her own skin, overcame obstacles and defeated the plight of the past. Having the HIV virus is illustrated by Precious as having "cloud over sun. Don't know when, don't know how, maybe hold it back a long long time, but one day it's gonna rain"(Sapphire 137). At this stage, Precious is full with positive energy and hope. Feeling peaceful for the first time, her life seems sunny and the HIV is but a cloud though it does not dim her light. The pouring rain signifies a rebirth of a new Precious who, correspondingly, ascribes herself a winner

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after she affirms: “I’m alive inside. A bird is my heart. Mama and Daddy is not win. I’m winning” (Sapphire 130). Precious feels cozy now that everybody respects her: “Everybody knows I write poems. People respect me”(Sapphire 137). Poems’ writing earned Precious respect and created an inner tranquility, cleansing and clarity. The direct effect of therapeutic writing or scriptotherapy, in this novel appears when Precious says: “Everybody in this house go to meetings, in recovery” (Sapphire 137).

Writing her own story in the collective book made her feel even more comfortable. The importance of listening and sharing all the other females similar traumas in the same book was intentional as the teacher stressed that “people who help you most (sometimes) are the ones in the same boat” (Sapphire 139). The outcomes of scriptotherapy are stressed even more when Precious accepts her situation and moved forwards as she accepts her friend’s advice when she says: “forgit the WHY ME shit and git on to what's next”(Sapphire 139). “Move on with your life” (Sapphire 140). A feeling of divine justice is sensed when Precious ‘son Abdul is not HIV positive. She presumes: “Abdul get tested. He is not HIV positive. Something like that makes me feel what Rhonda, what Farrakhan, say-there is a god (Sapphire 138). Precious assumes that she is going through a “cure” (Sapphire140). The cure, in this stance, is implicative of the consequence of therapeutic writing. Filling her heart with the love of her boy she says: “He my shiny brown boy. In his beauty I see my own. He pulling on my earring, want me to stop daydreaming and read him a story before nap time. I do”(Sapphire140). The teacher along with the community of girls were mesmerized by Precious writings and demanded that she writes more:

Ms Rain, senora La Lluvia, ask me to write more, write about my life now. Just talk some more in the tape recorder and she transcribe it. What life? Foster care, rape, drugs, prostitution, HIV, jail, rehab. Everybody likes to hear that story. Tell us more tell us MORE MORE about being a dope addict and a whore! Puta tecata puta tecata. But I tell

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you what I want, it's my book-we had a nice place, vel vet things, lace curtains, the crystal ball (Sapphire149).

Through this passage, we see that Precious develops a good sense of how to proceed with her writing journey, since she decides to record the bad alongside the good. The good, here, refers to one suggested technique of scriptotherapy which is optimistic ways of writing as mentioned in chapter two. It aims to be used in order to change the negative beliefs into more positive ones in a written literary style. Optimistic ways of writing as claimed by Wallace Gladding “nudges people from self-defeating ways of thinking into a more optimistic cycle which reinforces itself” (08). All in all, Precious transformational narrative is by itself optimistic intending to inspire the readers and novice writers alike.

4.8. Conclusion

The healing from trauma and the balancing of Precious life can only happen when Precious decides to leave her trapped situation and join the alternative school where she learns how to read and write. As she is immersed in reciprocal journaling, Precious' traumatic memories, anger, insecurities, learned helplessness and ill thoughts started to transform into more positive ones. Scriptotherapy makes Precious more valuable as she starts to love and accept herself, her body and her degrading situation anew. Then, scriptotherapy helps Precious to work upon herself to force, later on, her social visibility and drastic transformation. Precious' transformation is considered a metamorphosis as she thoroughly changed from an illiterate woman with a poor potential to an empowered woman who is unshaken by the traumatic past. Writing about her pain earns Precious a sense of tranquility, a peaceful clemency for herself and a renewed qualitative and energetic life.

Through this chapter, we have also exposed the emergency of leaving any discomfort zone when it starts to threaten our lives. Precious' gleam of hope could not shine unless she left

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the punitive school and home. Therefore, dwelling at a sedentary and deorable place is the worst enemy against progress. So, journaling and reciprocal journaling along with writing poetry, in this chapter, are the main tools of scriptotherapy. The main objective of these tools is reaching a deep sense of self or a new sense of self realization as it is the case for Precious. In a nutshell, scriptotherapy's techniques are used in this chapter to improve Precious dire situation, restore her self confidence, help her accept her ill-conditions and then make her ready to become a better empowered woman.

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*The voyage of discovery lies not in finding new landscapes but
in having new eyes. (Marcel Proust 3)*

5. Introduction

Leaving autobiography to its conventional credence of reality is no longer held in the last few decades. The edgy occurrence of creative narratives in autobiography and autobiography in fictional writings “has gained autobiography a reputation for elusiveness as a literary genre that defies genre distinction” (Suh 14). Reminiscent to autobiographical genres like confessions, diaries, epistolary novels and memoirs, the autobiographical novel may have some hair-splitting nuances with the mentioned modes of narration. Ramkrishna Batacharya argues that the autobiographical novel may relate to people that the writer had encountered in his life or events that he or she had witnessed in reality or occurred to his or her acquaintances (18). These details may help in the making of the autobiographical fiction. Through writing an autobiography, the writer reveals his intention that what he has written is genuinely authentic and, hence, “invites the reader to read under the persuasion of belief in its claims of veracity, that it is not some impossible historical exactitude but rather to the sincere effort to come to terms with and to understand his or her own life” (Lejuene30). This exactitude is made in a fictional text to make what Sarah Suh called an “autobiographical pact” between the narrator and the reader (98).

The autobiographical pact is established through the matching names of the writer, narrator, and the eponymous protagonist, “for what defines autobiography for the one who is reading is above all a contract of identity, sealed by the proper name” (Suh 99). In similar lines, in her memoir ‘Black Milk, Shafak attempts to assert a nonfictional narrative within her own fiction as a self-written account that is testimonial and confessional. More importantly, the very same

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memoir is classified under the sub-genre of post-traumatic memoir as it denotes the healing mechanism this woman writer made after her long journey of suffering from the writer's block trauma and post partum depression. This trauma of a writer's block is intrigued due to the delivery of her first baby. In fact, if we try to contemplate on the title of the novel itself; which is *Black Milk*; it may sound as oxymoron due to the paradoxical dimension it conveys; the color of milk is obviously white and not black. This oxymoron may symbolize the suffering of motherhood. The novel is rampant with emotions and ambivalent feelings that multiplied the protagonist agonies and culminated to her trauma. Such narratives are "commemorative and performative narratives navigating aesthetic, biological, cultural, linguistic and emotional pressure and inspiration" (Levin86).

The memoir, under study, exhibits the identical life experience of the writer. The eponymous protagonist Elif has never considered marriage and settlement. Her roving nomadic journeys and endorsement of loneliness generated a life devoted to writing. Yet, the mere sight of a mother holding her baby at the beach wakes up her biological clock and she starts to question the possibility of becoming a mother. However, the experience of motherhood hampers her career as a writer. The inability to write after giving birth made life even more despondent and mournful for the writer. Strangely enough, postpartum depression recalled a Djinni called Lord Poton who came to possess her to worsen her writing journey. Despite the fact that she visited psychotherapists and groups of discussion, she could not recover her skill of writing and, thus, could not surmount the writer's block trauma. To overcome this trauma, writing a memoir was the only remedy. As she comes to know this, Elif states: "if I started to write about the experience, I could turn my blackened milk into ink, and as writing had always had a magical healing effect on my soul, I could inch my way out of this depression"(Shafak 54).

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5.1. The Trauma of a Writer's Block

Before we dig any further, we find it pivotal to define the trauma of a writer's block. According to Robert Boice, "a writer's block is the helplessness of a writer to produce a written material" (45). Most scholars agree that a writer's block is about this powerlessness of creating a new written work. Yet, there is a disagreement about what could provoke this trauma-like condition. It is argued that apprehension is one of the main factors leading to the writer's block condition (Huston 6). Alongside, Karen Peterson considers poor writing tendency as another reason that culminates to the writer's block. Probing the writer's block condition, Rose Mike claims that there are several models that are worth noting: the first being the behaviorist which goes on similar lines with the poor and unpleasant writings habits conducted by the writers. This refers to the "narrow or inappropriate composing rules and planning strategies" (Peterson 12). The second is the psychoanalytic model which aims to highlight desperate fears and anxieties as experienced by writers. This refers to the writer's "fretfulness, disappointment, anger or perplexity" (Peterson 13). The third is the sociopolitical model which aims at exploring the environmental circumstances and social conditions that hamper the writer. While attempting to define the Writer's block, Mike Rozed reports that "it is the inability to start or keep on writing due to factors other than a scarcity of an essential skill or commitment" (46).

Writer with high blocks may construct merely few sentences; others may produce more, except that these sentences range from being mistaken starts, replications or disjointed patterns of discourse. Nonetheless, some others create an acceptable amount of prose and stop in mid-ways.

When tackling the issue of writer's block from the psychoanalytical perspective, Zachary Leader assumes that, "it was habitually seen as an unconscious defense mechanism or as the outcome of trying to force the writing process" (12). Commenting on this, he adds that similar writers developed the blocking due to being so much "critical and perfectionist about their work and

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have said at such times they found themselves rewriting entire chapters or throwing away work they did not consider good enough to meet their personal standards”(Leader 54). Nonetheless, Sarah Ahmed presumed that the vast bulk of reasons behind blocking are psychological such as general stress caused by life, stress, nervousness, despair, and physical exhaustion as being the most frequent source of blocking. Another widespread reason behind the blocking is a drastic loss of motivational zeal (57). Nonetheless, cognitive factors like obsession with perfectionism or behavioral factors like procrastination are considered as being the chief origin of the writer's block. However, the most commonly used recommendations for writers with blocks to overcome the phenomenon are taking break, empowering themselves to write and dare writing again (Sarah Ahmed 97). Talking about writing may also boost their state of mind and provoke their skill of writing and open their eyes to new perspectives and new writing projects.

5.2. The Use of Memoir as a Means of Scriptotherapy

Writing stories of pain have emerged in the scope of trauma studies since 1992 with the publication of Felman and Laub's '*Testimony: Crisis of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*'. This production is considered as a primary text that helps “externalizing and recontextualizing trauma, which counters the perpetual melancholy of Caruthian trauma” (Schoutrop, et al12). Equally, other researchers and critics in the field of trauma proved that narrativization of melancholic stories may come up with uplifting results. Pennebaker's claims that, “the mere act of disclosure is a powerful therapeutic agent that may account for a substantial percentage of the variance in the healing process” (Pennebaker 62). That is to say, the story allows the mind to begin to think of what before had been unspoken, “because trauma shatters the narratives that structure our lives, we can only be healed by telling our stories again, by representing in words the trauma that now controls our mental images, thoughts, and actions”(Stratford 45). Through narrativization and testimonial writing of pain, trauma can vanish

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and healing takes place. Suzette Henke, on parallel lines, uses the concept of 'narrative recuperation' to a diversity of twentieth century women writers who have been engaged in life-writing through fiction, nonfiction, and journals. She calls this kind of writing "scriptotherapy . . . the process of writing out and writing through traumatic experience in the mode of therapeutic reenactment"(xii). Candice Stratford reports aptly in this connection that "these various terms for writing to-heal—narrativization, narrative recuperation, life-writing, and scriptotherapy—all describe the same process of using writing as a way of recontextualizing trauma in a manner that allows for progress toward healing"(25).

In this memoir, the eponymous protagonist grapples with the experience of motherhood and writing literature on parallel lines. When the dilemma of motherhood arises, Elif goes through many mental conversations as she lists the experiences of many women writers who were for or against writing literature. The novel under discussion serves as a testimony which can be seen as strong and possibly perilous (Sandor 32). In this stance, it is perilous and hard for Elif to testify her agonizing pain; in other words it was tough to confess her feelings of malaise, or more precisely the writer's block, to a psychotherapist. An oral testimony, for Elif, is to no avail since a writer's block trauma can only be healed through writing again. Interestingly, Elif represents the mental battle she went through the use of the four little Thumbelina-size women who represent the Discordant Voices that have had a decisive role throughout the course of her life. Though they are clashing, the voices' opinions and strong decisions shape the path in Elif personal and intellectual journey. The main dilemma arises when her maternal instincts start to emerge. Early from the beginning; when she starts prospecting the woman in the beach, the mini harems inside Elif's mind reveal her bouncing ambivalence between motherhood and writing. Shafak shows that this ambivalence is common to many influential women writers that have grappled with this dilemma.

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Some of these writers realized that it is a herculean task to manage both writing and motherhood and, hence, remain single or childless for the rest of their lives.

According to Rachel Meltzer, a memoir is a literary factual narrative. Germinating from the French word 'memoire' meaning a memory, the word memoir is a factual compilation of experiences as encountered by the writer during a specific life time. Among the peculiarities of a memoir is that the narrator may go forth and back in time basing her or his fiction on the flashback technique. The author may also use the chronological structure chronicling the events from beginning to the end. Whether the memoir relies on a flashback structure or the chronological one, it has one specific theme envisaged in an adversity surmounted by the author. As for the autobiography, it refers to a nonfiction narrative that deals with factual and chronological details of an author life. Authors of this genre highlight factors that led to their personal development enclosed in a historical and cultural frame. The chronological recording of details as displayed in an autobiography hinges on probing childhood events, focusing on most vital moments that led to overriding success, overcoming difficulty or endorsing a self-deficiency ,etc. to Rachel Meltzer adds that autobiographies tend to end in a captivating takeaway that readers tend to capture after they finish reading (72). On similar ground, Shafak's memoir is assumed to be a tentative to bring to the fore themes of postpartum depression, the writer's block, motherhood, and writing. In this memoir, Shafak exposes the experience of motherhood and the obscurities she went through due to the loss of her writing skill or what is termed the trauma of a writer's block.

Through this memoir, Shafak aims to stimulate the readers' awareness about surviving any adversity in life by revealing her own individual experience of surmounting the writer's block trauma. This form of scriptotherapy falls within the group of testimonial narratives since it is: "a report of an event that relates what has been lived recorded and remembered. Memory is conjured here essentially in order to address another, to impress upon a listener, to appeal to a community.

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... "To testify is thus not merely to narrate but to commit oneself, and to commit the narrative, to others" (Felman and Laub 204). Similarly, when documenting one's trauma in a form of a memory, "it permits the person to cognitively access the event and regain a sense of control, and thus reducing the work of inhibition" (Osamnia & Djafri 243).

Scriptotherapy, or the process of writing out and writing through traumatic experience as a vehicle of "therapeutic reenactment or recovery", as explained by Suzette Henke, is frequent to women's autobiography in the twentieth century (2), "Though the act of writing is important to survivors' self-catharsis and in sharing pain, survivors also need public forums, the chance to connect with fellow survivors, to overcome shame and silence and to win the awareness if not empathy of readers" (Henke 5). Unquestionably, the interrelatedness between health, healing, and writing is noteworthy. It is, further, claimed that artists have developed a link between discourse or writing and wellness. It is also claimed that the main ordeal that occurs in trauma is that it turns a person's life upside down. Meg Jensen argues that after this turbulence happens nothing seems secure or familiar once more and hence the need for a means of healing, is urgent (52). In her book, *Memoir writing as a Healing journey* (2010), Lynda Meyres suggests that writing a memoir can heal the writer physically and emotionally (22). Writing creatively about one's emotions and feelings proved to be a good attitude for uplifting the immune system as it had a positive impact on some diseases like chronic fatigue syndromes, arthritis and asthma. Memoir writing includes what is subbed "self-discourse and confession" (Meyres 21). Self-discourse plays an important role in reducing pressure and bringing back mental and physical health. Memoir recording is like "an ancient church sacrament, confession ritualizes the unburdening of shame and guilt, enabling a person to move forward in a positive way" (Meyres 34).

