

ATILIM UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
ENGLISH CULTURE AND LITERATURE DOCTORAL PROGRAMME

**TRAUMA AND NARRATIVE IN CONTEMPORARY FICTION: KAZUO
ISHIGURO'S *A PALE VIEW OF HILLS*, MICHÉLE ROBERTS' *DAUGHTERS
OF THE HOUSE*, AND SEBASTIAN BARRY'S *THE SECRET SCRIPTURE***

Dissertation

İsmet TOKSÖZ

Ankara-2024

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Dissertation

İsmet TOKSÖZ

Supervisor

Prof. Dr. Belgin ELBİR

Ankara-2024

ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL

This is to certify that this thesis titled “Trauma and Narrative in Contemporary Fiction: Kazuo Ishiguro’s *A Pale View of Hills*, Mich le Roberts’ *Daughters of the House*, and Sebastian Barry’s *The Secret Scripture*” and prepared by  smet Toks z meets with the committee’s approval unanimously as Dissertation in the field of English Culture and Literature following the successful defense conducted on 10/06/2024.

Prof. Dr. Nazan TUTAŐ (Chair)

Prof. Dr. Belgin ELB R (Advisor)

Prof. Dr. Zeynep ATAYURT FENG  (Member)

Assoc. Prof. Dr. KuĐu TEK N (Member)

Asst. Prof. Dr. G kŐen ARAS (Member)

Prof. Dr. ő le TUZLUKAYA

Director

ETHICAL STATEMENT

I accept and acknowledge that I have prepared this thesis study, prepared in line with the Thesis Writing Guidelines of Atılım University Graduate School of Social Sciences;

- within the framework of academic and ethical rules;
- presented the information, documents, evaluations, and results in a way that meets the rules of scientific ethics and morality,
- I have referenced each work from which I have benefited while preparing my thesis, and that
- I hereby present a unique study.

I hereby also understand that I shall accept any loss of rights against my behalf in cases otherwise.

10/06/2024

İsmet TOKSÖZ



This dissertation is dedicated to my children,

Belis and G rkem...

ÖZ

TOKSÖZ, İsmet. Çağdaş Romanda Travma ve Anlatı: Kazuo Ishiguro'nun *Uzak Tepeler*, Michéle Roberts'ın *Evin Kızları* ve Sebastian Barry'nin *Saklı Kalanlar* Adlı Romanları. Doktora Tezi, Ankara 2024.

Bu tezin amacı bireysel ve toplumsal travmayı ortaya çıkarma ve bu travmalarla yüzleşme aracı olan öykülemenin Kazuo Ishiguro'nun *Uzak Tepeler* (1982), Michéle Roberts'ın *Evin Kızları* (1992) ve Sebastian Barry'nin *Saklı Kalanlar* (2008) adlı romanlarında bireysel ve savaş travmasını ortaya çıkarmada nasıl kullanıldığını incelemektir. Edebi travma kuramının yükselişi romancıların eserlerinde travmayı nasıl yansıttığını büyük ölçüde etkilemiştir. Edebi travma kuramının yükselişinden önce, edebiyatta travmanın işlenmesinin odak noktası travmanın olgusal detayları ve travma ile ilgili hatırlananlar üzerineydi. Ancak, edebi travma kuramının ortaya çıkışı ile birlikte romancılar travmanın psikolojik, duygusal ve anlatımsal sonuçlarını ve travmanın nasıl hatırlandığını incelemeye başladılar. Ishiguro, Roberts ve Barry romanlarında travmayı etkili bir şekilde kurgulayarak anlatım stratejileri olan yazım tarzları, kelime seçimleri, parçalanmış anlatım teknikleri, tutarsız anlatıcıları ve öyküleme kullanımı yoluyla travmanın romandaki temsiline katkıda bulunmuşlardır. Bu çalışma için seçilen üç romanın ana karakterleri Etsuko, Thérèse ve Roseanne, savaş travmalarıyla yüzleşmek, bunları ortaya çıkarmak ve bunlarla başa çıkmak için öykülemeyi bir anlatım stratejisi olarak kullanmışlardır. Seçilen üç romanın anlatım stratejilerini inceleyen bu çalışma Ishiguro, Roberts ve Barry'nin, öykülemenin travma mağdurlarının sessizliğini bozmak ve söylenemezi söylenebilir kılmak için bir öz-iyileşme aracı olarak kullanılabileceğini işaret ettiklerini göstermiştir. Bu çalışma, ayrıca, travmanın nesiller arası kendisini gösteren doğasını ele alarak, travmanın nesiller arasında aktarıldığını öne süren postbellek teorisinin geçerliliğini de göstermiştir. Bununla birlikte, bu çalışma, öykülemeyi bireysel ve savaş travmalarıyla yüzleşme aracı olarak kullanmalarının Etsuko, Thérèse ve Roseanne'i bireysel ve savaş travmaları ile yüzleşme yolunda daha cesur kıldığını da vurgulamıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: edebi travma kuramı, öyküleme, *Uzak Tepeler*, *Evin Kızları*, *Saklı Kalanlar*

ABSTRACT

TOKSÖZ, İsmet. Trauma and Narrative in Contemporary Fiction: Kazuo Ishiguro's *A Pale View Of Hills*, Michèle Roberts' *Daughters Of The House*, and Sebastian Barry's *The Secret Scripture*. Ph.D. Thesis, Ankara 2024.

The aim of this dissertation is to explore how individual and war trauma are revealed through storytelling that serves as a medium for presenting and confronting both individual and collective trauma depicted in Kazuo Ishiguro's *A Pale View of Hills* (1982), Michèle Roberts' *Daughters of the House* (1992), and Sebastian Barry's *The Secret Scripture* (2008). The rise of literary trauma theory has greatly impacted how novelists approach the representation of trauma in their works. Before the rise of literary trauma theory, the focus of trauma in literature was on the factual details of traumatic events and what was remembered from the past. However, with the advent of literary trauma theory, novelists have been able to explore the psychological, emotional, and narrative implications of trauma and how it is remembered. Ishiguro, Roberts, and Barry fictionalize trauma effectively in their novels through their narrative strategies; their writing style, choice of words, fragmented narration, unbalanced narrators, and use of storytelling contribute to the representation of trauma in fiction. The protagonists of the three novels, Etsuko, Thérèse, and Roseanne, use storytelling as a working strategy to confront, reveal, and come to terms with their traumatic war experiences. Underlining the narrative strategies of the three novels, this study has illustrated that Ishiguro, Roberts, and Barry imply that storytelling can be employed as a self-healing medium to break the silence of trauma victims and make the unspeakable speakable. This study has also addressed the transgenerational nature of trauma by highlighting postmemory theory that claims that trauma is transmitted among generations. Furthermore, this study has also emphasized that the use of storytelling as a narrative strategy makes Etsuko, Thérèse, and Roseanne more courageous in terms of confronting their individual and war traumas.

Keywords: literary trauma theory, storytelling, *A Pale View of Hills*, *Daughters of the House*, *The Secret Scripture*

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INTRODUCTION

This study argues that individual and war trauma are recalled through storytelling that functions as a medium for the revelation and presentation of both individual and collective trauma to explore its psychological, emotional, and narrative implications in Kazuo Ishiguro's *A Pale View of Hills* (1982), Michèle Roberts' *Daughters of the House* (1992), and Sebastian Barry's *The Secret Scripture* (2008). The rise of trauma theory has greatly impacted how novelists approach the representation of trauma in their works. Before the rise of trauma theory, the focus of trauma in literature was on the factual details of traumatic events and what was remembered from the past. However, with the advent of trauma theory, novelists have been able to explore the psychological, emotional, and narrative implications of trauma and how it is remembered. Fiction can bring trauma to the surface. It is in fiction, more than anywhere else, that these cultural wounds are frequently, albeit painfully, explored.

This study aims to show that with the use of storytelling as a narrative strategy, Ishiguro, Roberts, and Barry illustrate how and why individual and war traumas of the three protagonists Etsuko, Thérèse, and Roseanne are revealed, presented, and confronted. Trauma has been a trending topic in contemporary literature for a long time. The novels chosen for this study, *A Pale View of Hills* (1982), *Daughters of the House* (1992), and *The Secret Scripture* (2008) can be categorized under trauma fiction. The reason that these three novels are chosen for this study is that they all present collective and cultural traumatic war experiences of their protagonists in a detailed narrative with fictional stories created and narrated by their protagonists who are the trauma victims of devastating wars.

The reconstructing and narrating processes of their stories help Etsuko, Thérèse, and Roseanne break their deep silences about the wars they have experienced. These processes also stimulate self-healing processes for all the three protagonists in that through their stories they explore their traumas and confront them. Their traumatic sufferings are uncovered through the verbalizing processes of their traumatic war experiences. The start of such a healing process in the face of trauma is a testimony to the power of literature and writing in bandaging psychological wounds.

For this study, the novels chosen for analysis present both the period in which they were written and a certain historical period in which the two devastating World Wars and the Irish Civil War emerged. In the post-war period, the major war traumas of the protagonists of these novels emerged. These novels were written in the period between the late 20th century and the early 21st century. They cover the period between 1920 to 1945 and address the end of World War I and the start of World War II as a second setting. In other words, they present not only their present time but also the post-war period as their settings. The two huge and devastating World Wars as well as the Irish Civil War not only negatively changed the lives of millions but also created huge traumas in war survivors' lives. In this historical context, these three novels explore their protagonists' traumatic war experiences and present the sufferings of these experiences.

The protagonists of these three novels, Etsuko, Thérèse, and Roseanne all agree that storytelling is an efficient way to present, confront, and reveal their traumatic war experiences. With their word choice, self-revelation, process of writing, recording of trauma, and uncertainty of memories, Etsuko, Thérèse, and Roseanne put themselves on a path of changing and healing. They realize their traumatic recovery through storytelling in the forms of speaking and writing. Speaking to a member of their family, writing their memoirs on their own, or even speaking to themselves, all these three protagonists find a way to reconstruct their life stories -either true or not- in the face of their collective traumatic pains.

The term "trauma" emerged in the late nineteenth century. Jill Matus claims that this term emerged "when the label for a physical wound came to be connected with a mental state" (vii). In this context, the mind is regarded as both physical and psychological. Trauma became a social problem in the twentieth century due to colonization, child abuse, sexual violation, domestic violence, and poverty. However, trauma narratives in fiction have appeared as a reflection of the twenty-first century's devastating effects of wars, colonization, and poverty. Michelle Balaev claims that new approaches within literary trauma theory "move away from the focus on trauma as unrepresentable and toward a focus on the specificity of trauma that locates meaning through a greater consideration of the social and cultural contexts of traumatic experience" (2008, 3).

Sigmund Freud describes trauma in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* as the result of an “extensive breach being made in the protective shield against stimuli” (25). The past cannot be erased as Freud suggests, “nothing which was formed in the life of the soul can disappear; [...] everything is conserved in one way or another and can reappear in special circumstances” (49). William Faulkner claims: “The past is never dead. It is not even past” (85). Traumatic experiences emerge in several ways; for instance, these experiences might emerge for only one person, or for a group of individuals; trauma differs according to place and time. Jakob Lothe claims: “Traumatic experience is not stable or constant but changing over time” (160). Colonization, migration, patriarchy, political powers, or familial issues might create traumatic experiences for individuals or groups.

To contextualize a traumatic experience, Freud suggests using the term “talking cure”. It means talking about the traumatic event to someone who can help the victim process and understand his/her traumatic experience as a whole. By doing this, the victim might begin to make sense of what happened exactly. Such an approach involves sharing the stories and representations of traumatic experiences as Janine Altounian defines, “articulating the flow of individual histories with the flow of collective history” (6). Altounian also claims that if his/her story has not been shared, the victim cannot reach a progress of psychic healing.

In her book, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*, Cathy Caruth claims that the language of trauma requires a “new mode of reading and of listening” (1996, 7). According to Caruth, the listener or the reader is required to hear the unspeakable or to see the invisible. She claims that the language of trauma is unspeakable since it is “untranslatable into the common language of memory and conscious recollection” (2013, 7). Caruth describes the language of trauma as “non-verbal, non-symbolic, and non-representational” (2013, 7). For her, trauma is not a mode of communication since it cannot be communicated.

Although Caruth believes that trauma cannot be representable through any form of communication, contemporary trauma theory claims that trauma can be representable in literature. This revelation proves the power and strength of trauma fiction. To represent the unrepresentable, to speak the unspeakable, or to translate the untranslatable are the challenges of trauma fiction. In parallel with these challenges, this study illustrates that trauma can be represented in fiction and this representation

opens new horizons for trauma victims to heal their traumatic sufferings. These representations of trauma can be best explored in the novels categorized as trauma fiction.

Trauma fiction refers to works of literature that deal with themes of trauma and its aftermath, often exploring the psychological and emotional effects of traumatic events on characters. It is regarded as a literary subgenre of contemporary fiction. This subgenre of fiction has gained popularity in recent years as the concept of trauma has become increasingly recognized and studied by scholars with a greater understanding of the impacts of traumatic experiences on individuals. Nicole A. Sütterline suggests that “rather than representing it directly, literature can perform trauma employing a range of complex narrative techniques that resemble traumatic processes such as flashbacks, re-enactments and dissociative states” (19). These narrative techniques make the representation of trauma in fiction more powerful and authentic.

Trauma fiction serves as a powerful means of examining the social, cultural, and political factors that contribute to the prevalence of trauma, and as a way to promote awareness and encourage dialogue about the issue. Moreover, trauma fiction can provide an opportunity for both writers and readers to process and make sense of their own traumatic experiences. Anne Whitehead explains:

The term ‘trauma fiction’ signals the recent journey of the concept of trauma from medical and scientific discourse to the field of literary studies. The origin of contemporary trauma studies can usefully be dated to 1980 when post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) was first included in the diagnostic canon of the medical psychiatric professions (4).

Trauma fiction serves several critical functions. Firstly, it provides a voice to those who have experienced profound suffering, allowing their stories to be heard and validated. This can be particularly important for marginalized or historically oppressed groups whose traumas have been overlooked or minimized. Secondly, trauma fiction fosters empathy and understanding among readers by immersing them in the emotional and psychological landscapes of trauma survivors. Through the act of reading, individuals can gain a deeper appreciation of the complexities of trauma and the resilience of those who endure it.

Moreover, trauma fiction plays a crucial role in the broader cultural and historical discourse. By preserving and commemorating traumatic events, these narratives contribute to collective memory and ensure that such experiences are not forgotten. They also provoke critical reflection on the social, political, and historical contexts that give rise to trauma, encouraging readers to engage with issues of justice, human rights, and healing. Trauma fiction, through its innovative narrative techniques and profound thematic explorations, offers a powerful medium for representing and understanding trauma. By giving voice to the voiceless and fostering empathy and reflection, trauma fiction not only enriches literary culture but also contributes to the ongoing dialogue about human suffering and resilience.

Intertextuality, pastiche, and parody are frequently used in trauma fiction. Moreover, elements such as irony, black humor, and unbalanced narrators are frequently presented; narration is often set up in fragmentation and metafiction. Flashbacks are mostly presented in trauma fiction as well. *A Pale View of Hills* (1982), *Daughters of the House* (1992), and *The Secret Scripture* (2008) all present unbalanced narrators under the control of their traumatic memories. These narrators present their fictional stories in fragmented narratives. Ishiguro, Roberts, and Barry frequently resort to flashbacks and portray supernatural elements such as ghosts to represent war trauma and its after-effects.

Writers of trauma fiction consider trauma as evidence and a sign of social oppression or injustice. Trauma fiction presents how “defensive responses are created out of many types of wounding” (Vickroy 3). Trauma fiction presents the fears and worries of their traumatized characters, and how these characters cope with and overcome these fears and worries. Trauma fiction presents fragmentation on social and personal levels. It employs techniques like fragmentation and the use of unbalanced narrators. Trauma fiction acknowledges the inherent tensions between the individual and society that shape human existence. Trauma fiction also explores themes of power struggles and control.

In trauma fiction, there has been an ongoing interest in presenting a character’s story. This kind of fiction is presented like a memoir, and it frequently resorts to first-person narration from the protagonist’s perspective. The impacts of trauma are embedded in these characters’ memories. Storytelling is an effective narrative strategy to be used in trauma fiction. Through the use of storytelling,

writers of trauma fiction might go and come back in place and time, in a fragmentation; and they can also present flashbacks in their fiction.

Writers of trauma fiction use the power of storytelling to represent and reveal their characters' traumatic experiences. In this sense, storytelling functions as a testimony. It depends on collecting memories and recalling the events that occurred in the past. Recalling the past and reconstructing the traumatic experiences might be a means of revealing, presenting, controlling, and even overcoming trauma. Therefore, storytelling is an important narrative strategy that can be used in fiction to break the silence of the characters of trauma fiction.

Storytelling has a significant impact on societies. Storytelling convention dates back to ancient times of humanity. It is what connects an individual to his/her past. In other words, storytelling combines individuals and societies. That is, while listening to a person telling his/her story, listeners might find some pieces of themselves. Storytelling is also efficient in creating awareness and maintaining cultural heritage between generations. One of the aims of storytelling is entertainment; however, representation of other individuals, documentation, and reconstruction of history are other reasons. Even political powers are canalized in the process of storytelling.

Literary trauma studies reveal that storytelling and narrative might contribute to the healing process of a traumatized person or a group as Shoshana Felman claims, storytelling "belongs already in obscure ways to the healing process" (16). Healing of trauma begins when the traumatized individual can convert the traumatic experiences into a logical and coherent narrative; therefore, "the main step for the recovery of trauma is to verbalize the experience of suffering" (Andermahr and Pellicer-Ortin 2-3). This verbalization process can be completed through storytelling that can be employed as a narrative strategy in fiction.