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The process of healing in memoirs and confessional writings happens when people find words to issues that were unspeakable before due to the shamefulness, remorse and sorrow they embodied. Hence, "confessional words pierce through the inner darkness, opening our hearts to the light of hope and forgiveness. Through confession and unburdening, forgiveness can begin, for us and others" (Meyres 32). Documenting one's memoir brings up psychotherapy. The process is traceable to Freud's treatment. The latter was based on allowing the patients to speak freely about whatever crosses their minds. The therapeutic process happens when the person releases his or her own compressed feelings. Similar to this rule of treatment, writing down the compressed emotions releases the writer's from the lived negative emotions, events and traumas. Clare Cooper Marcus documented her therapeutic journey with creative writing as a healing practice. She reports that expressive writing helped her cope with severe emotions after being diagnosed with breast cancer at the age of sixty. She said: "I wrote while sitting, wracked with anxiety, in the hospital waiting room. I wrote about my fear of death, of pain, of not-knowing. I wrote sitting up in bed after my mastectomy, I wrote in the hospital garden, drinking in nurturance from the hundred-year-old Valley Oak tree, the squirrels running up its rotted trunk. I was writing myself into hope" (qtd in Meyres, 39). She also concluded that writing helped her to overcome the turmoil of emotions conjured up by her situation. Depicting the way writing enacted therapy she advances:

It helped me stay in the present moment, aware of each feeling and insight arising, then falling away, like leaves drifting by on a stream of consciousness. Writing at such a time was an exercise in mindfulness. Although I also spoke my feelings out loud, to friends, to a therapist, to members of a support group, it was writing that enabled me to go deeper, to give my soul a voice. I believe it was writing as much as medical treatment that enabled me to heal (qtd in Meyres, 11).

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The most difficult part of writing a memoir may be the very beginning as claimed by Linda Meyres who contends that the writer may be very reluctant to start writing a memoir. Yet, the process of writing a memoir, generally, starts from drafting a negatively difficult emotional story to positively overcome difficulty. This shift from negative to positive perspective is vivid to most memoir writing. A memoir tends to end in a captivating takeaway by providing “self understanding and healing” (12). A well written memoir can meet the following criteria:

Makes thoughts and events more concrete; • Leads to greater self-knowledge; • Releases emotional constriction and stress; • Strengthens the immune system; • Leads to short-term changes in the autonomic nervous system; and • Provides a template for the writer's future story. All sorrows can be borne if you put them into a story or tell a story about them (Meyres 14).

Memoir(s) writing is essential, for it assists people identify their own worth by exploring their internal life. Writing the bad brings forth the good; the writer “brings himself/herself forward, or out of the stuck place” (Meyres 18). At the beginning of writing a memoir, writers get entangled in the past, the social view upon them, etc. Linda Meyres advises memoir writers to “get on with life; quit thinking about the past,” they say. However, people cannot simply will themselves to forget what resides within, “sometimes memories intrude upon the psyche, as if demanding to be heard. Bad memories or parts of our pasts that are unresolved, have a way of intruding into our lives, as if demanding us to do our healing work” (Sendor 9).

Post traumatic events memories, are as hurtful as the incidents themselves. For example, ‘the trauma of abuse, loss, or accidents affects the brain. A series of powerful chemical-physiological and emotional reactions accompany such memories. Psychiatrists and other clinicians use the term Post-traumatic Stress Disorder or PTSD to describe this state, which is now

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a widespread focus. The efficacy of memoir as a means of scriptotherapy resides in its aptitude to put an end to intricate emotional disturbances as dire remnant of traumatic events. The process of scriptotherapy is made possible “by getting the images, feelings and conflicts out of us and onto the page, where they can be processed with more objectivity. In other words, the healing process is the writing itself” (Pennebaker 23). In his experience to heal patients by expressive writing, Dr. James Pennebaker suggested that they write about the traumatic events that occurred in their life. The patients' written memories are related to traumas culminating from external traumas like; “events in the outside world— natural disasters, car accidents, rape, or war” and internal traumas like “trauma or abuse at home—physical, emotional, and sexual abuse; alcoholism; and mental illness” (Pennebaker 23). That kind of injury is one of the most insidious ones because the victims, particularly when they are children, do not realize that what is happening is wrong. It is simply the way mommy and daddy act. It's the way things are. Even mature adults may feel that nothing can be done about life not being as they wish it to be.

However, the aftermaths of trauma are dangerous. Ultimately, Judith Herman, author of *Trauma and Recovery*, determines that: “traumatized people feel and act as though their nervous systems have been disconnected from the present”(Herman 78). This longlife effect implies that the effects of the trauma remain with the traumatized for a long life, “causing problems such as a strong startle reaction, sensitivity to loud noises, fears, phobias, nightmares, and depression.” (Herman 77). Dr. Pennebaker asked his patients to write about “darker topics, pain, rejection, loss, despair, vulnerability, depression, Fear, jealousy, longing, death, abuse, illness, etc” The process was made by free writing about a topic for about 15-30 minutes. After the writing time is over, Dr. Pennebaker asked his participants whether or not their thoughts, feelings and reflections have changed. The next pattern toward healing was to focus on one particular memory that provoked a positive quality of light, tranquility, peace, love, happiness and the likes. Then, they were asked

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to recall what happened during the writing and afterward. The task of writing a dark a story, then, checking whether or not it will shift into a lighter story and the task of writing a dark beginning and light end for the same memory is a therapy that reveals that no matter how severe the emotions of trauma are, the patients are also capable of balancing their situation. Hence, "the path of emotional healing is often like cleaning out an old wound: it hurts while we are cleaning it out, but we feel so much better afterward" (Pennebaker 25). Pennebaker recommends the following tips to keep a regular writing habit:

Make a list of the darker memories that trouble you from time to time. • Write down the age you were when these difficult times happened. • Write down what you did to cope with the event at the time. • How do you feel now about the incident? • What would you have liked to happen differently? Be sure to honor yourself in the process. Because the goal of this writing is healing, give yourself permission to listen to the stories that your mind and hand lead you to. If you find that you can't stop writing the same story, you might need therapy or some other kind of structured emotional support. Choosing to revisit different vignettes and times in your life cycle offers different points of view (Pennebaker 1243–1254).

Life traumas can be resolved after the writing process takes place when the writer or the participant recalls the trauma memory, but feels no longer shattered by its deep emotions or as Linda Meyres concludes, "a trauma is resolved if you are no longer troubled by it and your life is relatively free of a negative reaction to the event. Resolution means that your life is not circumscribed by your fears and you're not disturbed when you remember the traumatic event" (34). Worded differently, when the traumatic event is recalled without any previous emotional reaction, the trauma is healed and its memory is just an element of one's lived history. On the

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same pattern, the eponymous character Elif goes through similar path when writing her journey to healing from the trauma of a writer's block and intricacies of motherhood and writing.

5.3. Questioning Motherhood and Writing

Elif, the protagonist, represents the mental battle she went through the use of the four little Thumbelina-size women who represent the Discordant Voices. These voices penetrate every corner of her personality for they have had a decisive role throughout the course of her life. Though they are clashing, the voices' opinions and strong decisions shape the path in Elif personal and intellectual journey. The main dilemma arises when her maternal instincts start to emerge. Early from the beginning; when she starts prospecting the pregnant woman in the beach, the mini harems inside Elif's mind reveal her bouncing ambivalence between motherhood and writing. Shafak shows that this ambivalence is common to many influential women writers that have grappled with this dilemma. Some of these writers realized that it is a herculean task to manage both writing and motherhood and, hence, remain single or childless for the rest of their lives. Jane Austen, for instance considered her own novels as her children to the extent that she addressed her heroines as "My Emma", "My Fanny", and "my Elinor". Though Jane Austen was about to accept a marriage proposal, she once woke up of her sleep and wrote a note to her suitor telling him that she cannot marry. Shafak contemplates her situation presuming the possibility that Austen had a dream thwarting her from marriage and begetting. What the dream was, we never know. Another writer who disregarded the institution of marriage and motherhood is., as stated by Shafak, Being an eloquent writer and an outstanding scholar, who considers herself as: "nobody's mother and nobody's wife"(Cisnero 50). She has always been expressing the adversities and the advantages of being a single woman in a patriarchal background; a background that does not really advance writing as a career, let alone consider both motherhood and writing. Likewise; or as she calls herself: a writer on the border of two cultures. She claims: "I think writers are always split

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between living their lives and watching themselves live it”(Cisneros 50). Born in Chicago in 1954, the only daughter of six sons, she personally processed the pain motherhood can cause to parents who were not given compatible gender roles. Although, she grew up in a large family, she had all the needed love from her mother and father alike and was even given her own space to write fiction. Commenting on this, she states: “I am the product of a fierce woman who was brave enough to raise her daughter in nontraditional ways”(Cisneros 50). She, herself, wrote fiction fiercely and longed to write narratives that have never been told before. In her novel, *The House of Mango Street* (1984), she chronicles the story of Esperanza; the Mexican-American girl who was raised in the in the Hispanic quarter of Chicago. The book tackles issues of machismo, chauvinism and the effort of a woman of color to sound her own voice. Esperanza shortly realizes that: “writing heals her wounds, frees her soul. It helps her to develop her natural talents, finds out who she really is and resists all kinds of indoctrination that limit her choices in life due to her gender, culture or class”(Cisneros 59).

Cisneros' ideas on motherhood and marriage have always been notorious. In an interview, she states that despite her age she still feels like a child and because of that reason, especially, she simply cannot hold children or fuss over them. Around her twenties and thirties, she dismissed the possibility of marriage and dedicated herself to her writing solely. When asked why, she had discredited the potential of marriage, She states that: “My writing is my child and I don't want anything to come between us” (60). The examples mentioned above are not supportive for the option of marriage and motherhood which made Elif reluctant about the potential of becoming a mother.

In the upcoming part, attention will be directed to the mental fight that plagued the protagonist from writing after becoming a mother and, subsequently, resulted to the literary of the writer's block. Self-evaluative questionnaire are considered as a technique to retrieve “a basic

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sense of safety, self-worth, and control over one's life, as well as the capacity to trust again" (Rosenbloom et al 31). This notion is in tandem with the tumultuous thoughts of the protagonist who could probably not achieve a sense of stability without debating and questioning the issue of motherhood. Her thoughts got intense when she visited the aged Turkish writer Adalet who chose to embrace life as a writer solely and not consider motherhood. Through their discussion, they illustrated the cases of many writers who dedicated themselves to writing instead of being disturbed by family concerns. Among these writers, they mentioned the life courses of Louisa May Alcott, Anais Nin, Ayn Rand, Simone de Beauvoir and other women authors who chose a similar path.

For instance, despite her intellectual legacy, Simone de Beauvoir believed that motherhood hampers writing as a career or a talent. Raised by a stern catholic mother, she questioned marriage and motherhood deeply. She believed that many women longed to rediscover themselves in their children; which is considered as a psychological need. But, she did not support the idea. Though, she and Sartre were ideal, committed and independent couple, she believed that motherhood is incompatible with the life she chose for herself as an intellectual. She believed in Hegel dictum; 'the births of children go along with the death of parents' and that motherhood is not for the likes of her. Mentioning Simone De Beauvoir, who is considered as a literature diva, has discredited the possibility of motherhood which is an example that caused an unfathomable turmoil in her mind, simply because Elif was considering such a literary figure as a model to be emulated and , hence, her uproar would be even more intense. Despite this clamor, the inclinations of motherhood rang loud in Elif's guts and She states:

I hadn't known I wanted to become a mother and it took me by surprise. But I wanted to have this baby. It was as if another part of me—a domestic, nurturing, maternal side was now rebelling against the part that had dominated all those years. The compelling need of

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motherhood penetrates the tiny little villages south of my personality with an amazing speed and agility, but the vested powers sitting in the capital were still holding (Shafak 78).

This shows that the writer wanted to cross both paths with the same vigor. However, she is deeply convinced that if she becomes a mother she would risk losing her wandering, autonomous, untroubled relaxed spirit. The yammering voices in her mind multiplied her agony and mental battles as they are all loud at once. For this reason, she got into her pregnancy with miscellaneous emotions. Regarding this, she states: "as if I were being dragged toward the unknown by an undercurrent that was stronger than my heart" (Shafak 78). One finger woman called Anton Pavlovich Chekhov affirms that the dilemma will never come to end because of envy. She explains that: Envy is not a simple emotion or mindset, but a deep philosophical dilemma. The finger woman states that Jean-Paul Sartre said all sorts of racism and xenophobia stem from envy" (Shafak 58) To explain thoroughly, she confirms that the grass is always greener on the other side. Elif inquires about what that possibly means and the finger woman explains that if she has a baby, she will always be envious of women who focused on careers only and if she focuses on her career only, she will always be envious of women who had babies. Thus, whatever life to be chosen, the mind will always be obsessed with the dismissed decision. To make her even more depressed, another finger woman called Miss Highbrowed Cynic's assumes that one cannot live without melancholy. She adds that it is no coincidence that Paul Klee painted the Angel of history so lonely and hopeless.

As she grew bitter, Elif tried to stop the conversation since this in-depth knowledge is just making her sad and anxious, "to improve the conversation tone, the little finger woman claims that: "My point is, whichever woman you will grow into, you will wish to be the other" (Shafak 38). For the finger woman, having children or not having children is all the same, since the outcome is deep existential dissatisfaction and envy. To reinforce her point of view, she quotes

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Csinero who presumes: “we are all sentenced to fall inside ourselves and be miserable” (Csinero 40). Miss Ambitious Chekhovian shows up again and sates that Elif should be writing now instead of wasting her precious time on this nonsensical conversation about motherhood and writing. Then, she said that she will do all she can to stop Elif from becoming a moon woman. In this stance, it is clear that Elif is feeling a malaise due to her inability to feel a sense of tranquility due to the draught debate that colonized her mind. The latter raises the early depression to pave the way for an upcoming trauma. That is to say that the fear of losing the skill of writing led to an actual loss to the skill of writing after the delivery and, hence, caused the writer's block trauma. To the researcher sense, the first depression that Elif suffers from in this narrative is this indecisive mindset which first thwarts the writer from writing. If the dilemma was settled early from the beginning, Elif's life as a writer and a mother might have probably been less turbulent. The voice becomes intense and scorns Elif: “Go and get pregnant, gain all the pounds, and worry about breast-feeding, then raising the child, sending him to school, sending him to college, and before you know it, you will forget all about literature and writing” (Shafak 49). To emphasize our claim, the psychological fear of forgetting all about literature that dominated Elif before marriage and pregnancy is what truly intrigued the writer block trauma and state of perpetual malaise.

The chaotic thoughts of the protagonist got more severe when she visited the aged Turkish writer Adalet, as stated before. Adalet preferred to be only a writer disregarding motherhood. Through their talk, they illustrated the examples of many women novelists who dedicated themselves to writing instead of being disturbed by family concerns. Among these writers, they mentioned the life courses of Louisa May Alcott, Anais Nin, Ayn Rand, Simone de Beauvoir and other women authors who chose a similar pathway. For instance, despite her intellectual legacy, Simone de Beauvoir believed that motherhood may hinder writing as a career or a life's passion. Raised by a stern catholic mother, she questioned marriage and motherhood deeply. She believed

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that many women longed to rediscover themselves in their children; which is considered as a psychological need. But, she didn't support the idea. Although, she and Sartre were ideal, committed and independent couple, she was for the idea that motherhood is irreconcilable with the life she embraced as a thinker. She believed in Hegel dictum; 'the births of children go along with the death of parents' and that motherhood is not for the likes of her. The example of Simone De Beauvoir disheartened Elif and made her doubt motherhood. Despite this screech, the inclinations of motherhood rang loud in Elif's guts. Shafak states: "I hadn't known I wanted to become a mother and it took me by surprise. But I wanted to have this baby. It was as if another part of me—a domestic, nurturing, maternal side—was now rebelling against the part that had dominated all those years"(Shafak 67). The persuasive need of motherhood penetrates "the tiny little villages south of my personality with an amazing speed and agility, but the vested powers sitting in the capital were still holding" (Shafak 78). It is revealed, here, that the writer wanted to cross both paths with the same vigor. Still, she was well aware that if she becomes a mother she would risk losing her wandering, autonomous, untroubled relaxed spirit that a writer needs to write fiction.

The whining voices in her mind increased her anguish and mental torment. With this emotion, she steps on the threshold of pregnancy with miscellaneous emotions. Regarding this, she states: "as if I were being dragged toward the unknown by an undercurrent that was stronger than my heart" (Shafak 78). Anton Pavlovich Chekhov, one of her finger women, affirms that the dilemma will never end because of envy. She explains that: "Envy is not a simple emotion or mindset, but a deep philosophical dilemma. The finger woman states that Jean-Paul Sartre said all sorts of racism and xenophobia stem from envy (Shafak 58). To explain painstakingly, she states that the grass is always greener on the other side. Elif asks about what that potentially signifies and the finger woman adduces that if she has a baby, she will always be envious of women who

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focused on careers only and if she focuses on her career only, she will always be envious of women who had babies. Consequently, whatever life to be chosen, the mind will always be obsessed with the dismissed decision. To make her feel even more miserable, another finger woman called Miss Highbrowed Cynic's confirms that one cannot live without sorrow in life. As she felt depressed, Elif tried to stop the conversation since this in-depth knowledge is just making her sad and anxious, "to improve the conversation tone, the little finger woman claims that: "My point is, whichever woman you will grow into, you will wish to be the other" (Shafak 39). For the finger woman, having children or not having children is all the same, since the outcome is a deep existential dissatisfaction and envy. To strengthen her point of view, she quotes Cioran who presumes: "we are all sentenced to fall inside ourselves and be miserable" (Shafak40). Miss Ambitious Chekhovian emerges to her again and sates that Elif should be writing instead of wasting her precious time on this fruitless conversation about motherhood and writing. In this stance, elif lost her inner sense of tranquility. This latter raises the early depression to pave the way for an upcoming trauma. That is to say that the fear of losing the skill of writing led to an actual loss to the skill of writing after the delivery and, hence, caused the writer's block trauma.

To the researcher sense, the first depression that Elif suffers from in this narrative is this indecisive mindset which first thwarts the writer from writing. If the dilemma was settled early from the beginning ,Elif's life as a writer and a mother might have been less turbulent. The voice becomes intense and scorns Elif : "Go and get pregnant, gain all the pounds, and worry about breast-feeding, then raising the child, sending him to school, sending him to college, and before you know it, you will forget all about literature and writing" (Shafak 49).To highlight our claim, the psychological fear of forgetting all about literature that dominated Elif before marriage and pregnancy is what truly intrigues a kind of post partum depression similar to normal women, but dissimilar to women writers who consider literature as life style. Even so, Little Miss practical

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interferes claiming that women can be both good in motherhood and career alike. She continues saying that the secret of success is time management. Miss Ambitious Chekhovian breathes interjecting: "Of course, there are women like that, and I call them circus jugglers. Send the kid off to school in the morning, cook the husband a perfect omelet, dress in a hurry, make it to work, rush home in the evening, set the table, feed the kid, then pass out on the couch while watching TV... . Yes, those women do exist. But they never write novels" (Shafak 50). Through this passage, the mental fight Elif suffers of is never coming to an end. When regarding the issue from multiple perspectives, new-fangled alternatives are proposed by Elif's finger women like the idea of time management that was discarded by another finger woman who thought that time management is possible for any working woman who is not a writer of literature. Through this amalgamated ideas and thoughts, words stop to flow and this led to the writer's blockage. Nonetheless, Miss Ambitious Chekhovian clarifies that the idea she aimed to highlight is that those women are kind of versatile who can manage both motherhood and their works. Yet, the question to be asked, here, is if they can manage to accomplish a lot in their career or not? The inquiry is asked, here, simply because literature and writing are more than a career, but they are seen as a life style and lifetime passion indeed, "An artist needs to be ambitious and passionate. You don't work nine to five. You breathe your art twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. That's why you should consider a hysterectomy" (Shafak 50). It is an unending task that requires a full time writer who is available anywhere and ready at any time to write fiction which is not the case for the eponymous protagonist Elif after she straddles the world of motherhood.

5.4. Women Writers Embracing Motherhood and Fiction

There is always another side of the fence that makes the protagonist's inclination toward motherhood an urgent need to become a reality. Unpredictably, Shafak found out that she did not only have the four household finger women, but there were two other finger-women

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entrenched inside her psyche, a sexy feminine side known as Belle Blue Bovary, and a maternal side known as Mama Rita Rica, who have been marginalized due to her dedication to writing fiction. Meeting her beloved complicated things and made her swiftly think about forging a family. In this section, emphasis will be on examples of women writers who straddle both the world of fiction and the experience of motherhood successfully. Mother writers like JK Rowling, Toni Morrison, and Susan Sontag claimed that they had good ties with their children even when they struggled while writing. Contemporary mother writers, belonging to multiple cultures like the previously mentioned Mexican-American writer Sandra Cisneros, the Chinese American author Elizabeth Gilbert, who admitted her unwillingness to bear children and its consequences in her bestselling book *Eat Pray Love*, have faced the same adversity to decide to be mothers or not. These are supportive examples that help the protagonist Elif to walk out of her apprehensions and consider motherhood seriously. A notorious literary figure who managed both writing and motherhood is Toni Morrison, who was a mother for two children. She was, in fact, raising her own children when she began to write. Shafak proclaims that for many years, Morrison could not write in the daylight and that “her rendez -vous with pen and paper were taking place before dawn” (Shafak 30). Despite life difficulty, she found each challenging step an inspiration. Shafak states that “Sometimes, the biggest award a woman writer hopes to receive is neither the Man Booker Prize nor the Orange Prize, but a good-hearted, hardworking nanny”. It is a dream shared by many. Through this example, we see that Elif is trying to find a solution to meet the need of motherhood while sustaining her career as a writer. One of the solutions is having a good-hearted nanny or well qualified babys-itter. As an example, Sylvia Plath won grants that were written up to a nanny. She won “money with which she could hire a professional caretaker so as to find the time and energy to write (31). Yet, the issue of writing and begetting children is thought-provoking since it will always keep up questions. Csinero questions the issue of class and women writers and poets “having a maid of their own” (Cisneros 31). She wondered if Emily Dickinson’s Irish maid

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and housekeeper wrote poetry or if she ever had the hidden inclination to study and be anything in addition to a housekeeper. Cisneros writes: "maybe Emily Dickinson's Irish housekeeper had to sacrifice her life so that Emily could live hers locked upstairs in the corner bedroom writing her 1,775 poems" (Cisneros 31). Asking such questions would also intrigue a kind of guilt in Elif's mind which would revive the chaotic state she was in before. In the literary world such mundane topics, money and social class are still concessions that empower some and disempower other. Though shaken deeply by the issue, Elif seems always to rejuvenate her mind by remembering inspiring literary figures such as Sylvia Plath. She was a poet who was determined to write early from the beginning. Married to the poet Ted Hughes, their rocky marriage was considered a powerful tie between two shared metaphors and conflicting personalities. The written word was their peculiar pride. There is a poem she wrote entitled: *I Want I Want* where the main character is a God-like baby who is about to be born. Enormous, hairless and open mouth, this is not an adorable, angelic baby but rather a powerful natural power desiring to come into this world and asking for the needed love and attention. In the same poem, Plath employs a volcano as the symbol of feminine fertility, a broad horizon that can bear life in it. However, a volcano is also hazardous and can be considered as a destructive power.

In her book, *A Glimpse into Sylvia Plath's Works*, Agarwal Suman assumes that the story of Plath is worth mentioning in this stance, for it is reminiscent to the story of a writer who went through the same anxious paths to become a mother. All over the course of her life, Sylvia Plath went through various anxieties when considering womanhood and motherhood. At the very beginning, she was afraid of being sterile and not being able to bear children. Then, she was horrified by the idea of giving birth to a child and the probability of death. After having babies, she started to worry about the outside world and its cruelties (Sumam 84). However, just like Elif, she overcame her fears and was persuaded that being a mother is a fabulous journey that may add great things to her life and to her writings. After becoming a mother, she depicts herself as a

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superwoman; or one that is revealed in her poems as a magical mortal who was altered with the plain touch of a baby's pink thumb. In her diary she wrote, as quoted in Agarwal Suman's book, "I must first conquer my writing and experience, and then will deserve to conquer childbirth" (qtd in Suman 78). In another instance she writes; "I will write until I begin to speak my deep self, and then have children, and speak still deeper" (qtd in suman). In fact, she wrote her greatest work *Ariel* (1965) after having experienced motherhood. After giving birth to a son and a daughter after sixteen months, she became a writer who had new duties which are taking good care of the family and the babies. Sometimes, she came up with loaded pages written about home chores, babies, baking chocolate cookies, etc. For her poetry, babies were powerful metaphors and her poems were also her own babies. As she writes poems, she considered the writings that were not yet complete "unborn babies." She has even personalized her poems by giving them human characteristics. She, for instance, described how they smiled at her, how their foreheads bulge with concentration, and how they changed every day, stirring their tiny fingers and toes. So, she mothered two children and thousands poems. The example of Sylvia Plath and her experience with motherhood is but a supportive idea that assists Elif to gain the needed strength and courage to become a mother writer and forget about her psychic anxieties, inner fears and apprehensions. Though they belong to various nationalities, the previously mentioned women writers and poets managed both writing as a career and motherhood as the most stunningly challenging human experience a woman writer may undertake in her life. With all debates and challenging ideas, Elif walked into her pregnancy.

The writer's "emotional tremor" starts to develop in her life the very day she learnt about her pregnancy. Writing fiction was the most ardent passion the protagonist held in life, but as she learns about her pregnancy Elif states: "the writer in me panicked, the woman in me became happily confused, the pacifist in me remained passive, the cosmopolitan in me began to think about international names. The vegetarian in me worried about having to eat meat and the nomad

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in me just wanted to take as fast as she could” (Shafak 2). This passage represents the psychological fret that circles Elif from different angles in her life. As a writer, she worried yet as a woman she was happy since the instincts of motherhood are satisfied. But, pregnancy demands a healthy diet that includes proteins which is not customary for her who is a vegetarian. Pregnancy and motherhood alike also inquire a settlement which contradicts with the desires of the nomad she was. All these contradictory bearings induce her mental pain. The mood-swings provoked by the change of hormones and the worries of pregnancy did not cease only to be accompanied by the apprehension daunted upon Elif when the post partum depression punched her finding her utterly unshielded or, as she reports: “stretching out in front of me like a dark tunnel that seemed to have no end, it scared me out of my wits. As I cross through it, I fell down several times and my personality was shattered into pieces so small there was no way I could glue them back together again” (Shafak 2). The shattering of her pieces and the loss of her wit paved the way for trauma to invade her gradually and she could not go through the gloomy path she was trapped in. There seems to be no peaceful ways to establish “full-fledged, healthy inner democracy” (Shafak 2). Though she desired the baby, the inclination to write fiction was still existing and also hurting. The battle of the six different voices, as seen earlier, would add insult to her injury as she states: “I entered this pregnancy with mixed feelings, as if I were being dragged toward the unknown by an undercurrent that was stronger than my heart”(Shafak 78). Indeed, as she gave birth to her baby girl she felt: “perplexed and unprepared (Shafak 6).

Feeling bewildered and thoroughly unready, she could not write any more. To describe the writer's block trauma; Elif writes, “each time I attempted to go back into the world of fiction and start a new novel, I found myself staring at a blank page with growing unease that had never happened to me”(Shafak 8). This shows the trauma of the writer's block that occurred to Elif after the delivery whenever she tried to write. Explaining this odd situation, she writes, “I had never run

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out of stories. I had never experienced a writer's block or anything that came close to it, for the first time in my adult life, as hard as I tried, words wouldn't speak to me" (Shafak 8). Through mentioning the fact that she had always come up with stories implies that she was witty and creative. Here we come to realize that the loss of the writer's skill of writing is not due to her poor writing skills or writing habits but rather other psychological factors.

Threatened by this status, Elif was seized by the fear that something had irreversibly changed in her and that she would never be the same" (Shafak 8). Whenever Elif tries to produce fiction, she feels blocked, blank and unable. This inability made her restless and amplified her worry, fright and anxiety. Settled into the customary duties of household and motherhood, Elif felt changed, panicked and started to doubt that " she would not be able to write fiction anymore" (Shafak 8). That strong void was created as it tried to unbound the strong ties that linked Elif to books and fiction. This is well illustrated in the following passage:

Books had been my best friends since the day I learned how to read and write. Books had saved me. Stories had given my sense of continuity, center and coherence. The three Cs that I otherwise sorely lacked. I breathed letters, drank words and lived stories, confident that I could twist and twirl language in a passionate tango. All this time my writing had filled the one suitcase I took with me wherever I went (Shafak 9).

Through this passage we see how Elif laments her situation and bemoans the loss of her best companions. Being the best companion for a lifetime, the book gave Elif a sense of permanence, consistency and importance. Books were like air since she "breathed letters" and water as she "drank words." Using this metaphor implies that Elif cannot withstand life without two basic elements of living which are air and water; i.e. letters and words. Hence, just like a fainting flower, she starts to dwindle away after words stopped speaking to her.

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Life took a different shape and nothing is similar anymore. Elif settled into a dreary lifestyle not even finding the power to go out. To express this drastic change, she writes: “nothing seemed familiar. I, who had traveled across continents, easily finding home in so many places, could not find the strength or will to go out into the street. My skin got so thin everything started to hurt me. The sun was too hot, the wind too harsh and the night too dark (Shafak 9). Though she was a nomad cosmopolitan figure who travelled easily around the world, she became so psychologically frail to even think of going outside. The psychological frailty went in tandem with the physical one and this is clear when she claims: “my skin got so thin and everything starts to hurt me” (Shafak 10). The writer's block trauma made her feel “as if illiterate”, she confirms that words and letters that have been her best friends for life time have forsaken her or as she puts it, “words that had been my lifelong companions abandoned me and dissolved into soggy letters, like noodles in alphabet soup” (Shafak 175).

Increasingly, Elif started to wane and all the people around her started to notice that. Some people said: “you must be having a writer's block or something” (Shafak 175). Elif's pregnancy cost her huge mental pain for “it was a taxing experience and it took its toll (Shafak 177). Trying to decipher her condition, each one around her tried to give an explanation to what she was going through. A maternal grandmother ascribes the new condition to the evil eye, a spiritual master advises her to accept her condition since it is the will of God and “God never burden us with more than we can bear” (Shafak 178). However, a psychologist confirms that all that she goes through is the result of postpartum depression and hence contends: “welcome to postpartum depression. Let's start with two sessions a day and see how it goes, If you experience any mood changes down the road” (Shafak 175).

Taking antidepressants, talking to the psychologist were not fruitful because she “didn't have much faith in the treatment, and when there is no faith, there is little success” (Shafak 176).