The act of storytelling might be considered as a group therapy in which victims find the power to break their silence and speak about their traumatic experiences. Listening to another victim's story makes a person participate in the teller's story and sympathize with him/her. In this sense, storytelling can be regarded as a medium of confronting traumatic experiences as it moves the victim from the state of silence to speech. The silence can be broken by the act of telling or writing

about the victim's traumatic experiences. On the other hand, the traumatized victim might also tell or write about a completely different story from his/her story. That is, he or she can create new identities, new awareness, or a completely positive narration in his/her story. This kind of production of a new story can help the victim to reveal and confront his/her traumatic experiences as well.

There is a linear relationship between trauma and storytelling. In her work *Trauma and Recovery* (1997), Judith Herman claims that trauma victims have a "premature demand for certainty" (128). Literary characters experience traumatic, agonizing losses or they are silenced by deep feelings of guilt. Storytelling has an important role in leading traumatized individuals to reveal, present, and confront their traumatic experiences. These victims who are in most cases oppressed in the past suffer from their traumatic pains. Storytelling presents an opportunity for these traumatized victims to break the silence and express their traumatic experiences.

Storytelling in fiction serves as a testimony to traumatic experiences. Meg Jensen claims that "testimonial forms of storytelling that attest to traumatic experience are as old as humanity itself" (67). She also maintains as follows:

From ancient myths, legends, and folk tales in all cultures, to songs of war, conquest, revenge, and violence, both the power and the vulnerability of what it means to be human have been expressed through narratives with varying degrees of adherence to actual events and a strong compulsion to hold the attention of an audience. (67)

Therefore, storytelling serves for marginalized populations to break the silence of the oppressed individuals and groups. It is a response to the oppressive political, cultural, and social norms and institutions as well. Todorov defines storytelling as a "defiant and deadly act" (112) underlining the power of storytelling in literature.

Jakob Lothe claims: "There is a link between narrative and traumatic experience; elements of trauma can complicate attempts to give them narrative shape" (160). Individuals are enclosed and trapped in their traumatic anecdotes, and telling their traumatic stories can free and relieve them from such a trap. The traumatic experiences they have are horrible and shocking. The pains of these traumatic experiences make the victims suffer from worries and fears. Writing these experiences down, that is, the verbalization process of such traumatic experiences creates a language for these victims. Such a kind of writing process also creates a sense of human respect and virtue and aids victims to survive in even horrific

situations. Besides, written stories function as testimonies that contribute to the healing process of traumatized individuals.

Trauma narratives might contain fictional characters and symbols to transmit deeper truths. The question of contemporary trauma studies is how to represent the unrepresentable, unspeakable, or untranslatable. While listening to or reading one's story, another person might catch some glimpses of himself/herself. Sympathizing with a victim and knowing about how he/she suffers from his/her traumatic pains help an individual determine the appropriate attitude towards the victim.

A Pale View of Hills, published in 1982, tells the story of an old Japanese woman, Etsuko, and her daughter Keiko who committed suicide by hanging herself in her apartment. When Etsuko's youngest daughter, Niki, visits Etsuko for five days, Etsuko begins to tell a story about an ignorant mother and her neglected young daughter to reveal her traumatic experiences that are caused by the suicide of her eldest daughter, Keiko. Etsuko, displaying herself as a responsible mother in the story that she constructs, finds a way to ease her conscience. Indeed, Etsuko's traumas stem from the devastating World War II. The story she narrates is the real story of herself and her daughter; however, there are some changes in Etsuko's narration since she chooses to forget about her desperate attitude towards her deceased daughter in her real life.

The novel explores themes of broken promises and failed relationships through the stories of both Etsuko and her imaginary double Sachiko; however, there are many unexplained aspects in both characters' lives. Etsuko's memories include frequent gaps and silences that add to the emotional impact of the story. Although Etsuko's memories are vivid Ishiguro deliberately portrays Etsuko as a character who has not yet resolved important tensions in her life. As for Sachiko, she is portrayed as a mirror reflecting Etsuko's lacks and negative aspects.

At the beginning of the novel, with her younger daughter Niki's visit, Etsuko feels that Niki came to give her a kind of salvation about her traumatic pains that are caused by Keiko's suicide: "She had come prepared to tell me things were no different now, that I should have no regrets for those choices I once made. In short, to reassure me I was not responsible for Keiko's death" (Ishiguro 11). Soon after this discourse, Etsuko begins to narrate her story about Sachiko and her daughter Mariko

to reveal her regretful relationship between herself and her deceased daughter Keiko. In this sense, Niki's five-day visit stimulates Etsuko in her process of confronting her traumatic pains connected to Keiko.

Daughters of the House, published in 1992, presents the outcomes of denying traumatic experiences of the past and suggests the need for confronting these experiences. Through storytelling, Michèle Roberts creates a testimony to come to terms with trauma; in other words, the novel underlines the need to create a narrative to reveal traumatic experiences. In her novel, Roberts sets the story against the backdrop of the harrowing events of World War II, especially the Holocaust, depicting the protagonists' efforts to uncover truths that the survivors prefer to forget. The novel primarily centers around a Jewish family who are taken as refugees in a village after fleeing from being transported to a concentration camp. However, their escape is discovered, leading to their assassination by the German soldiers. The villagers choose to deny and forget these traumatic events; yet, they feel obliged to confront their past. The crisis comes to a head when one of the daughters, Léonie, begins to hear the ghostly voices of the murdered Jewish family at night.

The second narrative that occurs during the war is about Léonie and Thérèse's mother Antoinette who is raped by a German soldier. This traumatic event is hidden from the girls who are indeed the soldier's daughters. Finally, the girls are brought up as cousins rather than sisters. Although they eventually learn the truth, they continue to deny it until they reach adulthood. When Thérèse returns to their family house after twenty years in a convent, she tells Léonie that they must both confront the traumatic truths about the war by reconstructing their stories. Then Thérèse begins to rewrite her autobiography with the help of her sister. Retelling their childhood memories becomes an important strategy for the girls to confront their traumatic war experiences.

The Secret Scripture, published in 2008, tells the story of an Irish, one-hundred-year-old woman who has been receiving mental treatment in an asylum for about thirty years. This old woman, Roseanne, experienced major war traumas in her early and middle ages. The only way to talk about, to reveal, and to confront her traumatic war experiences, is to write her story as much as she can recall in the asylum where she has been staying. She writes her memoir about her traumatic pains stemming from the devastating civil war she experienced in Ireland.

The Irish Civil War, lasting from 1922 to 1923, was a bitter and devastating conflict that emerged in the aftermath of the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921. The civil war concluded in 1923, with the Free State emerging victorious; however, the scars of the conflict endured and left a lasting impact on Irish politics, society, and national identity. This war remains a complex and controversial chapter in Irish history, reflecting the profound challenges of forging a unified vision for the newly independent nation. In Barry's novel, the Irish Civil War is represented in its true occurrence. Due to this war, the protagonist Roseanne becomes a victim of the religious and political upheavals in Ireland in the period between 1920 and 1930.

The novel opens with Roseanne in the present time. Roseanne is one hundred years old and has been a patient at the Roscommon Regional Mental Hospital since 1957. She begins to write a memoir about the details of some of her early memories in the town of Sligo, Ireland. She regards her story as a secret scripture. Writing her autobiography and reconstructing her life necessarily relieves Roseanne in terms of her traumatic war experiences. All three novels discussed in this study cover the period of World War I and II; the murders, sufferings, losses, economic hardships, and safety problems are reflected in the novels. The protagonists have severe traumatic experiences and pains connected to these devastating wars.

Etsuko, Thérèse and Roseanne's individual traumas are often intertwined with their culture as literary trauma theory claims a relationship between culture and trauma as well. Colin Davis and Hanna Meretoja suggest that "individual traumatic experience is always culturally mediated" (4). They also maintain as follows: "Cultural discourse and its ways of giving meaning to particular forms of violence [...] affect the ways in which individuals experience and deal with their traumatic experiences" (4). Cultural discourse plays a pivotal role in shaping the perception and interpretation of violence, thereby influencing how individuals process and cope with trauma. Within any given culture, the narratives, symbols, and language used to describe and discuss violent acts can either validate or marginalize the victim's experiences. Therefore, Etsuko, Thérèse and Roseanne's discourses about their individual traumatic experiences also address the cultural discourses of the societies which they belong to. Although trauma and culture are two different terms, cultural traumas of the societies exist in the communities.

The division of the chapters of this study will be as follows:

Chapter one will be about literary trauma theory, the relationship between trauma and narrative, and trauma fiction. Accordingly, prominent psychologists and critics such as Sigmund Freud, Cathy Caruth, Michelle Balaev, Laurie Vickroy, Jakob Lothe, Joshua Pederson, and Anne Whitehead will be referred to. After the theory chapter, analyses of the three selected novels in the light of literary trauma theory will be presented. The novels will be analyzed in chronological order for a better understanding. War trauma and its huge impact on the protagonists will be underlined. All three novels include fictional characters who greatly suffer from their traumatic war experiences. Besides the hardships and problems of the long-lasting wars and the devastating impacts of these wars; the protagonists of these novels are also abused, silenced, and oppressed by the society in which they live.