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After attending sessions of therapy with the psychologist, Elif felt even worse because she was an introvert and she was not like the rest of people who can share their private issues publically. Henceforth, her situation worsened with every session instead of improving. Regarding this she stated, "I couldn't get used to the idea of talking about my private life to a circle of strangers. As soon as words slipped out of my mouth, they felt unreal, almost illusory" (177). For an introvert like her, the idea of healing through talking was not a brilliant idea and she couldn't describe her situation authentically amidst a bunch of unfamiliar figures. Her trauma, anxiety and agonizing pain instead of dwindling away, have simply augmented. Trying to justify this depression, Elif suggests that she was puzzled enough to put the blame on hormones, external forces, a personal poor habits or cultural constraints. She assumes that "depression happens to us against our will and without our knowledge, but then, slowly and furtively, they may turn into river in which we willingly paddle. I had embraced depression to the point of seeing it as a permanent condition looking into life through its blurry lenses" (Shafak 177). Through this, we realize that Elif was entangled in this condition against her will and, hence, all her activities and style of life were affected by this condition. This quote shows that Elif allowed depression's murky side to cover her life and look through the foggy lenses of this despair, yet suddenly realize that the only way to go out of this depression is starting to write again. She tried to put her thoughts into paper again, but unfortunately the words are no longer pouring as it is displayed through the following quote: "I urgently had to go back to writing to find my way out of this quagmire. I had to put my thoughts on paper, but the words wouldn't flow" (Shafak 177).

The trauma of blocking took place for eight months. Though short the period seems, for a writer like Elif it seemed like "eternity" (Shafak 178). Describing to what extent she was influenced by the post partum depression, she compares it to being possessed by a Jinni called Lord Poton who came to destroy what remains of her shattered personality. Lord Poton who

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switched her into a living dead taking pleasure out of any activity she does. Injecting her with passivity, he became an "avid stalker" whose:

Presence was tiring, and yet he never took things to the extremes. He didn't eradicate you, but he turned you into something less than human, an empty shell of your former self. Perhaps he didn't stop you from eating and drinking together, but he took all the pleasure out of it. Perhaps he didn't destroy all your reserves of strength, but he drained them enough that you felt stuck between deep sleep and wakefulness, like a doomed somnambulant" (shafak 179).

Unlike books which were used to empower and enrich her, the metaphorical representation of Lord Poton came to impoverish Elif rendering her an empty shell. Retaining her physical figure, Elif became devoid of her deep inner passions. The blocking along with the depression triggered a vacuum that is difficult to fill without putting pen to paper again. Being highly traumatized, she is left with no sentimental or reflective resources. She became a "doomed somnambulant" or simply a living dead who was heading an aimless life.

The type of writer's block that takes place in Elif's case is that of a writer's block if we link it to Rose Mike's the cognitive dimension of the writer's block and his psychoanalytic model which is premised on the idea that the writer's block occurs due to psychological factors rather than behaviorist or socio-cultural reasons. It becomes clear in this stance that Elif's fears and anxieties of losing the writing skill after the delivery led her to actually become unable to write. Thinking that literature has forgotten her "turning its distant and forbidden land with bulky guards protecting its boundaries", she started to believe that she will never be allowed in the literary sphere. She also starts to think that the lack of practice may even worsen the situation when she claimed "I wondered if writing was like riding a bike you didn't really ever forget once you learned how to do it. Or was it like learning Arabic or Korean? The kind of skill that

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abandoned you, little by little, if you were out of practice for long" (Shafak 186). The writer's quagmire kept going tougher as she starts to ponder upon the exigencies of being a writer and the way they differ from those of being a mother. A writer is supposed to believe and have a strong faith in what he or she writes. When the writer is deeply integrated in the stories she writes, she may even disregard the external world which seems to be a bit tedious. When being a writer, any social meeting or activity can be delayed and the writer will always have an alibi for her absence to write fiction. According to this idea, Elif assumes that "everything will be "secondary"—only for writing will you find the time. The novelist is, and has to be, selfish" (Shafak 187). Unlike writing, motherhood is premised on generosity and giving. Though the novelist may be an introvert, a mother is supposed to be an extrovert. In the following passage, Elif mentions the existing discrepancies between being a novelist and being a mother. She describes:

while the novelist is an introvert at least for the duration of writing her novel, a mother is by definition an extrovert. The novelist builds a tiny room in the depths of her mind and locks the door so that no one can get. There she hides her secrets and ambitions for all the prying eyes. As for the mother, all her doors and windows must be wide open morning and night, summer and winter. Her children can enter through whichever entrance they choose and roam around as they please. She has no secret corner (Shafak 187).

Through this passage, we understand that the exigencies of motherhood are not synonymous with the exigencies of writing and this cost Elif a huge mental pain. Thus, motherhood entails an immediate meeting to the child needs which similarly means that anything can be delayed but the child needs like it is illustrated in the following example, "when your child falls and scrapes his knees or comes home with his tonsils swollen or lies in bed with fever or when he performs a Sponge BOB Square Pants in the school play, you cannot say: Okay, well I am writing a new chapter just now, can you please check back with me next month (Shafak 187). This example is

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mentioned here to portray to what extent the mother is supposed to be involved in her child's life. She cannot have his needs delayed but rather immediately met. The mother is, hence, supposed to be actively present in her child's life to provide a quality life which contradicts with the exigencies of writing fiction. This opposition kept paining Elif through a long time before she could make a recovery from the trauma of blocking and the depression of post natality.

Unable to write again made life appears in a dull shade and she is unable to enhance it anymore. According to Elif, the depression caused her much pain and she presumes that "all kinds of depression deepen when we forget to enhance life. Perhaps the most persistent question we ask ourselves at times like these is: why? Why is this happening to me? Why not to others? Why me" (Shafak 187). Unable to write anymore intrigued a depression that deprived her of being able to even enhance life and she was left speechless as she attempts to answer the reason behind such a depression. For Elif the complexities of motherhood concern both women with careers and women without careers. The conventional idea about motherhood views that motherhood is the woman's noblest commitment and that she must give up everything to accomplish this gracious mission. The modern idea, on the other hand, represents the modern mother as a versatile superwoman who is successful at home with her husband and children and at work. Yet, both ideas Elif stresses focus on what they aim to highlight discrediting the complexities of motherhood, for motherhood "transforms a woman and her crystal heart" (Shafak 188).

5.5. Scriptotherapy and the Positive Effect of Writing the Memoir *Black Milk* (2007)

In her memoir, Shafak confines a condensed diary of her pregnancy where she recalled her ambivalent feelings of pregnancy, disempowerment, postnatal depression, and nostalgia for her writings and intellectual life and worse her inability to write again. When her baby girl was born, she felt so weird and intellectually inapt to perform her role as a writer and a mother similarly. Her inability to be an ideal mother generated a form of depression that was personalized as a form of a

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djinni called Lord Poton who managed to exile the six finger women and silenced their skirmished talks. The main paradox that faced the protagonist as a writer is that she is introvert and reclusive and her role as a mother requires her to be more open to the outside world. This, in fact, caused her a huge depression. Uncertain of whether it was this paradox, hormones, or external powers that drove her to submerge into what she calls the post-partum blues, she developed this writer's block trauma like condition.

The protagonist Elif walks away from her depression by making reconciliation with the strident, challenging parts of her. Recognizing that these untruly voices are all part of her and accepting their existence unfolds an inner tranquility. As the depression eased, she starts to consider writing again. A writer's full recovery must be related to scriptotherapy as earlier mentioned. Scriptotherapy is writing through and writing out of trauma. This is well illustrated through the following passage: "I couldn't tell how much of my depression was due to hormones or outside forces, how much of it was self-imposed or culturally imposed. I urgently had to go back to writing to find my way out of this quagmire. I had to put my thought on paper" (Shafak 186).

Through writing this memoir as a means of scriptotherapy, the writer can overcome her dire condition. As she manages to write back, her soul is rejuvenated again. Writing, for Elif is pleasing as a game that writers choose to play so as they do not grow fast. Elif attests, "writing novels composing stories, creating and destroying characters—is a game favored by those who refuse to grow up" (Shafak 189). Thus, the practice of writing makes the writer immortal, simply because the spoken word perishes, the written word remains. She goes on to describe the awesome feeling or comfort the written word provides stating, "it gives comfort against the fleetingness of life. A novelist believes, somewhere deep down inside, that she or he is immortal" (Shafak 189). However, for scriptotherapy to take its path, the writer needs to have faith; which means that

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they must believe immensely in their creative narratives and that they are means that help redeem and enhance the quality of life. The writer's block trauma starts to disappear through the healing mechanism of Narrativization i.e., narrating a memoir. The writer attests, within this experience, that it was the first time in her life that literature "turned its distant and forbidden land with bulky guards protecting its boundaries" (Shafak 187). She worried if she could never write again and resembles her inability to write to different difficult situations. Like stated before, she compares the loss of writing to the loss of the skill that cannot be recovered due to the lack of practice, "Then I started suspecting that writing had forgotten me" (Shafak 188) An incident indeed that may distract the life career of a writer; a fact that may lead into a chaotic trauma. Willing to walk away from trauma allowed her to go beyond pain, depression and melancholy.

She let go of her despair, allowed the multiplicity of voices and restored her written skills. When she starts to write again, her soul was rejuvenated again. Writing, for Shafak is pleasing "as a game that writers, choose to play so as they do not grow fast. She attests: "Writing novels—composing stories, creating and destroying characters—is a game favored by those who refuse to grow up" (Shafak 188). Therefore, the practice of writing makes the writer immortal, merely since the vocal word vanishes, whereas the written word remains. She goes on to describe the awesome feeling or comfort the written word provides stating: "it gives comfort against the fleetingness of life. A novelist believes somewhere deep down inside, that she or he is immortal" (Shafak A89). Nevertheless, narrating one's pain is as a healing mechanism that can be enacted creatively and it is believed that the latter may enhance the quality of life. However, in order to produce the thoughts of her minds, she needed to see the words on paper; or as she states: "in order to understand the thoughts churning in my mind, I have to first see them in the form of letters. I know I have an idea now, but I need to put pen to paper to learn what it is. And for that I need paper" (Shafak 12). To put an end to her pain, she needed to write all her suffused and infused enough with depression, Elif decided to take off the gown of depression and start writing

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again. The recovery of her skill is described when she said :“ then one morning, I woke up with an urge to write again and sat at my desk”(8).In the first part of this quote, the writer mentions that she woke up with an urge to write came after she had accepted her first condition. Accepting her depression, anxiety, postpartum depression and the trauma of blocking provoked an inner peace inside and diminished the scolding uproar which took place for a long time.

All positive feelings and descriptions are associated with the recovering her writing skill. A sense of serenity is implied through the phrases; quiet, the scent of jasmine, the blue sky and everything was ok. She could finally realize that this dragging depression must come to end. The direct healing effect of writing this memoir is revealed when Elif claims: “writing had always had a magical healing effect on my soul,I could perhaps inch my way out of this depression” (8). Thereby, it is only through writing that she could overcome her depression and trauma-like condition. Yet, motherhood is also considered as the most precious endowment in life. To reveal the positive effects of writing, the writer uses a personification where she compares the pen to a human as he put his head down; the way we use the pen to start writing and give metaphorically its dark sweetness; ink embodying the sweetness of words through the pages. In this metaphorical representation she states: “the pen puts its head down to give a dark sweetness to the page. Rumi” (Shafak 156).Along with this rejuvenating dimension to the human soul, Elif claims that writing makes a person immortal. And this is clear when she says that: “Writing novels, composing stories, creating and destroying characters—is a game favored by those who refuse to grow up” (Shafak 187).The positive effects of scriptotherapy appear when the writer reports,“even though the game takes place on paper, the possibility of playing it over and over again helps you forget your own mortality” (Shafak 187). The inference that can be made from this stance is that mortality may symbolize trauma and the psychological frays the writer had been through. This, ultimately, leads to the claim that scriptotherapy helps in promoting emotional and intellectual wellness. To confirm this, the writer adds: “the spoken word perishes; the written word remains.It

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gives comfort against the feelingness of life” (Shafak 187). More importantly, scriptotherapy brings forth liveliness as it comforts feelingness and, hence, the rigidity developed due to trauma. More interestingly, a writer as Shafak mentions, “believes somewhere deep down inside, that she or he is immortal” (Shafak 187). Another example that reveals the outgrowth of scriptotherapy on the eponymous character Elif is seen when she declares, “yet, at the same time, the experience helped me to look within and meet anew every member of the mini harem I had carried inside of me all those years” (Shafak 2). This refers to the inner peace that she managed to restore after a prolonged interior battle she had to go through. Now that she restored her oneness, tranquility and self-acceptance, she attests that “the experience helped her to look within and meet every member of the mini harem she had carried within throughout the previous years” (Shafak 2). The experience in, this example, refers to scriptotherapy and the manner she helped her accept and, thus, embrace the divergent multiplicity of roles and duties she had to encompass as a woman, a wife, a mother and a writer. Albeit the difficulties of motherhood, which are referred to as *black milk* like the title of this memoir, indicates, the experience of motherhood was a motivating one. To explain this in different words, I suggest that the title of the book *Black Milk* indicates the hurdles of motherhood and postpartum depression which, in its turn, provoked the post-partum depression. Yet, this experience also fueled and inspired the writer to write this memoir to be mentioned as a story of motivation. To emphasise the very same idea, Shafak argues, “this book was written with black milk and white ink_a cocktail of storytelling, motherhood, wonderlust and depression distilled for several months at room temperature” (Shafak 2).

At the very beginning of the memoir, the writer presents herself as a nomad, a vegetarian, a writer and a woman as she says, “I am a pacifist. I am a vegetarian and I am a woman, more or less in that order. That is how I would have defined myself until I reached the age of thirty-five” (Shafak 1). Mentioning the age of thirty five may allude to the fact that the writer

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started to worry about her biological clock as stated later in the memoir. She has, for the first time, a desire for motherhood. Though she was confused at the beginning as she was involved in the dilemma of choosing between “the uterus and the brain”, she feels at peace with all the parts of her personality now. Nonetheless, she became a mother while maintaining her life long passionate career (Shafak 15). Suffused and infused enough with depression, Elif decided to take off the gown of depression and start writing again. The recovery of her skill is described:

then one morning, after months of depression, seclusion and unsuccessful treatment, I woke up with an urge to write again and sat at my desk. It was quiet, except a few fishing boats in the distance and the baby sleeping in her cradle. There was a scent of jasmine in the air and the sky over the Bosphorus was a blue so pale that it had almost no color. Suddenly I had this most soothing realization that everything was okay and had always been so. As Rumi said, the night contained the day. We could start our lives over, anytime and anywhere (Shafak 8).

In the first part of this passage, the writer mentions that she woke up with an urge to write after she had accepted her first condition. Accepting her depression, anxiety, post-partum depression and the trauma of blocking provoked an inner peace inside and diminished the scolding uproar which took place for a long time. All positive feelings and descriptions are associated with the recovering of her writing skill. A sense of serenity is implied through the phrases; quiet, the scent of jasmine and the blue sky.. She could finally realize that this dragging depression had to come to end. Nonetheless, she made reconciliation with herself and made it clear as she claims, “It was okay that I had panicked and could not stop crying. It was okay that I had feared I couldn't manage writing and motherhood at the same time (Shafak 8).