There are some differences in the narrative strategies of these three novels. In *A Pale View of Hills*, the protagonist Etsuko tells her youngest daughter Niki both factual and fictional story as though she is confessing her ignorance and wrong attitudes towards her deceased daughter Keiko. The narrative strategy of *The Secret Scripture* is different from Ishiguro's novel. Roseanne, the protagonist, writes about her past traumatic experiences to relieve herself. She writes her story in the form of an autobiography. The narrative strategy of the last novel *Daughters of the House* is similar to the narrative strategy of *The Secret Scripture* in that like Roseanne, Thérèse writes about her and her sister Léonie's traumatic war experiences in the form of an autobiography to rediscover the truths about the Holocaust.

The war traumas that these three novels present can be categorized under the term 'collective trauma'. Collective trauma refers to psychological reactions to a traumatic event that influences a society as a whole. Collective trauma addresses a historical fact or event and inherently destroys a society's welfare. Collective trauma initiates a reevaluation of the established social structure and creates a challenge to shared beliefs and values. Both individual and collective traumas encompass aspects of fear and a perception of vulnerability. Arthur Neal explains the state of the national psyche in a case of collective trauma as follows:

Under conditions of national trauma, the borders and boundaries between order and chaos, between the sacred and the profane, between good and evil, between life and death become fragile. People both individually and collectively see themselves as moving into uncharted territory. The central hopes and aspirations of personal lives are temporarily put on hold and replaced by the darkest of fears and anxieties (5).

Similar to individual trauma, collective trauma has the potential to leave a lasting impact on a society or nation. Disregarding or overlooking the traumatic experience is not a feasible choice. The circumstances surrounding a trauma continuously reemerge in the consciousness of a person or a society. Similar to a rape victim who undergoes permanent transformation due to the trauma, a nation undergoes lasting changes as a consequence of trauma in the social sphere.

The collective consciousness of many nations was profoundly shaped by the two World Wars. Terms like “shell-shock” and “Post Traumatic Stress Disorder” (PTSD) originated from the traumatic experiences of soldiers in the trenches during World War I. The impact of war trauma extended far beyond soldiers and left a lasting effect on narratives that were passed down through generations. The soldiers of the World Wars not only suffered from memory gaps but also experienced extreme traumatic events through flashbacks, nightmares, and hallucinations, even months or years after the incidents occurred. These recurrent experiences are important coping mechanisms for PTSD.

The collective traumas of Etsuko, Thérèse, and Roseanne dominate their individual traumas as well. In other words, the individual traumas of these three characters stem from their collective traumas created by the devastating wars they experienced. The most efficient way to reveal collective and individual traumas in contemporary fiction is the use of storytelling as a narrative strategy. Contemporary novelists, Kazuo Ishiguro, Michèle Roberts, and Sebastian Barry all employ storytelling as a narrative strategy to display that their protagonists can reveal and present their traumatic war experiences. Storytelling can contribute to the healing processes of these characters’ collective traumas, helping them to recall and reform their traumatic memories. By revisiting and rearranging their traumatic memories, trauma victims can find a platform to face and present their traumatic experiences. Such control over their traumas makes these victims enhance their overall well-being, and obtain an important step towards recovery in the face of trauma.

Through their narrative strategies, Ishiguro, Roberts, and Barry explore the complex interplay between individual and collective traumas by presenting how individual pain is interwoven with historical and cultural disruptions. The protagonists’ stories highlight the transformative nature of storytelling, allowing them to face, express, and integrate their traumatic experiences. By giving voice to

the unspoken, these novels make important contributions to discussions on trauma, memory, and recovery, emphasizing literature's crucial role in acknowledging the past and fostering empathy and understanding in the present. Therefore, storytelling emerges as a means of self-healing and an essential medium for preserving collective memory and enhancing cultural resilience.



CHAPTER 1: TRAUMA NARRATIVES IN CONTEMPORARY FICTION

The purpose of this study is to demonstrate how storytelling as a narrative strategy is used in Kazuo Ishiguro's *A Pale View of Hills* (1982), Michèle Roberts' *Daughters of the House* (1992), and Sebastian Barry's *The Secret Scripture* (2008) to reveal, present, and confront the protagonists' individual and war traumas. The war traumas of these protagonists, in most circumstances, induce the emergence of their individual traumas. Trauma is an important and thought-provoking subject matter in the art of fiction. Especially, in contemporary fiction, how trauma is addressed and explored is an ongoing subject of debate among literary scholars.

Anne Whitehead suggests that "the rise of trauma theory has provided novelists with new ways of conceptualizing trauma and has shifted attention away from the question of what is remembered of the past to how and why it is remembered" (3). The rise of trauma theory has greatly impacted how novelists approach the representation of trauma in their works. Before trauma theory became prominent, literary works often concentrated on the factual details of traumatic events and the memories of the past. However, with the emergence of trauma theory, novelists have shifted to examining the psychological, emotional, and narrative aspects of trauma and its recollection.

Parallel to this claim, this study presents how the three contemporary novelists Kazuo Ishiguro, Michèle Roberts, and Sebastian Barry use their narrative strategies that include self-revelation, recording of trauma, and uncertainty of traumatic memory in their novels. Moreover, they use unbalanced narrators; and their narration is often set up in fragmentation and through flashbacks. These narrative strategies are all employed in their novels with the use of storytelling as an important narrative technique as well. In this context, this study exemplifies how storytelling is employed in these novels to present, reveal, and confront the protagonists' war traumas. Storytelling can also function as a powerful medium for trauma recovery in some circumstances in these novels.

Storytelling can be a powerful tool for the recovery of trauma victims since it allows them to construct and reconstruct their memories in a way that is meaningful and relevant to their present needs. By revising and rearranging their memories, individuals can gain a greater sense of control over their experiences, which can lead

to a reduction in trauma symptoms and an increased sense of well-being. In Kazuo Ishiguro's *A Pale View of Hills* (1982), Michèle Roberts' *Daughters of the House* (1992), and Sebastian Barry's *The Secret Scripture* (2008), Etsuko, Thérèse, and Roseanne, feel that they have control over their traumatic pains as their narrative continues. They sometimes fill in the gaps or change the truth in their stories in an attempt to relieve their traumatic sufferings.

The novels discussed in this study can be categorized under trauma fiction. These three novels are exemplified as trauma narratives. They were all written in the contemporary literary period when the representation of trauma in fiction was a challenging topic for novelists. Trauma fiction, indeed, is a literary genre that explores the profound and sorrowful experiences of individuals who have undergone intense psychological trauma. Trauma fiction also investigates the aftermath of such experiences, examining the impact of these experiences on the characters' lives, relationships, and overall well-being.

Most contemporary novels address the capacity of trauma to capture the reader's sympathy by closely presenting the social and psychological consequences of trauma on individuals. These novels employ a narrative strategy to display traumatic effects in social circumstances. Fiction regards trauma as essential to human development, survival, and maturation. Fiction is often seen as a way to explore and understand trauma as well as a way to cope with it. Trauma can be a difficult subject to discuss, and fiction can provide a safe space to explore the causes and effects of trauma. Fiction can also help to normalize the experience of trauma and can offer hope that things can get better. Trauma is often seen as a part of human experience, and fiction can be a way to explore the different ways that individuals use to cope with trauma. Novels that present trauma portray characters who have problems in talking about their traumas. These characters might struggle to find the words to describe their traumas or might feel that their experiences are not understood by others. Even, they might use their traumatic experiences to communicate with others who have also had similar experiences.

Trauma fiction goes beyond merely recounting traumatic events; it seeks to illuminate the complex emotional and psychological reflections, shedding light on internal struggles, coping mechanisms, and resistance. Through the use of storytelling, trauma fiction not only reflects the harsh realities of trauma but also

aims to foster understanding and empathy among readers by encouraging them to confront the profound effects of trauma on the human psyche. Novels of trauma address the complexities of trauma and offer readers a poignant and thought-provoking exploration of the human capacity for survival and healing in the face of profound adversity.

Storytelling is essential for the recovery process of the traumatized victim since reconstructing one's traumatic experiences and retelling them at a particular moment contributes to the relief of the trauma sufferings of the victim. Michelle Balaev claims as follows:

Traumatic memory is rarely represented as an exact recalling of events. Rather, the construction of the past includes new details with each telling, or it is constructed from different perspectives, which demonstrates that memories of the traumatic experience are revised and actively rearranged according to the needs of the individual at a particular moment (2008, 164).

In the novels discussed in this study, these particular moments are presented as crises. For instance, it is only when her younger daughter Niki visits her, Etsuko begins to tell her fictional story about her traumatic past. It is only when her sister Thérèse returns home from the convent and begins to rewrite her autobiography that Léonie decides to reveal and confront her traumatic war experiences. Moreover, it is only after the decision to evacuate and demolish Roscommon Regional Mental Hospital that Roseanne begins to write a memoir about her traumatic pains, serving as a testimony of herself.