The direct healing effect of writing this memoir is revealed when Elif claims: “writing had always had a magical healing effect on my soul, I could perhaps inch my way out of this depression” (Shafak 8). Thereby, it is only through writing that she could overcome her depression

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and trauma-like condition. The therapeutic encasement of Elif's mental growth is made clear by the end of this memoir, when she presents a dialogue with the Jinn who is said to possess her taking her writing skill and causing her mental distress. As she recovers her writing skill, Elif dared to share a conversation with Lord Poton. Once she started to write again, Elif restores her shining skin and outlook which is clear when Lord Poton tells her: "there is something different about you this morning; sparkle in your eyes that wasn't there before." Shafak replies that she saw a dream the night before. Dishonorable and sneaky, the Jinn hoped it was a nightmare instead since he is "a dastardly Djinni" (Shafak 189). Elif is compassionately sympathetic to even understand the Jinni nature and replied: "That is Okay. It was as intense as a nightmare anyway." Elif responds that the Jinn and her were waiting by a harbor and that the ship was transferring Djinni into another space. She adds that: "it was a mammoth ship with lots of lights. The port was so crowded; hundreds of pregnant women were gathered there with their big bellies. Then, you embarked and I sadly waved goodbye to you" (189). The use of this metaphor is used by the writer to show that the trauma that existed before reached its very end when she decided to let it go and start to write anew. In the next part of their extended conversation, Lord Poton felt confused to know that Elif feels sad to bid him farewell saying: "You were sad to see me go? Are you sure? You must have been jumping for joy. Why, I've destroyed your life. Me: No, you haven't. It was me who has done this to myself" (Shafak 190). Elif putting the blame on her of having her life ruined proves an irony. She identifies that the mental battle she went through along with the ambivalent feelings are her own fault of over obsession. Lord Poton felt overwhelmed and confused to know that Elif is not mad at him. We infer that Lord Poton is the trauma Elif had to witness and scriptotherapy is the door that unlocks this quandary.

Nonetheless, Elif accepts her trauma-like condition when she assumed that it was a must have lived experience in life. If she did not go through the trauma of blocking, she would have, probably remained anxious for the rest of her life. According to this, she asserts: "I think I

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needed to live through this depression to better reassemble the pieces. When I look at it this way, I owe you thanks" (Shafak 191). This contextual irony takes place when Elif thanks the Jinn for crossing her path since it is an enriching experience even if it seems to be awful. Though Elif's answer seemed kind, it managed to shake Lord Poton and he answers: "no one has spoken to me like this before. I don't know what to say. (His eyes fill with tears). Women hate me, doctors, and therapists too. Oh the terrible thing they write about me! You have no idea how it feels to be insulted in brochures, books and web sites" (Shafak 191). She adds that the ship name was Aurora which is a Spanish word meaning dawn; which also denotes a new and a better beginning that involves the healing from trauma. This is clarified in the following passage: "Listen, that ship in my dream had a name: Aurora. It means "dawn" in Spanish, Shafak in Turkish. Elif realizes that her hard condition was due to the unsettled state of plurality she had to deal with. She clarified that motherhood, even if it caused the loss of the writing skill, was a compulsory experience that helped Elif restore her peace and glue the divided pieces of her personality together. She claims: "I couldn't deal with my contradictory voices anymore. I've always found it hard to handle the Thumbelinas. If I agreed with one, I could never make it up to the others. If I loved on a little more, the others would begin to complain. It was always that way" (Shafak 190).

Yet, motherhood helped her to make a ceasefire among the internal skirmishing voices. This is made clear when she says: "But after I gave birth the system stopped functioning. I couldn't bear the plurality inside of me" (Shafak 191); Just like motherhood determined stability and wholeness to the new born baby, Elif's personality needed oneness. Declaring this hard-perceived testimony to Lord Poton provoked his wrath and led him to evaporate. When Elif was divided into six voices, she was lost and unable to decide what to do. Yet, "Motherhood required oneness, steadiness and completeness, while I was split into six voices, if not more. I cracked under the pressure. That was when I called you. That is when the strangest thing happens" (Shafak 192). Elif develops a deep wisdom now that she puts the blame on herself, because she is the one who

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allowed the conflict to affect her mental health. Feeling appalled, Lord Potan starts to melt and “dissolve, like fog in the sunlight.” Then he said: while “taking out his silk napkin and dabbing at his eyes: I guess it is time for me to leave” (Shafak 193). Lord Potan departs, in this stance, signifies the end of the trauma of blocking. As he was leaving he asked Elif whether she will miss him or not. She responds that she would rather write about him saying: “I’ll write about you. I’ll write a book” (Shafak 194). This implies the role or the main function of scriptotherapy in mitigating the trauma of blocking and its related mental ills. Hence, writing a book as Elif claims would help her regain and instill a sense of order and stability from anew. As he was about to leave, Lord Potan has inquired about the finders women who were locked into a box. Elif replied: “I will take them out of the box. I’m going to give them each an equal say” (Shafak 194). This refers to the new state of psychological balance she built up after writing back. Giving an equal say to each part of her personality led her to be mentally flexible and broad minded again.

Scriptotherapy, in this memoir, helps extending Elif’s horizons of thoughts, as she became more open minded after accepting the different parts of her personality. Motherhood is no longer a stumbling block at the face of writing. Elif realizes that a woman is not only supposed to confine herself on her feminine functions like being a wife and a mother, but she can also make a distinguished carrier if she has an ambition and a potential. Likewise, she understands that her carrier as a writer does no longer impede her feminine side. On the contrary, motherhood refined her personality and fueled her inspiration to write about the experience of pregnancy, the joy of giving birth and the elation of being a mother. She infers that life ecstasy is not limited or found only in literature and that life has many gifts to be enjoyed. Being versatile is the key to ultimate happiness, unity and stability. Those qualities were elicited when Elif accepts and was convinced that she is able to be all-around; in the sphere of literature and household. Giving equal due to all the feminine voices led to the end of the conflict of the harem inside her; and this appears when Shafak says: “the oligarchy has ended, and so have the coup d’état, monarchy, anarchy

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and fascism. It is finally time for a full-fledged democracy" (Shafak 195). The full-fledged democracy refers to the new found peace in Elif's life. Yet, Elif explains further that there is no one fit all size formula for successfully managing motherhood and writing as a life carrier. However, there are many ways and,

the smallest glimpse into the lives of women made us realize that there is no single formula for motherhood and writing that suits us all. Instead, there are many paths on this literary journey, all leading to the same destination each equally valuable. Just as every writer learns to develop his or her own unique style and is yet inspired by the works of others

(Shafak 193).

This denotes that each woman writer can draw her way to success in her own unique way. By the end of the story, Shafak tries to make a reconciliation with all the voices as if to settle the mental fight that occurred in her mind. As she unlocked the long ago fighting finger women, they start to ask if they missed her or not. She answered them: "I missed all of you equally" (Shafak 196). Feeling amazed, the finger women wonder how to be missed equally. Questioning the equal missing condition, Mrs Blue Belle Bovary asks: "You never treated us equally." Elif replied: "You're right. It was a mistake and I apologize to all of you. From now on, I'm not going to censure any of you, you will all have an equal say. We are a democracy now" (Shafak 196). Democracy indicates freedom, equality and fairness. Being equal and balanced refurbishes Elif's stability and oneness.

Scriptotherapy, thus, helps Elif accept the multiplicity of functions she came to endorse as a writer, a wife and a mother. After she recovered her skill, she feels happy again. So, after she accepts her oneness, she rejoices saying: "fantastic!" For the first time in my life, I realize, I see them as one—inseparable pieces of the same whole. When one is out in the cold, they all shiver. When one is hurt, they all bleed. When one is happy and fulfilled, all benefit from her bliss.

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Placing the finger-women on my writing desk, I hug all six of them. Giggling, they hug me” (Shafak 196). This indicates the newly established harmony and psychological equilibrium that Elif reached. The sense of complicity and support that the six different parts of her personality achieve make her embrace her anew and provide her with a better vision for herself.

At the very end of her memoir, Elif provided a set of justifications for all that was causing the mental struggles that pertain to motherhood. As an attempt to explain the reasons why the coup d'état happened, she asserts that it was due to her attempt of suppressing her maternal side and her body was not at peace with the idea. Additionally, the problems that anxiety occurred after the delivery was intrigued due to other female voices that were not well-matched with motherhood demands. The mental struggle was intense, for she was constantly favoring one at the expense of the other or in her words: “every turn, I would put one finger woman on a pedestal at the expense of all the others” (Shafak 196). Writing the memoir, which is a technique of scriptotherapy, helped her accept the divergent voices of her voice; “I am all of them—with their faults and virtues, pluses and minuses, all their stories make up the book of me” (Shafak 197). Elif acknowledges that the female voices, fights, inadequacies, shortcomings are all her own parts of personality which contribute into the making of this book and, thereupon, led to her steadiness.

Shafak mentions the female writer, scholar, writer, essayist and literary critic who analyzed the Freudian approach that considers the woman as a lack and instead she replaced the female lack with the female excess which implicate women extreme potential. Hélène Cixous describes female writing by means of motherhood and childbirth metaphors. She considers motherhood as a fulfilling experience, since it is regarded as “the most intense relationship that a human being has with another human being” (qtd in Shafak 197). She assumes that “female biology is an inspiration for her figurative way of writing. I'm brimming over! My breasts are flowing milk and ink” (Shafak 198). This presumably indicates the female excessive ability to

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produce not only children, which is symbolized by milk, but also literature which is also symbolized by ink. Cixous was critical of logocentrism and phallogentrism and she believed that women writers had the burden of changing the convention by breaking the wall of silence that had long been existing. For Cixous, social change cannot occur in the absence of the linguistic change and for that particular reason, women must write. She puts it forward: "we should write as we dream" (qtd in Shafak 198). Ursula K Le Guin is also a woman writer who has a penchant for literature; "the day she started writing at the age of five to the present she has never slowed down" (Shafak 198). Despite the glamour of writing, the responsibilities of writing and motherhood require concentration and total devotion. In this respect, she claims:

writing was never easy. The difficulty of trying to be responsible, hour after hour, day after day for may be twenty years, for the well-being of children and the excellence of books, is immense: it involves an endless expense of energy and an impossible weighing of competing priorities. Despite the difficulties involved, she says the hand that rocks the cradle, writes the book" (qtd in Shafak 198).

All together, Elif's fingers' women started to live in harmony where "no one tries to rule the others, no one is a dictator. No one is wearing a crown or carrying badges. Not anymore. This is not to say that they agree on every issue. But by are listening, not just talking, they are learning the art of coexistence" (Shafak 198). In tandem with what was stated before, the unity of Elif fingers voices are in conformity as they learnt how to exist together, respect one another differing views and opinions. Relating this analysis to the essence of scriptotherapy, it is noticeable that writing the memoir has changed Elif to the better mentally and even socially. This could only happen when she accepts the social responsibilities of motherhood and writing at once. Her inner voices are no longer an encumber for now they "exist freely and equally, they need one another, and that where

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even one voice is enslaved none can be free. Together we are learning how to live, write and love to the fullest by simply being all of who we are" (Shafak 198).

Intrestingly, writing helped the different parts of Elif's personality in becoming one and supporting one another. This unity contributed to Elif's success, self-worth and deep love for writing and motherhood. Nonetheless, disparity of views did not caused them to be separated or fighting any more. Regarding this, Elif explains, "sometimes we manage this beautifully and artlessly; sometimes we fail ridiculously. When we fail we remember the moments of harmony and grace, and try again" (Shafak 198). On the same way, Elif's progress centres on the same idea, which means that to advance in life we move on even if we fail because life's cycle of ups and downs is an inevitable part of it; or as Elif concludes: "Take a step forward, move on, fall down, stand up go back to walking, trip over and fall down on my face again, pull myself up, keep walking" (Shafak 199). After developing this fully fledged personality, Elif runs into her second pregnancy without worry. Describing the second pregnancy, Elif writes: "the second pregnancy was an easy one and neither after the delivery nor in the months following it did I run into Lord Poton—or any of his relatives" (Shafak 198). In a nutshell, pregnancy, motherhood, the postpartum depression and the truma of a witer's block are part of life cycles and must have lived experiences for Elif to prosper again as a writer when she accepted and recognize that it was okay to go through the trauma, the mental fights and the inner distress. This vital realization could happen thanks to the process of scriptotherapy and the writing of her memoir. Soon after, she wrote this memoir, she started writing one of her bestselling books; *The Forty Rules of Love* (2007), which was also accompanied with the birth of her second child after eighteen months from the first delivery. Throughout the writing of the second novel and the second pregnancy, Elif did not go though the same dilemmas any more and blocking stopped once and forever.

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5.6. Conclusion

Writing is a major way of conveying thoughts and feelings to others and to oneself. The use of writing in healing is known as scriptotherapy. Writing is seen as “an effective therapeutic approach in the resolution of life difficulties, especially those that are unnoticed, denied, unresolved, or traumatized” (Baikie and Wilhelm 34). Likewise, the protagonist could only overcome the depression she was trapped in and the trauma of a writer's block through scripts or words that were put on paper and the narrativization of her memoir. By the end of the same year after her delivery, she came up with her bestselling novel *the Forty Rules of Love*; which was one of the most mesmerizing written books a reader can read.

This chapter answered the question that choosing writing as a career and dedicating one's life to writing only is not an option that the protagonist takes by the end of the mental battle that was taking place in her psyche. Thus, she chose to straddle both the world of motherhood and writing alike with tenacity. Accordingly, when Elif involved herself in therapeutic writing/Scriptotherapy, she starts to have a new clear mental picture about herself as a woman and a mother, her own personal surroundings and herself as a writer. This is confirmed by the idea which vouches for the connection of “scriptotherapy with psychotherapy” (Meilsman 19). As such, writing appears to approve and rush the evolution of the psychological growth. Though written about the writer's life events, writing this memoir as a technique of scriptotherapy is a major way of conveying thoughts and feelings to others and to oneself. Writing a memoir is, hence, seen as “an effective therapeutic approach to working with clients in the resolution of life difficulties, especially as related to those who are unnoticed, denied, unresolved, or traumatized” (Pennebaker 19). This similarity means that “writing enables self-expression, acceptance of feelings, personal growth, and sometimes an increase in a person's sense of spirituality” (Gladding 7). Similarly, Elif could only overcome the depression she was trapped in and trauma of a writer's

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block by documenting her own memoir. Finally, we see Elif renovates her oneness and rejuvenates her draught soul through putting pen to paper again, or in other words through the use of scriptotherapy and the writing of her memoir. Ultimately, the outcome of scriptotherapy is overcoming the yammering inner voices, the postpartum depression and the writer's block trauma.

General Conclusion

This section will close this study by summarizing the key research findings as connected to the research objectives and questions that were set at the beginning of this research. In this section, we endeavour to discuss the value and contribution of this study to literature and psychology. It also aims to review the main limitations of this study as encountered by the researcher. Nonetheless, we will also open the horizon for scientific research to further probe scriptotherapy by recommending the close reading and probing of postmodern stories of revival and transformation. Our closing thoughts will end in take-home message for readers.

In her introduction to *Shattered Subjects*, Suzette Henke defines scriptotherapy as “the process of writing out and writing through traumatic experience in the mode of therapeutic reenactment” (xii). It is an outcome of her research into women’s life writings in the twentieth century in which she argued that autobiography and life writing narratives can be effective substitutes for psychoanalysis by providing a therapeutic alternative for female victims of traumatic experience. This “writing out and writing through” that characterizes scriptotherapy may, if successful, lead to both individual and collective closure and contribute to consequent healing. Throughout this research, it is argued that scriptotherapy is intended to promote wellness through writing. As far as the reader is concerned, this can also be a direct practice of healing especially as the writer happens to tackle some of the readers’ similar traumatic experiences that can remain disturbing if undeclared. The vast bulk of contemporary female writers dealing with trauma fiction see that their utmost recompense is a feeling that their narratives were a means of healing for their readers. In this regard, Larrt Godwin attests that “writing serves as an instrument in the process of healing and scriptotherapy is a space where the writer explores his/her writing for the therapeutic purposes” (5). Being a privileged trope of postmodernism, trauma fiction and its growing number of depictions, and characterization show that there is a conjugal relationship between the traumatic event and its subsequent healing power. Ostensibly mirroring the concerns of the human psyche and real world, “every autobiography imposes a narrative form an otherwise

formless and fragmented personal history and every novel incorporates shards of social, psychological and cultural history into the texture of its mimetic world” (Caruth 28).

In the three chapters of practical analyses, we closely examined the deployment of the multiple scriptotherapy techniques that we have found in the three selected narratives by highlighting relevant examples to help us investigate the ways through which they validate the correlation between the three elements that arrange the basis of our trajectory; trauma, scriptotherapy and survival. Enmeshed together, the trope of interrelatedness of this three-fold trajectory would figure outstandingly in the following findings.

Analyzing the auto-narratives of three selected female authors; the Palestinian-American writer Susan Abulhawa’s *The Blue between Sky and Water* (2015), the African- American writer Sapphire which is the pen name for Romana Lofton ‘s *Push* first published in (1999) and adapted in (2009), and finally the Turkish writer Elif Shafak ‘s *Black Milk* (2007) approve an approach of métissage that is essentially anti-canonical and anti-national one. To this end, we presumed that this approach is used to presuppose an individual as well as a cultural repair which can be considered an endeavour to survive trauma through scriptotherapy and its variety of techniques. Here, we will zoom out and present our findings in practical terms as related to these contextualized research aims and prior research questions. The study aimed to show that writing makes self-expression, acceptance of feelings, personal growth possible as it may even increase a person’s sense of being leading to trauma survival. Connecting this general conclusion to our general introduction, we assume that though literature taught us bitter lessons from the postmodern trauma narratives, it also equipped us with tools to face those bitter experiences. Hence, through scriptotherapy we reveal that in our malaise lies our ease. The results found indicate that the highest rate of using techniques of scriptotherapy is found in Susan Abulhawa’s *The Blue between Sky and Water* (2015). Through the narrative, we come across multiple traumas that the protagonist Nur had to face at a very young age. In fact, her early trauma was the sudden

death of her only caretaker and grandfather Mamduh who was the only hope in Nur's life and the one who endowed her with an abiding love to reading and writing. The second trauma to be faced by Nur was the harsh treatment of her biological Spanish mother who repeatedly scolded and ruthlessly abused her either physically or verbally. Later, she was exposed to a new trauma which is that of a sexual incest as she was sexually abused by her mother's would-be husband. Nonetheless, trauma arises when she found herself moving from one foster family to the next and finding no true bond of family love or national belonging. Even when she seemingly fell in love, she found herself dumped under the name of faked love. The only remedy for Nur deeps hurts became writing and since an early childhood she used expressive writing as a means to quibble with life adversities. The findings that are conjured up from the analysis of the first narrative show that the main techniques of scriptotherapy as used in the third chapter are: creating a character sketch, writing a memory book, optimistic writings, writing epistolary correspondence of letters, writing poems and translating poems. The character sketch technique as sustained by Glading and Wallace is used as tool of scriptotherapy with the aim of bringing an ideal image of what a person is like. These techniques include the personality traits of an exemplary character. The process through which this technique happens is by brainstorming the main ideas shared by one character. When clustering the virtues and ideal characteristics of his /her preferred person, the user may have a good likelihood to compare themselves with their favorite characters in a very optimistic way. In this posture, the character sketch is the grandfather; Abulhawa attributed all the positive personality traits to Nur's grandfather by revealing him as an intellectual, knowledgeable and kind hearted. These good attributes in addition to his persisting attitude to learn the written word made Nur believe that he is her role model in life and the mere mention of his personality traits made Nur happy about herself. The usefulness of this technique in mitigating Nur traumas lies in the fact of maintaining a sense of order on her whenever she felt like drifting away to the dire results of trauma.

Being the second technique of scriptotherapy in this novel, the memory book conveys important values leading it to be cross generational transmitting beautiful memories from one generation to the next. It may include stories, anecdotes, drawings, etc. Subsequently, Nur and her grandfather decide to write a memory book entitled ; *Jiddo and Me* where they keep all the magnificent memories and qualitative moments they spend together including Nur's and the most favorite things they did together, places they desire to visit and all the playful activities that join Nur with her grandfather. The utility of writing a memory book inflicts a therapy that Nur does not come to understand till the abrupt trauma of her grandfather's death appeared. Writing all the beautiful life sequences with her grandfather are appeasing, quietning and calming.

Another technique of scriptotherapy is optimistic ways of writing which is used with the aim to change negative attitudes into more positives ones by expressing them through the written communication. Nur suggested that she and her grandfather keep a list of good words for their hearts to hold. Welcoming the idea, the grandfather decides that they write any good virtue on the memory book. Though, the trauma that occurred in the protagonist life was still early to occur, the grandfather was preparing her through scripto-therapeutic techniques to face her future traumas especially that he fell so frail to paddle the boat of life with Nur for the coming days. Effectively, Nur used those developed techniques, unconsciously, to handle her lifelong traumas afterwards.

The written epistolary correspondence of letters is another mechanism of scriptotherapy that is used by the protagonist. This mechanism reveals how the traumatized writes letters to correspond deep feelings to the ones they love and esteem. Keeping a diurnal correspondence with Dr. Jamal made Nur feel a sequence of unrivalled emotions of love and admiration. The epistolary correspondence of letters is used in this novel to unveil the beauty of love that Nur chanced to feel for the first time in her life. It is worth mentioning that after Nur was exposed successively to the trauma of her grandfather loss, her mother's rejection and her stepfather incest, she lost her ability to react to anything bad or beautiful that happens in her life. This was a symptom of post traumatic

stress disorder. We notice that even if she were always the best at school, college and university, she never cared about her excellent marks because her “happiness, did not feel happy” (Abulhawa 99). We have already shown that this reaction is a kind of self mechanism that the trauma victim develops after being exposed to several traumas. We have advanced earlier that the way people react to a post traumatic stress disorder varies from “freezing, flight or fight” (Fraghaki et al 1). Hence, freezing is a usual result measure in human research after the fights and flight reaction. Though Nur was using the freeze defense mechanism after she lost her ability to feel anything beautiful or awesome in her life, she came to regain her ability to feel love and appreciate it and even write about in a form of epistolary letters with her beloved Dr. Jamal. This form of scriptotherapy shows us how Nur recovered from the freeze condition of post-traumatic stress disorder.

Writing translated Poems and poems as means of Scriptotherapy is the last technique to be found in this novel. We have argued before that poetry expresses the writer’s profound emotions and thoughts. However, the poem can also be “a place of safety” (Eriksson 50). Hence, the obtained feeling of safe internal space or peaceful place garners poetry this healing to inhibit trauma. Considered as therapeutic process, poetry endeavours to make “arrangement out of derangement, harmony out of disharmony, and order out of chaos” (Eriksson 57). As far as the translation of poetry is presented, it is certified that it is used as a means of scriptotherapy to create imagery making the readers reflect on their memories, prompting their emotions, and stimulating their responses. The value of poetic translation resides in the hidden value it carries within its folding which, ultimately, hint to the effectiveness of poetic translation as it brings forth a soothing feeling of relief. Regarding this Fatiha Dani adds: “in fact, poetic translation is an art of re-creation, where each word, each group of words, takes on its true meaning according to its contextual position. It is not just about transferring from one language to another a thought or a feeling, but also to implement an aesthetic value but with a specific thorough character” (76). Departing from this newly perceived knowability, our findings are hinged on the idea that

writing poetic lines along with translating other poetic lines from Arabic; like translating the poetry of Mahmoud Darwich in this study, are tools by which Nur faces the trauma of being dumped by a fake lover. All in all, through the use of multiple techniques of scriptotherapy, Nur managed to face her traumas and restore a sense of stability in her own life. Through writing, she straddled the world of high education to become herself a psychotherapist helping children who went through similar traumatic pasts and helping them to handle their own traumas.

Further findings of this study show that the medium rate of using other techniques of scriptotherapy is found in the second novel: *Push* by Sapphire (1999). Precious was a black teenager who has been excluded from school at the age of 16 due to her pregnancy. Precious early traumas are mentioned early from the beginning of the narrative. Just like Nur traumas, precious traumas fall also into the scope of family trauma. Yet, different from Nur, the early trauma of Precious sexual incest start to appear at the age of three when her father starts to sexually rape her and hence sequenced her to a life of rape and shame. Being pregnant for the second time by her own father, Precious was forced into social invisibility. Factors forging Precious social invisibility are not only restricted to the sexual incest she received at home from the part of her father and the verbal and physical abuse she received from the part of her mother, but also the first failing education and social system which could neither teach her nor save her from being harmed. Unfortunately, the early educational system could only intensify her poignant traumas. Hope of redemption starts to appear in Precious life when she joined an alternative school and met her teacher Ms. Rain who came to enlighten her pathway through introducing her to the world of writing. Precious traumas of verbal, sexual abuse, social rejection and trauma of HIV start to be soothed as she starts to write. Nonetheless, the writing journey connected her to a group of female learners who had grappled with similar traumatic experiences and, hence, started to encourage one another sharing communal support, love and sympathy. To come up with the aforementioned healing effects, the writer uses two main techniques of scriptotherapy which are writing a journal and reciprocal journaling.

Writing a journal as a means of scriptotherapy is traceable to Mirgain who uses the term as therapeutic journaling. (98) She declares forth that therapeutic journaling is the means through which personalized traumatized experiences, throbbing thoughts and deep emotional hurts are communicated. The ultimate goal of therapeutic journaling, in this study, is the attainment of a deep sense of self acceptance or a new-fangled sense of self-realization. This new self-realization is achieved only through articulating Precious deep wounds in a written account. This is presumed to be a therapeutic process of using written description of the range of difficult experiences or traumas. After including this technique, it helps achieve a better emotional health with stimulating survival energy. As stated in the fourth chapter, Zencare Team builds up the idea that therapeutic journaling is a plunging into internal thoughts and individual experiences, “in order to gain new self-perspective”(p,n.d). Admittedly, writing about our thoughts and emotions enables us express them in a way that can help work through difficulties and go beyond their sores and scars. After Ms.Rain taught Precious how to write, she starts asking her to document all that pains her in a form of a journal that she reads and edits afterward. Through writing the scenes of forced rape, physical battering and motherly rejection and monstrous treatment, Precious starts to accept her trauma and thereupon feels worthy and valuable, for she realized that it was not her mistake to be abused. After she starts to write about her own trauma, she starts accepting herself and even her pregnancy. This is clearly revealed when she reports:

I don't pretend I'm not pregnant no more. I let it above my neck, in my head. Not that I didn't know it before but now it's like part of me” more than something stuck in me, growing in me, making me bigger. I sit in my room. I know too who I'm pregnant for. But I can't change that. Abortion is a sin. I hate bitches who kill they babies. They should kill them, see how they like it! I talk to baby. Boy be nice. Girl might be retarded, like me? But I not retarded” (Sapphire 63).

When enacting scriptotherapy, Precious starts to develop a strong personality after she made a kind of reconciliation with herself, her body, her pregnancy and even the sexual incest committed

by her father. When we first presented Precious 'trauma, early in the fourth chapter, we notice that Precious was deeply lowered-self confident unable to think properly about her life. She even had suicidal ideas, but soon after scriptotherapy was employed, all the negative feelings were altered into positive ones.

The second technique of scriptotherapy to be found in this narrative is reciprocal journaling. Like it is explained in the theoretical parts of this research, reciprocal writing as advanced by Davis and Voirin, is a technique about reciprocal communication between two agents in a writing document/a journal. Reciprocal writing urges to make a crucial intersection with "solution-focused and narrative therapy" (Voirin 67). In harmony with the above mentioned, reciprocal journaling is used in the novel when Ms. Rain and Precious used it interchangeably with the purpose of bringing forth a strong emotional and mental health. Through reciprocal writing, Precious managed to braze the trauma of having HIV and she starts to skillfully heighten her writing abilities to write for the sake of empowering the female community and not only herself. Thanks to the techniques of scriptotherapy that are used in the narrative Precious come from the damages of a cracked society and transform into a liminal character who values her life, respect herself and understand the aim of her life.

The final findings on the usage of scriptotherapy techniques are concomitant with the last analyzed narrative by Shafak's *Black Milk* (2007). The lowest rate of scriptotherapy is embodied in the last mode of auto-narration which is memoir writing as being a technique of scriptotherapy perse. In this memoir, the eponymous protagonist grapples with the experience of motherhood and writing literature on parallel lines. Her peripatetic life of a nomad and cherishment for loneliness and solitude favored a life dedicated to books and writing. More intricately, motherhood made the writing journey even more difficult causing the trauma of a writer's block. The latter is mainly intrigued due to psychological anxiety that was fueled by postpartum depression. After giving birth, Elif lost her ability to write and it was for the first time that "literature did not speak to her" (Shafak 8). To add fantasy to the story, postpartum depression

brought up a Djinni called Lord Poton and his family who came to possess her and add insult to her writing injury. Though she consulted a psychotherapist and group discussion, she could not walk out of her depression or writer's block. Writing was the only remedy. As she comes to know this: Elif the protagonist states ; "if I started to write about the experience, I could turn my blackened milk into ink, and as writing had always had a magical healing effect on my soul, I could inch my way out of this depression"(Shafak 54). The trauma of the writer's block starts to wither away after she managed to write again. When putting pen to paper again, she got rid of Lord poton, the postpartum depression and reached reconciliation among her inner voices which were most of the time fighting. Thus, she would regain her whole personal entity again and overcome the trauma of writer block. At this point in the novel, motherhood is a bliss and her daughter is another inspiration for writing.

The key findings of this research reveal a variety of degrees in the rate of using scriptotherapy in the three narratives. A potential interpretation for the highest degree of using scriptotherapy in Susan Abulhawa's *The Blue between Sky and Water* (2015) is related to the extended area of traumas that the protagonist Nur came to face in her lifetime. Unlike, Precious and Elif, Nur had to go through trauma at different stages in her lifetime. In her early infancy after her grandfather died, and in her early adolescence when she was badly treated by her mother and sexually abused by her stepfather and then in her years of youth when she became pregnant outside wedlock. I argue that the writer's use of many techniques of scriptotherapy goes in tandem with the various traumas that occurred in the protagonist's lifetime. Nonetheless, the nature of Nur's lifespan revolves around a war-torn environment, a journey of diaspora, (un)belonginess, dislocation and double identity; the American identity and a sought for Palestinian identity that she came to recognize by the very end of the novel. Hence, I suggest that the multiplicity of her traumas urged the writer to use many techniques for Nur to face these multifaceted traumas. Medium rate of scriptotherapy is seen in Sapphire's *Push*(1999) since her trauma particularly intersects with the details of family trauma and domestic abuse. The lowest degree of

scriptotherapy is expounded in the last novel of Shafak *Black Milk* (2007) due to the fact that her trauma was the less threatening one. Albeit its debacle, the trauma of the writer's block was not that crippling if compared to the other protagonists' traumas. Instead, it was intrigued by a normal depression that all women around the world go through, which is the postpartum depression. Yet, it was of paramount importance to put this trauma under scrutiny to see the therapeutic process the writer goes through when documenting her memoir as a mechanism of scriptotherapy. Elif lost trust in words altogether and chronicled her journey through the squabbling harem of women; the cynical, skeptical intellectual, the goal-oriented, and the practical-rational, who resided in her mind. Her craved harmony and unifying identity was only achieved through scriptotherapy. Scriptotherapy proved to bring a cathartic solution settling the conflict between artistic creation and motherhood. Regarding this, she states, "fiction was the invisible blue glue that held all my different facets together"(Shafak 9).