Trauma studies presume that storytelling and narrative can function in the recovery process of a traumatized individual or a group. Freud and Breuer's "talking cure", Pierre Janet's variation between "traumatic memory" and "ordinary narrative memory", and Carl Jung's view that the healing of trauma begins when the traumatized individual can convert traumatic experiences into a logical and cohesive narrative are significant examples of this view. Andermahr and Pellicer-Ortin suggest that "the healing of trauma only begins when the traumatized person can transform traumatic events into a logical and coherent narrative" (2). Suzette A. Henke also suggests in her book *Trauma and Testimony in Women's Life-Writing* as follows:

The process of writing out and writing through a traumatic event in the type of therapeutic re-enactment [...] Autobiography could so efficaciously imitate the scene of psychoanalysis that life-writing might provide a therapeutic alternative for victims of acute anxiety and, more seriously of post-traumatic stress disorder. (1998, xii-xiii)

Similarly, in this study, the trauma of the three protagonists is reflected through creating a narrative around them. These protagonists resort to storytelling to reveal and present their deep traumatic pains since storytelling functions in fiction as a form of representation of traumatic experiences. That is, the trauma of the characters in trauma fiction is transformed to be representable thanks to storytelling.

The novels discussed in this study also address postmemory theory. Postmemory refers to creating memories in the next generation based on the experiences of those who lived through traumatic experiences in the past. Marianne Hirsch describes postmemory as “a structure of inter and transgenerational return of traumatic knowledge and embodied experience. It is a consequence of traumatic recall but (unlike posttraumatic stress disorder) at a generational remove” (6). Hirsch’s conception of postmemory refers to the way that experiences are shaped for those who grow up with narratives from before their birth. Their own delayed stories are overshadowed by the previous generation’s accounts of traumatic events, which cannot be fully understood or recreated.

Postmemory underlines how the transmission of trauma extends beyond the individuals who directly experienced it, affecting their descendants through stories, behaviors, and cultural practices. Therefore, a younger family member is expected to build his/her postmemory from the stories of his/her ancestors and elders who endured violence, oppression, and other catastrophic events. Passing on an experienced past to generations who did not directly experience it is not about recreating the experience, but rather about remembering it through storytelling.

Unlike posttraumatic stress disorder that manifests in those who personally endured the traumatic events, postmemory operates at a generational distance, embedding itself into the identity and collective memory of subsequent generations. This process underscores the profound and lasting impact of trauma, demonstrating how it can shape and influence the lives and memories of people far removed in time and experience from the original events. To transmit the unexperienced past to younger generations, autobiographies, journals, memoirs, and diaries are powerful and effective productions. These accounts of the traumatic memories construct the postmemory of the successor members of the family.

Mieke Bal defines storytelling as “the presentation in whatever medium of a focalized series of events” (37) and she maintains: “It concerns others, and it is always, at least in part, fictional” (37). Even when drawing from factual events or personal experiences, storytelling inherently involves a degree of fictionalization since it involves elements of imagination and creativity. The fictional nature of storytelling allows the exploration of abstract concepts, universal themes, and the human condition. The power of storytelling lies in its ability to connect with others, evoke emotions, explore universal themes, and create meaningful and impactful narratives.

In today’s world, storytelling is regarded as a field of human sciences since it reflects social manifestations. Storytelling convention is also linked to forming identities and awareness since stories carry some cultural essentials from individuals and societies. Storytelling intervenes in daily life and shapes how individuals see the world around them. Individuals learn about cultural values, beliefs, and conventions of their cultures through stories. They also respond to specific situations and amuse each other by telling stories, and employ storytelling to talk about their worries, fears, hopes, delights, and frustrations. In some cases, individuals employ storytelling to criticize groups or other individuals, or to persuade others that they are right in their assertions.

One function of storytelling is its contribution to the healing of trauma. That is, what cannot be spoken might be at least exemplified and mediated through cultural practices. Since the great rise in interest in trauma fiction from the late 1980s, literary trauma studies present how traumas of different kinds have been exemplified in fiction. Joshua Pederson claims: “In the immediate aftermath (of the traumatic experience), the victim may forget the event. And if memories of the trauma return, they are often nonverbal, and the victim may be unable to describe them with words” (335). Then, one way of describing these traumatic memories is to create a narrative about them. Whether fact or fiction, these narratives even contribute to the healing process of the traumatized victim.

The main purpose of storytelling in fiction is to break the silence and fear that characters have. By telling their stories, Etsuko, Thérèse, and Roseanne find a way to reveal the traumatic experiences that make them silent and isolated from the world around them. Converting an individual’s trauma to a discourse is like taking him/her

to a hospital to bandage his/her wounds. Hartman claims: “Literature allows us to ‘read the wound’, to attend to the reality of world-warping loss” (537). Therefore, if literature can present trauma, it can reveal reality in its truest form. In this sense, as Pederson suggests, literature “remains a valuable tool in the struggle to reclaim our most painful experiences” (350).

Most literary trauma critics emphasize that storytelling is essential for the development of identity and well-being. Traumatized individuals mostly suffer from feelings of guilt and blame themselves for their defeat. These victims need to establish a new and hopeful future for themselves. To achieve this, victims must get rid of their negative, sorrowful, and devastating feelings. In this sense, storytelling functions as a therapy to help individuals build alternative meanings for their living conditions.

Critics such as Judith Herman support the power of language and narrative, especially the function of storytelling as a “talking cure”. Herman claims that the ability to give a coherent and convincing account of a traumatic experience is a necessary step in the process of recovery. In her book *Trauma and Recovery*, she claims: “The therapeutic work of bearing witness to the truth of a survivor’s experience is crucial to the healing process” (107). This is because she believes that traumatic events overwhelm the ordinary systems of care that give people a sense of control, connection, and meaning.

Jakob Lothe underlines: “Storytelling can be not only ethically dubious but dangerous, creating myths and constructing lies that are politically or ideologically motivated” (160). Mythmaking and the construction of false narratives can be used to reinforce control over populations. By creating heroes, villains, and simplified narratives that serve political or ideological worldviews, storytellers can manipulate public opinion, reinforce existing power structures, and silence alternative perspectives.

Narrative reconstructs memory as when an individual engages in storytelling, he/she reconstructs his/her memories into a coherent narrative structure. Individuals select, interpret, and arrange their memories in a way that they construct a meaningful and comprehensible story. By doing so, they shape their identities and make sense of their past experiences, connecting them through a narrative. Narrative

preserves and transmits memory. Through storytelling, memories can be preserved and transmitted across generations. Personal narratives serve as a vehicle for passing down cultural, historical, and familial memories. By sharing stories, individuals connect with their collective past, maintain a sense of continuity, and reinforce their identities within a larger social context.

One way that individuals process and understand their memories is by creating a narrative around them. This narrative gives the memories context and meaning and helps to make sense of them. Traumatic memories, as also presented in the novels discussed in this study, often do not have a clear and certain narrative structure, and this can make them difficult to understand and process. Van Der Kolk and Van Der Hart argue that trauma treatment should focus on helping people create a narrative around their memories. This can help to make the memories more manageable and less overwhelming. It can also aid individuals to better understand and process their experiences. Richard J. McNally summarizes narrative memory as follows:

In contrast to the involuntary experiencing of traumatic memories, narrating memories to others [...] enables survivors to gain more control over the traces left by trauma. Narrative memory is not passively endured; rather, it is an act on the part of the narrator, a speech act that defuses traumatic memory, giving shape and a temporal order to the events recalled, establishing more control over their recalling, and helping the survivor to remake a self. (71)

Van Alphen claims that “narrative can be seen as an existential response to the world and to the experience of that world” (68), and Jens Brockmeier claims that “narrative is a language of, and a tool for, ‘existential meaning-making’” (51). Narrative serves as a powerful tool for individuals to respond to and make sense of their existence and the world they inhabit. By engaging with narratives, individuals engage in sense-making, identity formation, emotional exploration, existential questioning, and social reflection, all of which contribute to their existential response to the world. Similarly, the protagonists of the novels discussed in this study, Etsuko, Thérèse, and Roseanne find their existence in the world and reform their identities through the stories they construct. In this sense, their stories serve as a guide to find their path to rediscover themselves in the face of their war trauma.

Van Alphen notes that narrative functions as “the medium of identity” (68). He names this identity as “narrative identity”. Ongoing historical and cultural changes challenge the narrative identity. In other words, narrative forms and shapes

identity. Arendt suggests: “Who somebody is or was we can only know by knowing the story of which he is the hero – his biography, in other words” (186). An individual’s biography, as the story in which he/she is the hero, is crucial for understanding his/her true identity. Examining a person’s life narrative enables us to understand his/her experiences, motivations, and the influences that have shaped him/her, and provides a comprehensive and empathetic understanding of who he/she is or was.

Narrative has the power to illuminate various aspects of human identity. “Although human identity is not dependent on narrative, narrative can make aspects of human identity clearer to the narrator – and the listener or reader or viewer” (Lothe 156). While human identity is not solely dependent on narratives, narratives provide a valuable tool for self-reflection, understanding cultural diversity, exploring emotions and motivations, making sense of life experiences, fostering empathy, and challenging stereotypes. Through narratives, both the narrator and the audience or the reader can gain deeper insights into the complexities and nuances of human identity.