It is crucially important, at this stage, to mention the methodological arrangement of our corpus and the manner by which we have investigated the tools of scriptotherapy. Along the way, while studying the different techniques of scriptotherapy, the disposition of the analysis went along with a chronological line of thoughts to the threenarratives' plots timeline. Captivatingly, going back and forth through the plots' time span is used to provide the reader with a chronological line of thought to better understand the events of the story in relation to trauma and survival. The chronological harmony of the plots' spans is also matched with our ordered sequence of positioning the problematic. To explain further, as we probe the techniques of scriptotherapy in the three female narratives, we proceed with similar orderly structured stages which are directed as follows: exploring the experience of trauma, manifesting the traumatic events through scriptotherapy and promoting the therapeutic or surviving energy that scriptotherapy conveys. The adoption of this attitude is intentionally used to maintain the narrative sense of logical and general coherence of a cause and effect stimulus. Therefore, through the three novels we follow a similar road map where we present the traumas as experienced by the three

female protagonists, the emergence of the element of writing in the three novels, then we mentioned the techniques through which scriptotherapy is articulated in the narratives. Finally we ended up the analysis by revealing the positive effects of scriptotherapy on the psychological growth of the three female protagonists who have successfully defeated their traumas through writing.

Extending our discussion on the meeting points that the three narratives share with regard to scriptotherapy, we notice that there is an onomastic feature that can be declared in both Susan Abulhawa's *the Blue between Sky and Water* (2015) and Sapphire's *Push* (1999). The notion onomastics, as related to literature, is traceable to Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* when Juliet questioned Romeo's "family name Montague." (Wamitila 35) In literary writings, some characters are identified by the names attributed to them, and hence "some character analysis methods tend to define characters by taking recourse to their names and sometimes identifying them in metaphorical terms. These are linguistic or semiotic signs that play a very crucial role in the overall linguistic structure of a literary text or its signification" (Wamitila 35). Thereupon, deciphering the significance(s) of the characters names became critical task to be engaged with since it helps the reader interpret the characters' course of actions, attitudes, ideologies, values, culture, etc. Clarifying this idea in brighter light, Nesselroth contends: "It is not surprising that theorists pay so much attention to naming in fiction (literature) since proper names are the nodal points through which actions and descriptions are interconnected" (Nesselroth 133). Quite in line with this premise, we attempt to interpret the peculiar use of the names of the protagonists Nur in *The Blue Between Sky and Water* and Precious in *Push*. Nur is an Arabic name meaning the bright light. Nur's grandfather Mamduh used to call her my Nur to show her that she is the bright light that he has in life after he's been scattered in a lonely dim life when his wife Yasmine and son Mohamed passed away. Nur, as her name, indicates was the only hope that remained for Mamduh. The name also evokes an ethos of positive aspirations accompanying Nur during her lifespan traumas. This light has always been there in her educational journey for example as she has always

been shining and successful despite the traumatizing hurdles she had to deal with. The name Nur anticipates an optimistic dimension in the story that blends well with the therapeutic effects of scriptotherapy.

As far as the name Precious signifies, the adjective precious denotes something of high price or great value. In this novel, Precious was forced into social invisibility and hence deplorable vulnerability due to her large body, black skin, unwanted pregnancies, untidy looks, social belonging and domestic traumas. All together, these factors led Precious to think ill of herself believing that she is unimportant and unvalued in a society where nobody valued her . However, once she starts her writing journey, all the attributes of her name start to figure in her life. Interestingly, Precious starts to thrive believing that she is valuable and worthy and that she is, as her name indicates, dear and important. Nonetheless, Precious becomes aware that this self-value comes from within when she made a reconciliation with her defects and accepted herself anew. These thinking attitudes helped her to go beyond her narrow-minded world view and, hence, stretch herself in the territory of hope in new confident gleam. Precious intense desire for development did not stem from vacuum, her teacher Ms.Rain played a central role in her empowerment. Ms. Rain is a teacher who adopts a humanitarian approach and a peaceful attitude in handling Precious' negative behaviors. The choice of the name Rain for the teacher may also symbolize all the positive feelings that Ms.Rain was endowed with. Among the wide ranging significances of the name Rain as related to the qualities of the teacher Ms.Rain, we may mention recreation, tranquility, clarity and refinement. When Precious suffered from trauma, she lost faith on everything and everyone, and hence got trapped in a cycle of negative thinking attitudes. The previous school's punitive system excluded Precious from school due to her pregnancy dropping her to cynical outbreaks and, thereof, prompting her gradual regressesion. Yet, the alternative school offered Precious a new hope where Ms. Rain contained her traumas, embraced her scars and helped her restoring her self-confidence to build herself anew. She did so, by nurturing her intellectual and emotional levels through immersing her in a learning journey. This positive

manifestation could start to appear on Precious life, as long as she began to learn how to write. Linking the implication of the name rain to the development of precious reveal this metaphorical link between the name Rain and the way Ms.Rain showered Precious with positive attitudes. Another significance may also dwell on school as a meeting place where both Nur and Precious develop their intellectual growth. School, in both narratives, was the only solace that could offer hope for both Nur and Precious. Consequently, it symbolizes a milestone that revitalizes the female protagonists by equipping them with a supportive and caring environment where they felt respected, empowered and sustained. Add to this, it was the most adequate place to deftly develop the skill of writing. However, an inadequate school, like it was the case for Precious former school, is backfire breakdown that renders its students intellectually and spiritually hollow. From this, we get to know the pressing need to change any discomfort zone in our life be it a school, a town, an experience, etc. The importance of changing a place of tension, may, to my sense, ring familiar with Philip Larkin poem the importance of elsewhere. Living a couple of years in Northern Ireland, the poet had a considerable impact on his life and identity formation. Changing the place from England helped him mold his skill of writing and cultural identity. Likewise, joining school and leaving home managed to shape Nur and Precious intellectual identity.

The titles of the three selected narratives are also of paramount significaces. The title *The Blue between Sky and Water* may be multi-dimensional. The blue is a soothingly relaxing color that helps the individual to free and release the human potential opening the gates for his imagination, intuition and thoughtfulness. The blue, in this stance, refers to the Mediterranean sea and the so many stories that took place in the shore of Gaza. The depth of the ocean may reflect also of depth of Nur's faith, intelligibility and sensitivity in handling her life traumas. As far as the sky is concerned, it is symbolic of eternity and devine omnipotence or power that restores order to Nur's life. No matter how damaged Nur's life was, there was always a revival as if she were guided by a devine justice bringing her to shore again whenever the storms of trauma deviated her

canoe. Our interpretation of water or the sea/ocean is related to the deep feelings of Nur. Nonetheless, it was the most special place where inspiration flowed. For instance, Nur used to come up with poetic verses about her deep emotions while in the shore of Gaza. The sea, the water and the blue all work together, as healing means, to genuinely incarnate the therapeutic ends of scriptotherapy. In Push's autobiographical narrative, the verb push meaning to exert force on something implies that Precious had to make a strenuous effort to push herself from the mistaken thoughts she used to think of herself before. Therefore, she pushed herself to a new and a better vision of herself despite all the ordeals and traumas she came to face in her life. This interpretative endeavour reinforces, and definitely, falls within the goals of scriptotherapy as implemented on the narratives.

Another meeting point between Elif and Precious is the struggle of motherhood as faced with the urgencies of writing. Just like scriptotherapy helped Elif pursue her journey as a writer and a mother, Precious was also determined to be a good mother while maintaining her writing routines. Yet, before this change happened, both were entangled in the ambivalent feelings of choosing motherhood over writing or the opposite since choosing one thing over the other was painful. To achieve equilibrium, they maintained both with the same zeal. Yet, when reacting to trauma, we notice that Elif and Nur show the same defense mechanism, which is the freeze one. They both silently retreat to themselves when being hurt not responding to the pain, but rather containing it inside. Unlike them, Precious retreats to fight defense mechanism which appears in the way she uses profanity and rude language with her former teacher when they comment about her unwanted pregnancies. The reason why Elif and Nur retreat to the freeze reaction to trauma may be related to the way they have been brought and their style of life which thrive upon science, knowledge, silence and solitude. Another commonality that both Precious and Nur share is the fact that both female characters became victims to sexual incest and mother rejection at a very young age, though they were living under dissimilar circumstances. Yet, female characters, share the fact that they had to use writing as a means of survival and well-being.

Braiding and weaving through the three female narratives may bring us also to comment about the link that joins them together. Pertaining to the field of liminal literature, scriptotherapy as used in the three narratives can be interrelated with the principles of liminal narratives. The term liminal was originally introduced by the anthropologist van Gennep in 1909 to depict the middle phase of passage that reveal a landmark “transition from one social status to a another” (Thomassen 8). The concept was developed by Turner I 1964 “to include all in-between phases or temporary states of upheaval that involve being on a threshold or in-between one state or space and another”(Thomassen 9). Turner was interested in how liminal experiences affect people in modern society, ‘the way in which personality was shaped by liminality, the sudden foregrounding of agency, and the sometimes dramatic tying together of thought and experience’ (Thomassen 14). Though liminality was initiated in the socio-anthropological fields, it is used in the modern and postmodern age in a variety of specialties. When linked to the practical criticism of literature, liminal narratives emerge to understand the liminal spaces and experiences which are seen “as places of transition and possibility that can protect, support and advance the development of liminal beings, those who may be perceived as in-between, as they transit from one state to another”(Thomassen 15). Malynda Taylor contends that the middle stage is the "betwixt and between" (6) which is a transitional phase that is recurrent especially in the twentieth century narratives. When conducting a study to study the limilnal transition in three twentieth-century novels written in French: Georges Bataille's *Le Bleu du ciel*. Julien Green's *L'Autre*, and Assia Djebar's *L'Amour, la fantasia*, she tried to *investigate* the notion of liminality in the three mentioned female narratives. Malynda shows how the female protagonists became more prominent. According to her, the concept of liminality is practical to the analysis of literary texts because it is also practical to study the evolutionary transitional phases that took place in literary studies. Illustrating this idea, she explains that literary studies have been going through a liminal transition during the past thirty years. Ultimately, deconstruction and feminism are addressed as being landmarks intriguing this sense of liminality in literary studies. For example, the use of the

term *écriture* is traceable to Jacques Derrida implying a writing that challenges the logocentrism of literary and philosophical schools of thoughts. Borrowing the term, feminists authors such as Helene Cixous and Luce Irigaray use the term “liminality” to denote a literary style called *écriture féminine*. The latter is used to investigate women literary style in the framework of creative writing. Hence, within the frame of feminine narratives, “liminality is a change agent because it “both initiates and becomes the process of change” (Langdon 20). It initiates change by loosening the individual from the structures of custom and routine; it becomes the process of change by allowing participants to be other than they have been; and it, thereby, “directs their energies toward this otherness, often a new social identity or status”(Langdon 21).

In the light of this theory of liminality, we claim that the female narratives, brought in this study, forge the very essence of this literary liminal phenomenon which is explored through the social change that occurred to the three female protagonists. The liminal change could be intriguing as they moved from trauma to survival confirming the liminal concept of transition from one social status to another after going through the betwixt or in-between phenomenon, that fostered this change which is in our study; trauma. Narrated from a feminine vantage point, the female narratives intensify feminine progression and social visibility. After being subjected by traumatic experiences, the female protagonists used scriptotherapy as an agent to become a liminal element in their stories.

Starting with the first novel, Nur could transform from being a child sequenced to multiple traumas to being, ironically, a psychotherapist. For Precious, scriptotherapy forced her social visibility changing her from a woman with no potential to a woman with decision. Elif changed from a woman shackled by the writer’s block trauma and post partum depression to a prominent writer. We may conclude that Precious’ change was the most drastic one. It can be considered as a metamorphosis since she made a huge transition from being an illiterate, a fact that we concluded even from the inadequate way she used English at the beginning of the novel to being an educated woman with a purpose which also shows through the elaborate language she uses after she learnt

writing. This linguistic change is synchronized with the psychological growth of Precious who developed a good sense of how to proceed in her writing journey as she writes and accepts the good with the bad alike. This liminal change forced her social visibility which is revealed in the novel when she reports, “people start to respect me”, and, hence she begins to ground her dreams after feeling more validated in society. Supremely, the chosen liminal narrativeness in accordance with scriptotherapy promoted the empowerment of the female protagonists by opening the gates for possibility, healing and redemption. Ideally, the narratives focus on developing their main characters teaching us to let go, calm down, and change along the way. We come to realize that the three narratives provide us with an undeniable thread of hope. We come also to identify the transformations that the three female characters undergo; they transform as they move from silence to voice, oppression to empowerment, and from possibility to agency. A transition across the lifespan of vulnerability to empowerment occurred in Nur and Precious especially.

More generally, these basic findings are consistent with the claim that the life writing narratives analyzed in this thesis tell, in one way or another, stories of not only individual progress and survival but also collective communal survival of trauma, and, hence, are a call for the healing of the community. To explain further, though this research centers its attention on contemporary female posttraumatic narratives, it does not only serve women on the practical life. Rather, it aims to help anyone who is grappling with difficulty, trauma, anxiety or apprehension. So, they may serve as public “curing phenomenon” to whoever experiences trauma and difficulty in life” (Larson 60). They aim to engage the readers in “a public intellectual and academic environment and give voice to their long-term struggles to make clear that healing is possible when self-determination is recognized” (Larson 61). Captivatingly, this transition from trauma to survival is made possible through literary writing/scriptotherapy as proved in the findings of this research. Consequently, writing makes a person mentally and emotionally tough even when life causes a roller coaster of conflicting traumas. In addition, these findings provide additional information about the importance of reading literature in addition to writing literature.

Scriptotherapy as used for therapeutic writings overlaps with its counterpart bibliotherapy which is also used to mean book therapy or therapeutic storytelling. Bibliotherapy is hinged on the premise that reading literary materials is a psychological supportive therapy that helps to advance “wellness, happiness and injects one’s emotional intelligence” as claimed by (Osamnia 47). Our recommendation, at this phase, dwell on the idea of making further research on exploring further means and ways of using scriptotherapy and bibliotherapy as related to postmodern fiction to come up with unexplored benefits of both techniques on the human psyche.

Also worth noting, in this concluding discussion, is the fact that these works confirm the need to voice trauma even if it deals with taboos otherwise it may threaten the physical health causing stress and anxiety. Modern medicine shows that stress and anxiety are the reasons behind the most serious illnesses and hence if trauma remains unattended; then it will surely threaten the human race. Rendering these posttraumatic experiences speakable and revealing their different manifestations in the miscellaneous fields of literature and psychology may open the debate to speak about the importance of writing about trauma in improving physical health. James Pennebaker is of the view that expressive writing has been found beneficial for our health (30). It is crucial since it increases our immune system performance. When trauma strikes one’s mind, he/she becomes unable to exactly process the advent leaving the resultant outbreaks of feelings in the memory. When the traumatized person starts releasing these unspoken emotions, they start to let go bringing lucidity allowing the person to find himself anew. Dr. Pennebaker, was the first to investigate the benefits of expressing writing in improving physical health. Confining a therapeutic journal about centred care and cultural transformation, the patients were asked to write about their difficult events and feelings for about twenty minutes over four successive days. The journal “was associated with both short-term increases in physiological arousal and long-term decreases in health problems, such as immune system functioning”(Pennebaker 1). Similar studies were conducted by Frisina et al. where they engaged a clinical population in a written emotional report of traumatic experiences and malaise feelings. The results found beneficial for a range of

medical conditions like: “lung functioning in asthma, disease severity in rheumatoid arthritis, Pain and physical health in cancer, Immune response in HIV infection, hospitalizations for cystic fibrosis, Pain intensity in women with chronic pelvic pain, Sleep-onset latency in poor sleepers, Post-operative course” (8). Building on this, we recommend further researchers to make practical research on the way literary writing improves physical health conditions at the level of Algerian hospitals.

Among the limitations that we encountered when conducting this research is the scarcity of the corpus. It should also be mentioned that finding a peculiar corpus that fits the selected approach was a demanding task and we had to spend a long time to find appropriate narratives for the requirements of the selected approach. Nonetheless, the acute interdisciplinarity of trauma studies was time consuming and finding the peculiar way to have this wed relationship between trauma and literature was a cumbersome endeavour. In fact, our preliminary research was mainly made on psychology and the key term scriptotherapy was not easily found. After roaming in the intricate field of psychology and writing entire lengthy papers on psychology trauma while trying to find a way to link it to literary healing, we had to move to Spain where we met Pr. Bárbara Arizti, who first exposed scriptotherapy as a workable theory for our selected narratives.

, Tying all the previous sections together in an overall argument, we confirm that literary art has “the potential of bringing, into consciousness tacit, prelinguistic, preconscious knowing” (Hayes and Yorks 49). Bringing the unconscious to our consciousness through scriptotherapy helps to create empathic connection among people with varied and opposing experiences, “they are a powerful medium for fostering critical subjectivity and critical intersubjectivity” (Yorks & Kasl 93). Critical subjectivity can happen when trying to understand one’s own trauma, whereas intersubjectivity happens as we try to interpret communal traumas or trauma at a communal level. This subjectivity and intersubjectivity rings well with Hendry’s question, “What would it mean to read a life outside narrative, to let the network of relationships construct the narrative?” (492). To wrap it all, the female narratives, highlighted in this study, tried to bring a thorough understanding

of the human essence by making the best of any difficult situation. They provide us with a thread of hope delineating that no matter how intense the trauma, the pain and suffering were, revival, survival and healing always exist as long as we push ourselves, test our limits, take massive actions and work on our new determined self. Thereof, scriptotherapy is but a ways of psychological growth to bring forth the satisfaction of achievement, the overcoming of obstacles and the feeling of comfort in one's skin. However, scriptotherapy is only one pattern to psychological growth, intellectual liveliness and curious mind. Yet, scientific research in the field of humanities is widely deep and open to investigate the pattern further.

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Appendices

Appendix One

Synopsis of the Novel: *the Blue between Sky and Water* (2015)

The narrative of the *Blue between Sky and Water* is that of grief, fear and survival of the Baraka family of those who remained in the refugee camp and those who emigrated. In the following up of her debut novel; 'Mornings In Jenin', Susan abulhawa excavates the ruins of the Middle east conflicts, examining it through the lives of an extended family from Southern Palestine from the early 20th century to the present day. The novel centers on the sufferings of the Baraka family, forced to leave their idyllic village of Beit Daras in 1948 for a refugee camp near Gaza's southern shores. After that, the family scatters some remains in the camp where the majority of the novel takes place, while others emigrate to the Gulf and then to the US. But, this is not only a story about displacement and emigration, but it also tackles themes like: love, hatred, sex, rape, survival, death, loss, and belonging. Abu Saif states: "it is full of celebratory dances, partying on the beach, mourning, fear, mysteries, dirty jokes and national heroism". (2015, p, n.d)

The family's main characters include those who stayed in Gaza and must face the difficulties of life in a refugee camp. The second part of the novel revolves around Nur Valdez, the main character who grapples with difficulties in her early childhood after the death of her grandfather and caretaker Mamduh. The main traumas that occurred to Nur in her early childhood is first of all the death of her grandfather and only caretaker Mmanduh. After that, she found herself an orphan. Later in the novel, she was exposed to a new trauma which is that of a sexual incest as she was sexually abused by her own step father. Nonetheless, trauma arises again where we see the little Nur repeatedly scolded and ruthlessly rejected by her own real Spanish mother. The only remedy for Nur deeps hurts became writing and since an early childhood she kept a memory book where she writes all the positive attitudes she learnt from her grandfather. Nonetheless, education was her only solace and refuge after that life sequenced her to a state of unredeemed chaos. After she

grows up, she, herself became a psychotherapist, and she dedicated herself to helping the likes of hers; especially children who witnessed the bitterness of life under war circumstances and its relentless aftermaths.

Appendix two: Synopsis of the Novel *Push* by Sapphire (1999)

Push is narrated by the protagonist herself; a young black teenager who was illiterate, overweight and pregnant; a fact that made her inevitably a subject of bully at school. At the age of sixteen, Precious was excluded from school because of her pregnancy. She, indeed, was impregnated twice by her own biological father who started to sexually abusing and raping her at a very young age and, hence, sequenced her to a lifetime of rape and shame. Her first child, a little babygirl with down syndromes, was conceived at the age of twelve as a result of being raped by her own father. The trauma of sexual incest was not the only one to take place in Precious' life, but she also had to outlive the trauma of motherly mistreatment, rejection and repetitive oppression and physical hitting. Precious was living with her offensive and rude mother Mary who was also beating her and abusing her ceaselessly. Mary considered her own daughter as a potential rival to her, for she accused her of wanting to take her husband, instead of considering her a poor sexual incest victim. She, in fact, kept her home to collect welfare. Meanwhile, Precious had to join an alternative school named Each One Teach One where she found a compassionate community and made acquaintance with a group of girls who grappled with similar traumatic pasts. The alternative school offered her the opportunity to meet Ms Blue Rain; the teacher who taught her how to read and write. The journey of precious revival starts when Ms. Rain encouraged her to write a daily journal to practice writing and mitigate her diurnal hardships. Afterward, she left her abusive parents and left to a halfway home provided by the school community. Writing about her own pain and sharing it with her teacher and school community forced her visibility and, thus, urged her redemption. The ramification of writing and education enlightened Precious and empowered her. Yet, trauma emerged to threaten her life gain. Short after she left home to take care of her son in a house of her own, her mother came to deliver the

news of her father death who died of Aids and injected the virus in her. After she was tested positive to HIV, she was about to fall apart. At that very incident, Ms. Rain advised Precious to write all what pains her. Working on her advice, Precious wrote letters, diaries and poetry to strengthen herself. Precious had to handle multiple traumas, deal with an inadequate physical condition and raise her own children while she was a child herself. Nonetheless, Precious could manage her traumas and carried on her education while taking care of her own children. By the end of the novel, Precious obtained full custody of her own children, face up her mother and made an international Journal of Child, Youth and Family Studies and head on out of the public welfare gloriously determining a better beginning for her children.

Appendix Three: Synopsis of the Memoir *Black Milk* by Elif Shafak (2007)

After she delivered her first child, Shafak plunged into a journey of postpartum depression that intrigued a deep inner psychic confusion. The triggered crisis led to a newly developed apprehension about the ability to become a good mother and writer at once. Upon this event, Elif, the eponymous character, starts doubting her writing talents and, thus, felt like words betrayed her. In her narrative, she depicts her experience starting from being an instinctive nomadic writer to a delicately twisted mother. The psychological crisis was caused due to the ceaselessly clashing harem of females who reside in her mind each with her own personality traits; the skeptical intellectual, the determined go-setter, the realistic objective, the religious, the motherly, and the sexy feminine. Elif longs for a peaceful coexistence of all the harem voices, but found none. While questioning motherhood and writing alike, she starts to chronicle the experiences of prominent authors like Sylvia Plath, Virginia Woolf, Alice Walker, Ayn Rand, and Zelda Fitzgerald. Through bringing the life chronicles of these female writers, she tries to find a key resolution to the dilemma that exists between creative art; (writing in this stance) and the responsibilities of motherhood. The conjured up conflict culminated to a new mental distress that Elif exhibits as being a Jinn called Lord Poton. The only way to overcome the post partum depression, the writer's block and Lord Poton, the bickering female voices and their constant fights is by putting pen into

paper again. Writing fiction again helps her overcome all the mental anguish she had to go through in her journey. By the end of the novel, every shred of cynical darkness was swept away, when the issue of motherhood ceased being used from one side. After Elif regained her whole entity as a mother and a writer she portrayed the ecstasy she had felt as a mother. Regarding this, the writer says: “ this book is the story of how I faced my inner diversity and then learned to be one. I am a writer.

I am a nomad.

I am a cosmopolite.

I am a Lover of Sufism. (p,01)

Abstract in Arabic

كشفت النتائج الإحصائية الرصينة في مجال علم الاجتماع أنّ الهزج، والحروب، وزنا المحارم، والاعتداء على الأطفال، والضرب المبرح، والجرائم الالكترونية، والعنف الأسري، وتعنيف الزوجة وما مائلها من اعتداءات وحشية سُجلت كأفزع أحداث عصر ما بعد الحداثة. ومن شأن هذه الأحداث المثيرة للقلق أن تسبب صدمة نفسية. وفي هذا السياق، برزت دراسات الأزمات والصدمات النفسية بداية في حقل علم النفس ثم جعلت تتوغل في حقل الأدب من خلال كبار الباحثين مثل كاروث، وهارتمان، وفالمان، ولوب، ولاكابرا. استطاع الدارسون المعاصرون، وخاصة الدارسات منهم إنشاء نمط جديد في الأدب وهو أدب الصدمة في عصر ما بعد الحداثة من خلال شهادات حيّة، حرصا منهم على بيان حقيقة هذه الصدمات المفجعة التي طالت عصر ما بعد الحداثة؛ غير أنهم أغفلوا بيان آلية تخطي هذه الصدمات وصيّبوا تركيزهم على تحريّ مدى تأثير العصر الجديد بهذا النوع من الصدمات. ومن هذا المنطلق، تنبثق إشكالية ورقتنا البحثية: تحليل مظهرات الصدمات النسوية في ثلاث روايات نسوية معاصرة: رواية "الأزرق بين السماء والماء" لأبي الهوى (2015)، و"الدفعة" لسبير (1999)، و"الحليب الأسود" لإيلاف شفق (2007)، وكيف تمكنت هذه النسوة من تخطي صدماتهن؛ متبنيين المنهج الكيفي باستخدام العلاج بالكتابة لتشكيل قاعدة نظرية انتقائية هجينة جمعت بين مختلف الأنماط والتقنيات. أما النظرية الانتقائية فنقف على أثرها في كتابات هانك، ليقترح بعده ثلة من النقاد المعاصرين تقنياتها على غرار غلادين ووالاس (2018)، وهوفمان (2002)، وغلادين (2016)، وغروث (2002)، وسوروكو (2012)، وميغران (2016)، ودفيس وفوارين (2014)، ومالتر (2022).

وأبرز هدف لهذا البحث هو تحليل عملية التشافي التي عايشتها الشخصيات النسوية من خلال تحريّ تقنيات العلاج بالكتابة التي لجأن إليها. وقد رامت الدراسة بيان واقع فاعلية العلاج بالكتابة (أو الكتابة الأدبية) وكونه علاجا ناجعا إذ أنّه باعثٌ على تقبل الذات ونمائها، إلى أن يجعل هذه الذات قادرة على الظهور وسط المجتمع. وقد دلّت نتائج الدراسة على أنّ رواية "الأزرق بين السماء والماء" لسوزان أبي الهوى كان لها الحظ الأكبر من استعمال تقنيات العلاج بالكتابة المتمثلة في اختلاق الشخصيات، وكتابة مذكرة، والكتابة بعين التناول، وكتابة الرسائل، ونظم القصائد وترجمة الأشعار. وتليها رواية "الدفعة" لسبير التي تمظهرت فيها تقنيات العلاج بالكتابة من خلال تدوين اليوميات. فيما سجلت رواية "الحليب الأسود" لشفق الحد الأدنى إذ اقتصرت على تقنية وحيدة من تقنيات العلاج بالكتابة وهي كتابة مذكرة.

أتبعنا النتائج المتوصل إليها بالتحليل والتأويل لشرح أسباب التفاوت المسجل في استعمال تقنيات العلاج بالكتابة في الروايات الثلاث. وعمدنا كذلك إلى تعزيزها بفتح النقاش حول التأويلات والدلالات المحتملة من وراء أسماء الشخصيات البطلة، والأماكن المذكورة في الرواية وكيف أسهمت في عملية التشافي.

استدعت الطبيعة البيئية لهذا البحث استكشاف آفاق أبعـد لتأثيرات العلاج بالكتابة إذا ما ارتبطت بحقول أخرى - خاصة الطب - وإمكانية تطبيقها في بيئات علاجية محلية. ليختم البحث بتوصيات لبحوث مستقبلية.

Abstract in French

Résumé

Les statistiques inflexibles de la sociologie moderne indiquent que le meurtre, le viol, la guerre, l'inceste, la maltraitance des enfants, les mutilations, les crimes électroniques, la violence domestique, les femmes battues et d'autres infractions atroces sont les actes les plus affreux que l'ère postmoderne aie connus. Ces événements troublants sont susceptibles de provoquer des traumatismes. Les études sur les traumatismes, d'abord, sont apparues dans le domaine de la psychologie, puis ont commencé à touché le domaine de la littérature avec des universitaires majeurs comme Caruth, Hartman, Felman, Laub et Lacabra. Profondément soucieux de révéler une représentation authentique des terribles traumatismes qui se sont abattus sur l'ère postmoderne, les auteurs contemporains, en particulier les auteurs féminins, ont réussi à créer le genre de la fiction traumatique postmoderne à travers des récits de vie testimoniaux. Cependant, enquêter dans quelle mesure la nouvelle ère est affectée par le traumatisme sans mettre en évidence le mécanisme de survie ne sert à rien. Ainsi, la principale problématique de recherche de cette thèse est d'analyser la manière dont les traumatismes féminins sont représentés dans les récits de trois écrivaines contemporaines sélectionnées ; *The Blue between Sky and Water* (2015) d'Abulhawa, *Sapphire's Push* (1999) et *Black Milk* de Shafak (2007) et les moyens par lesquels ils ont survécu à ces traumatismes. Au final, la principale méthode de recherche qualitative qui a été utilisée, qui repose sur une approche de métissage, est la scriptothérapie. Mêlant différents genres et techniques littéraires, la scriptothérapie a été le socle théorique éclectique de cette recherche. Bien qu'elles remontent à *Shattered Subjects* (1999) de Henke, les techniques de la théorie éclectique ont été explorées par de nombreux autres critiques contemporains .L'objectif majeur de cette recherche était d'analyser le processus de récupération de multiples traumatismes féminins en étudiant pratiquement les techniques de déploiement de la scriptothérapie sur les récits sélectionnés. L'étude visait à montrer que la scriptothérapie s'avérait être thérapeutique rendant possible l'acceptation de soi, la croissance personnelle et, éventuellement, la visibilité sociale. Les

résultats de cette étude ont souligné que le taux le plus élevé d'utilisation des techniques de scriptothérapie ; créer un croquis de personnage, écrire un livre de mémoire, des écrits optimistes, écrire une correspondance épistolaire de lettres, écrire des poèmes et traduire des poèmes, ont été trouvés dans *The Blue between Sky and Water* (2015) de Susan Abulhawa. Taux moyen d'utilisation d'autres techniques de scriptothérapie ; la journalisation et la journalisation réciproque, ont été retrouvées dans le second roman : *Push by Sapphire* (1999). Ces répercussions sont suivies d'interprétations potentielles justifiant ces taux différents. Nos résultats obtenus ont également été condensés par une discussion ouverte sur d'autres interprétations possibles de la signification et du symbolisme des noms, des lieux et de la manière dont ils ont contribué au processus de guérison majeur des protagonistes féminines. La nature interdisciplinaire de cette recherche nous a incités à explorer également des horizons pour d'autres implications de la scriptothérapie si elle est liée à d'autres domaines, en particulier la médecine et l'application potentielle de la théorie dans les environnements médicaux locaux. La conclusion de cette thèse fournit aux lecteurs quelques recommandations pour d'amples recherches.