Narrative, memory, and identity are closely linked to each other. Jakob Lothe suggests: “It appears impossible to come to terms with the concepts of narrative and identity without activating, implicitly or explicitly, aspects of memory” (153). Narrative, memory, and identity are intimately interconnected. Memory provides the foundational material for constructing narratives, which in turn shape individuals’ sense of identity. The relationship among these notions is interconnected since memory influences narrative interpretation, and narrative can impact how individuals recall and understand their past experiences.

Narrative relies on memory since it is a means through which individuals construct and convey their experiences, perspectives, and identities. These narratives draw heavily on memory as individuals recall and recount events, emotions, and details from their past. Without memory, the creation and preservation of personal narratives would be impossible. Memory shapes identity as memories play a fundamental role in shaping individuals’ sense of self and personal identity. The experiences individuals remember, the relationships they value, and the lessons they learn all contribute to their understanding of who they are. Memories of individuals provide the raw material for constructing a coherent narrative of their lives, which in turn influences their identities.

Memory influences narrative interpretation since the act of interpreting a narrative relies heavily on memory. Readers or listeners use their memories, experiences, and cultural backgrounds in the process of understanding a story. These personal memories and associations shape individuals' interpretation of the narrative, influencing the meanings they get from it and how they relate to the characters and events within it. Narrative shapes memory. The act of constructing a narrative can influence the memory. That is, the act of storytelling can impact how individuals remember events. Individuals tend to reshape and reinterpret their memories in line with the narrative they construct by emphasizing certain aspects, downplaying others, and even filling in the gaps. In this way, the narrative individuals construct can shape and reshape their memories over time. Jakob Lothe underlines the contradiction in the narrative process as follows:

What the narratives to be considered do suggest, though, is that while narrative – including the decision to narrate, the attempt to narrate, and constituent elements of narration – can enable a Holocaust survivor to come to terms with aspects of his or her traumatic experience, other aspects of that experience, including the way it is remembered, resist narrativization. (154)

Despite the resistance to narrativization, the act of attempting to convey the Holocaust experience through narrative remains essential. However, “the attempt to narrate blends into an act of remembering that activates, or intensifies, painful memories of the traumatic experience” (Brockmeier 119).

Lothe claims that “narrative is a resource with a view to the uphill task of coming to terms with, and living with, a traumatic memory” (160). That is, narrative can serve as a valuable resource for individuals who attempt to grapple with and integrate traumatic memories into their lives. Narrating one's story, in an oral or written form, is a central and vital experience for those who have experienced serious social trauma. It is a means of restoring one's sense of humanity. It is a means of bearing witness so that others can better understand what has happened. Although storytelling does not always have a healing consequence for the victim, it unlocks paths of feelings, ideas, fears, and worries that have been locked for a long time. Having a chance to narrate one's traumatic experiences might sometimes guide one to the act of narrating deeply private stories that might have long been either neglected or rejected.

Lothe also puts forward that “the relationship between trauma and narrative is close but problematic” (152). He maintains: “While our memory of a traumatic event may prompt narration, it may also thwart narration” (152). For one victim, recalling and telling about his/her traumatic experience might be helpful and healing although for another, the narrative activity might be a challenging action since the victim might try to remember what he/she indeed wishes to forget.

Societies and communities might hinder victims from explaining behaviors that prompt trauma. There is a strong tendency in communities to sacrifice victims for society’s benefit. Michelle Balaev claims as follows:

The environment of social relations and cultural values can be a source of trauma or a force that silences victims out of denial or guilt. It can create veils of illusion and attempts to mask or reinterpret behaviors that induce trauma. Societies, communities, or families may want to preserve stability or be willing to sacrifice victims for other goals [...] However, individuals or circumstances within these same environments can be triggers for memory or encouragement because not everyone is silenced or traumatized by similar circumstances. (2014, 131)

Trauma theory has shifted the focus away from simply recounting traumatic events and towards understanding the complex and often fragmented ways in which trauma is remembered and processed. This shift has allowed novelists to explore the internal experiences of trauma victims as well as the impacts of trauma on memory, identity, and perception. By focusing on the process of remembering trauma, rather than only its factual details, novelists have been able to create more nuanced and psychologically rich representations of trauma.

In the realm of literary criticism, the concept of trauma has been debated and contested, with scholars exploring the relationship between trauma and narrative, the representation of trauma in literature, and the cultural and political implications of trauma narratives. This diversity of opinions and perspectives has left literary scholars with a wide range of definitions and theories of trauma to work with, leading to a rich and complex field of study. The expansion of the definition of trauma has led to debates and controversies about the criteria for diagnosing and treating trauma, with some scholars advocating for a more nuanced and culturally sensitive understanding of trauma and its effects. The history of literary trauma theory is also marked by conflicting opinions about the role of memory and forgetting in the aftermath of trauma, with some scholars emphasizing the

importance of repressed memories and others emphasizing the role of dissociation in coping with trauma.

Characters of trauma narratives often experience several symptoms that are similar to those of actual trauma victims. These symptoms can include paralysis, nightmares, and the sense of something missing. Furthermore, characters might also experience flashbacks, intrusive thoughts, and a feeling of disconnection from the world around them. The accompanying post-traumatic effects that are symbolized in trauma novels include unsuccessful relationships and mental collapses. Characters in trauma novels might display different reactions towards their traumas. For instance, these characters might aim to hide or change the actual flow of the traumatic events to avoid facing their traumatic experiences. Etsuko's hiding Keiko's suicide from her old teacher, Roseanne's changing the actual flow of her father's murder, and Léonie's continual escape to hear and understand the ghostly voices of the deceased Jewish family can be important examples of avoidance from the confrontation of their traumas.

Trauma narratives focus on several social and psychological issues, presenting how individuals react to and process trauma. How differently traumatized individuals react to similar traumatic experiences also presents a different outlook. Furthermore, trauma narratives can explore how different types of traumas can affect an individual's life. Trauma fiction gives voice to silenced characters who carry personal and collective histories within them. With characters influenced by some traumatic experiences, writers of trauma fiction mostly aim to present wider cultural traumas. Such narratives question how individuals deal with losses and fragmentations in their lives.

In her book *Trauma and Survival in Contemporary Fiction*, Laurie Vickroy investigates the social contexts of traumatic events and narrative designs that writers employ in trauma fiction to attract their readers to traumatic conflicts. Considering cognitive psychology, narrative, and cultural theories, Vickroy suggests that trauma fiction reveals three effects: the consciousness of the multidimensionality of an extravagant experience and especially the social effects that form the victim's identity, the textual design of the social aspects of the character's mind, and the morals or values of reading that pressure empathetic compatibility between the reader and the fictional character.

Vickroy also claims that “trauma narratives go beyond presenting trauma as subject matter or in characterization; they also incorporate the rhythms, processes, and uncertainties of trauma within the consciousness and structures of these works” (xiv). Trauma narratives present more than depictions of the traumatic events and these narratives aim to reveal the long-lasting impacts of the traumatic events on the characters. In trauma fiction, the plot might not have a beginning or an end since the origin of trauma might not be completely understood in the process of its occurrence. Luckhurst states that “no narrative of trauma can be told in a linear way: it has a time signature that must fracture conventional casualty” (2008, 9). Trauma fiction might also direct readers to question the reality of the story and the self-awareness of the traumatized character, by employing supernatural and fantastic elements such as ghosts, mysterious sounds, and hallucinations. Indeed, these elements in trauma fiction emphasize the nature of real post-traumatic experiences.

Trauma fiction and its mission have been topics of discussion since the 1990s; however, according to the general agreement of the theoreticians, “no genre or discipline owns trauma as a problem or can provide definitive boundaries for it” (Lacapra 96) since “trauma is also always a breaching of disciplines” (Luckhurst, 2008, 4). Trauma fiction is not only a new genre, but also a new perspective to view traumatized people. In trauma fiction, the traumatized individuals are not only the victims of history but also the victims of society. Moreover, trauma fiction can be valued as a combination of the experiences of traumatized people and the experiences of the people who have not been traumatized. That is to say, trauma fiction is a new genre that is hard to classify under any genre. Yet, with its representation of catastrophic violence and its after-effects, trauma fiction can be categorized under war fiction.

War fiction, as a literary genre, encompasses narratives that focus on the multifaceted aspects of military conflict, engaging with themes such as the brutality of combat, the psychological and moral complexities faced by soldiers, and the profound effects of war on both combatants and civilians. This genre often portrays the visceral realities of battle, delving into the emotional and physical tolls exerted on individuals, while simultaneously exploring broader ethical and existential questions surrounding the nature of warfare and its justification. Moreover, war

fiction also reveals the collective traumas of societies by displaying how and why these traumas emerged in communities.

Lidia Yuknavitch suggests that war fiction includes “rereadings of past wars, conflicting readings of present wars, and speculations about future wars” (ix). She also comments on the representation of war in fiction as follows:

While it is certainly true that the war novel after 1914 began to shift its forms and techniques in relation to changes in social life and economy [...] the post-1960 war novel has turned from telling the story of the event of war to telling the story of language itself, trading the value of the event for the efficacy of representation. In other words, as the fronts and technique of war have shifted, the content and form of the novel have as well. (5)

Yuknavitch’s analysis underscores the evolution of the war novel, emphasizing how literary approaches have adapted to reflect broader societal and economic transformations. War novels have increasingly focused on the complexities of language and representation, rather than just recounting war events. This shift mirrors changes in warfare and its portrayal, suggesting that contemporary war fiction seeks to explore deeper, often abstract dimensions of conflict. The narrative focus has moved from the literal depiction of battles to an exploration of how war is communicated and understood through language, highlighting the intricate relationship between narrative form and the realities of war.

War fiction can be set in historical contexts, offering a reflection on past conflicts, or in speculative futures, presenting dystopian or alternate realities to critique contemporary and future implications of war. Through its diverse representations and thematic depth, war fiction not only serves as a poignant reminder of the human costs of war but also as a significant cultural and political commentary on the nature of conflict and its pervasive impact on society.

Trauma fiction presents various responses and survival manners within the characterization of victims. Characters in trauma fiction often have to find ways to cope with their experiences to survive. Some characters might bury their traumas and pretend that they never happened, while others might attempt to face them. Some characters might even try to use their trauma as a way to help others who have gone through similar experiences. Psychic healing is the goal of representations of trauma; to represent what victims cannot state or even recall is the aim of trauma fiction.

Trauma fiction is a genre that aims to represent the psychological effects of traumatic events. These effects might include post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), dissociation, victims' guilt, and other mental health issues. Trauma fiction often employs techniques of stream of consciousness, nonlinear storytelling, and unbalanced narration. Writing about the profound impact of traumatic events blurs the boundaries between literature and reality. Much of what is written about the traumatic experiences can be regarded as testimony that addresses personal accounts of actual events. Testimony carries important responsibilities for both the writer and the reader. Both the acts of testifying and recounting historical events are constructed processes; they involve retelling events after they occur, and these stories are influenced by factors beyond the events themselves. However, "in fiction, precisely because it is free to say anything, there is often an access to the manipulation of collective memory" (Eaglestone, 2013, 57). This manipulation of collective memory can be observed in Etsuko, Thérèse, and Roseanne's traumatic memories while they are telling or writing about their traumatic past. In some parts, they aim to manipulate the truth for their self-healing processes.

Valentina Adami defines trauma fiction "in terms of the narrative's formal structure, and of the capacity of that structure to convey the fragmentation of meaning and identity brought about by traumatic experiences. Recurring stylistic features of trauma fiction include intertextuality, repetition, and a fragmented narrative voice" (73). All three novels discussed in this study include repetitions, flashbacks, and fragmented narrative voices. As Adami also suggests, a novel cannot be categorized into trauma fiction only by presenting the traumatic event or events. The psychological after-effects of these traumatic experiences on the characters as well as how these effects are revealed throughout the novel are important elements of trauma fiction. For the novels discussed in this study, the after-effects of war traumas of the protagonists Etsuko, Thérèse, and Roseanne are revealed and presented through the use of storytelling about the characters' traumatic war experiences.

"Some critics have argued or even assumed that trauma can only be represented in complex, challenging and, even perhaps, modernist or postmodernist forms" (Eaglestone, 2020, 290). This claim proves to be true as trauma fiction can be categorized under contemporary fiction. In trauma fiction, intertextuality, pastiche, and parody are commonly employed, alongside elements such as irony, black humor,

and unbalanced narration. Fragmentation and metafiction often characterize the narrative structure, reflecting the fractured nature of traumatic experiences. Writers of trauma fiction regard trauma as both evidence and a symptom of social injustice or oppression, exploring how defensive mechanisms work as an outcome of traumatic experiences. They also depict the fears and anxieties of traumatized characters, alongside their strategies for coping with trauma and seeking relief. By engaging with themes of fragmentation and exploring the tensions between the individual and society, trauma fiction sheds light on control mechanisms that shape human history and existence.

In the realm of trauma fiction, there exists a continual trend of presenting characters' stories, often in the forms of memoirs and autobiographies. Eaglestone underlines that "trauma fiction means less 'fiction about trauma' and more, 'reading with trauma in mind'" (2020, 287). Therefore, the novels categorized in trauma fiction do not directly portray traumatic events and circumstances; indeed, they focus on the outcomes and after-effects of traumatic experiences. Writers of trauma fiction frequently employ first-person narration from the protagonist's perspective. The reflections of trauma are presented in these characters' memories, which makes storytelling an important narrative strategy in trauma fiction. Through storytelling, writers can present different times and places in a fragmented narrative; they might use such techniques as flashbacks, repetitions, and fragmented narration to enrich their narratives.

Trauma novels are important literary productions in that they reveal, present and reconstruct individual and war traumas in their stylistic features. Their narrative strategies, word choices, fragmented nature, use of flashbacks, and unbalanced narrators who present their memories in obscurity contribute to the development of trauma fiction. These stylistic elements mirror the disjointed and often chaotic nature of traumatic memories, allowing readers to engage with the psychological and emotional realities of the characters. The fragmented narrative structure, for instance, reflects the disrupted memory and sense of time commonly experienced by trauma victims, creating a reading experience that echoes the process of piecing together a shattered past.

Flashbacks serve to immerse readers in the immediacy of traumatic events, blurring the lines between past and present to convey the persistent and invasive

nature of traumatic recollections. The use of unbalanced narrators, whose perceptions are clouded by their psychological turmoil, further deepens the authenticity of the portrayal, highlighting the struggle for coherence and understanding. Through these techniques, trauma novels not only convey the profound impacts of trauma on individuals but also invite readers to empathize with and reflect on the complex process of healing and memory reconstruction. In doing so, they contribute significantly to the broader discourse on trauma, offering insights into the human condition and the enduring effects of violence on the psyche. Furthermore, trauma novels prove that trauma can be represented in fiction; indeed, in some circumstances, these novels open a gate for readers to confront their traumatic sufferings and find a way to bandage their psychological wounds.

Readers of trauma fiction need to fill in the textual gaps when necessary. Kaakinen suggests that “narratives of trauma are often approached as narratives of indirection, in which textual gaps are indexes pointing to an absent, traumatic referent” (259). Considering the novels discussed in this study, none of the three protagonists clearly state that their individual traumas stem from their war traumas. The relation between the characters’ life stories and the historical facts is built by readers of the novels. In other words, what these characters suffer and what they cannot directly tell address the sorrowful experiences of the devastating wars they survived. In the aftermath of these historical events, Etsuko, Thérèse, and Roseanne find themselves shocked and stuck in the face of both individual and collective traumas.

An overwhelming traumatic event, its recurrent after-effects, the confrontation, and the resolution processes of trauma are essential elements in trauma fiction. Eaglestone defines a stereotypical traumatic fiction plot as follows:

There is, first, an overwhelming event, a trauma, for a character or community; then there is the period of “latency”, in which the symptoms recur and emerge in other ways; and then there is a confrontation, often via an act of transference, and so a resolution of the trauma. (2020, 292)

In trauma novels, recall and verbal construction of the past are essential. The act of narrating a traumatic experience can serve as a means of processing and making sense of the trauma. Through the process of putting words together, characters in trauma novels might suffer from the deep impacts that their traumas cause. Furthermore, how characters recall and construct their traumatic memories can reveal

important aspects of their psychological states such as their levels of reaction and coping mechanisms. Therefore, in trauma novels, recall of the past and verbal construction serves not only as a means of exploring the inner lives of characters but also as a way to address larger societal issues related to trauma and recovery.

Michelle Balaev explains the function of trauma in the novel as follows:

Trauma, in the novel, lurches the protagonist into a profound inquisitive state, in which the meaning of the experience and the process of conceptualizing the self and World are meticulously evaluated [...] The traumatized protagonist's inquiry into previous "truths" of the self or formulations of identity produces a change in consciousness, however painful this might be, that takes the protagonist on a transformative journey, one that does not necessarily provide relief from suffering or redemption. Responses to traumatic events in fiction often cause the protagonist to turn inward and struggle with the past. (2008, 164)

The characterization in trauma fiction is also different from other narrative forms. In trauma fiction, characters are mostly created as marginal ones, and in their post-traumatic situations, they mostly ignore their traumatic experiences. However, their ignorance of these experiences does not last long and trauma displays its impacts in various forms. These forms might be in fragmented episodes, narrations of past events, or the creation of parallel, realistic but fictional stories. In this study, Etsuko, Thérèse, and Roseanne create parallel and fictional stories of their past as a reaction to the long-lasting ignorance of their traumatic war experiences.

In the post-traumatic situation, characters suffer from a physical disability, mental illness, or psychological trauma. They are also often unable to communicate their experiences with others, and they are often disbelieved or ignored when they attempt to do so. In some cases, characters' experiences are so horrific that they are unable to remember them. Characters might be obsessed with anything that reminds them of their traumas. To reflect these obsessions, writers might employ complex metaphoric and symbolic structures in their literary narratives.

Trauma is addressed in many contemporary novels. Novels like Alice Munro's *Lives of Girls and Women* (1971), Margaret Laurence's *The Diviners* (1974), Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony* (1977), Iris Murdoch's *The Sea, The Sea* (1978), and Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987), illuminate the enduring impact of trauma on individuals and societies, while also highlighting the possibilities for healing and redemption. In all these novels, the protagonists are given a way to cope with their traumas by altering how they interpret these traumatic experiences. These

protagonists all find a new way to interpret their trauma, help themselves to process and bear witness to their traumatic experiences.

This therapeutic and ethical approach is conveyed to the reader through the authors' narrative strategies. These strategies engage the reader in the novel, allowing them to experience a changed perception of trauma. They include avoiding fixed endings, using contradictory sentences, disrupting linear chronology, and emphasizing the fluidity and adaptability of interpretation over fixed meanings. These strategies challenge the realist narrative structure that often creates a definitive version of events. Therefore, these novels underline the importance of narrative in processing and bearing witness to trauma; they establish and then disrupt conventional narrative forms to create a narrative that acknowledges the need to tell stories about the protagonists' traumas.

Eagleton claims that "fiction is the freest of all the arts" (2013, 21). He maintains that fiction "is not simply made up; it does not just tell a story. Originally, 'definition' meant the setting of bounds or limits: it's not at all clear what the limits of fiction are, or indeed if there are any" (21). Contemporary trauma novel reveals the impacts of suffering on the individual and the society based on the character's relation to place. Balaev states:

The author who situates traumatic experience in relation to a particular place indicates that trauma is understood as a culturally specific event, in which its meaning remains contingent on factors such as a historically specific moment, or socially ascribed attributes of identity, such as race and gender. (2008, 160)

Fiction has always been interested in the past, history, and memory. However, "contemporary fiction is turning back to thinking about the past but often rejects the traditional historical novel by exploring memory, trauma, and the way the past haunts and possesses the present" (Eagleton, 2013, 50). There is a well-known quote from William Faulkner: "The past is never dead; it is not even the past" (85). Many contemporary novels prove that this claim is true. Individuals' relationships with past events and their attitudes about the past are always changing. Historical research addresses different directions about the past over time. Individuals' private and public stories about the past might change and develop as their identities might be formed by the stories they tell about their past. Therefore, their senses of themselves change; their past becomes their present. In this context, contemporary

fiction reflects these changes and investigates ways to relate the events of the past to the pastness of the storytellers. Laurie Vickroy states:

Contemporary writers, informed by postmodernism, more directly link subjects' psyches to societal designations and contexts than do modernists. They provide readers with many looks at the characters' experiences through the use of multiple and split narrative strategies and perspectives. Narratives developed along these lines attempt to engage readers ethically by making them interlocutors and interpreters of multiple viewpoints. (16)

Contemporary post-war novels share a common characteristic in their exploration of human psychology and narrative techniques. These novels address the complexities of the human mind and portray characters with depth and psychological complexity. Contemporary novels frequently employ stream-of-consciousness narratives and interior monologues; on the other hand, trauma novels also use these techniques but blend them with other innovative narrative styles. Vickroy relates contemporary writing to trauma as follows:

In trauma novels, traumatic experience alters the previous framework of reality; therefore, the protagonist needs to reorganize himself/herself according to this new view of reality. Traumatic events can have a profound and lasting impact on an individual's sense of reality. The traumatic experience can cause the protagonist to question his/her previously held beliefs, values, and assumptions about the world and himself/herself. This shift in reality can lead to feelings of disorientation, confusion, and a loss of control. As a result, the protagonist might struggle to reorganize his/her sense of self and find meaning in a world that now seems fundamentally altered.

Reading trauma fiction can indeed have an emotional impact on the reader, and it might be distressing or triggering. Trauma fiction often deals with intense and distressing subject matter such as violence, abuse, or other traumatic events which can evoke strong emotions and reactions. Reading and writing trauma fiction might reveal empathy and an understanding of the traumatic experiences of individuals who have gone through similar cases. It can also provide a sense of catharsis or validation for individuals who have had similar experiences. However, trauma affects people differently, and what might be cathartic or empowering for one individual can be deeply distressing for another.

The understanding of trauma and its psychological effects has deepened significantly since the 1970s. This increased awareness has allowed contemporary writers to explore trauma with an alternative perspective and draw on psychological research and real-life accounts. Therefore, contemporary trauma literature benefits from a wealth of knowledge, contributing to more authentic and empathetic

portrayals of traumatic experiences. Writers of trauma fiction provide readers with a profound understanding of the causes and consequences of trauma; they also present more empathy and awareness towards traumatic experiences. Joshua Pederson claims as follows:

The language a victim uses [...] has the power to enact healing, give order, and allow the reconstruction of the victim's shattered psyche. Readers who accept the restorative power of language are likely to see the literature on trauma not as a collection of faltering or failing speech acts but instead as efforts – no matter how halting – at rehabilitation. Suggesting that simple 'narration' of trauma is both possible and salutary does not steal the power that Caruth grants to literature. (339)

In trauma fiction fragmented narratives and shifting subject positions emerge as essential elements. These narrative strategies display the writer's belief in the presence of multiple and conflicting environmental influences. These narratives challenge the notion of a stable and consistent identity. Contemporary storytelling often portrays a shattered self; it is directed by uncontrollable forces, and it exists beyond the chronology. Indeed, storytelling takes its power from the storytellers' past. The storyteller's past serves as a reservoir of lived experiences, shaping the themes, characters, and messages conveyed in their narratives. This connection to personal history not only enhances the storyteller's ability to engage audiences but also lends credibility and resonance to the stories being shared. Moreover, by weaving elements of their past into storytelling, individuals can create a powerful bond with listeners, fostering empathy, understanding, and a shared sense of humanity. Therefore, the storyteller's past is not merely a backdrop but a fundamental source of strength and resonance in the art of storytelling.

The evolution of trauma fiction reflects a dynamic intersection of societal changes, evolving perspectives on mental health, and a deepening understanding of human psychology. Early works often approached trauma indirectly or through symbolic narratives. As societal awareness of trauma grew, particularly with advancements in psychology and increased recognition of the impact of historical events such as wars and social injustices, trauma fiction expanded to include more explicit and diverse portrayals of trauma.

In the latter half of the 20th century and the 21st century, trauma fiction writers illuminated the nuanced and varied experiences of trauma, putting marginalized voices together and addressing issues such as racism, gender-based

violence, and the aftermath of trauma. The genre has become increasingly interdisciplinary, drawing inspiration from fields like psychology and sociology to depict trauma with greater accuracy and depth. Today, trauma fiction continues to evolve, reflecting ongoing shifts in societal attitudes, mental health discourse, and a commitment to exploring the complexities of the human condition.

Van Der Kolk and Van Der Hart define traumatic memories as “the unassimilated scraps of overwhelming experiences, which need to be integrated with existing mental schemes and be transformed into narrative language” (176). Van Der Kolk and Van Der Hart argue that symptoms of trauma are outcomes of the body and brain’s inability to process and store overwhelming experiences. Traumatic memories are stored in a different way than regular memories, and this can lead to difficulty in processing and understanding them. In the novels chosen to be discussed in this study, the way of processing and understanding such traumatic memories is to storify them. The protagonists of the novels create fictional stories from their past experiences and present them to reveal their traumatic pains.

Although scholars like Cathy Caruth and Sigmund Freud claim that trauma cannot be represented truly and completely through narrative; trauma fiction writers developed a new narrative strategy in fiction, storytelling, through which trauma fiction writers proved that trauma is representable in literature. The novels this study discusses include both storytelling and the main characters’ traumatic experiences. In this sense, they can be regarded as trauma fiction. These novels all aim to represent individual and war traumas through their detailed narration and depiction of the after-effects of trauma. Pederson claims that “traumatic memories [...] are potentially more detailed and more powerful than normal ones” (339). Ishiguro, Roberts, and Barry all address the after-effects of war trauma through some circumstances and details in their novels. For this study, to reveal the main characters’ traumatic experiences and to display the impacts and results of war traumas, these three novels are subject to detailed analyses based on their protagonists’ lives and discourses. To reflect their traumatic experiences, these characters create their own fictional stories and use these reconstructed stories to recover from their sufferings of individual and war traumas.

CHAPTER 2: KAZUO ISHIGURO'S *A PALE VIEW OF HILLS*

2.1 Kazuo Ishiguro and Storytelling in *A Pale View of Hills*

Kazuo Ishiguro is a British novelist and screenwriter of Japanese origin, and he is widely regarded as one of the most distinguished contemporary writers in British Fiction. Ishiguro was born in Nagasaki, Japan, in 1954, and moved with his family to England when he was five years old. He attended the University of Kent, where he studied English and Philosophy, and he later pursued a Master's Degree in Creative Writing at the University of East Anglia. Ishiguro's first novel, *A Pale View of Hills*, was published in 1982, and was followed by his acclaimed works, *An Artist of the Floating World* (1986), *The Remains of the Day* (1989), and *Never Let Me Go* (2005).

Ishiguro is a distinguished storyteller with a unique talent for exploring the complexities of human emotions and relationships. One remarkable theme that permeates Ishiguro's work is his exploration of trauma. His novels, such as *Never Let Me Go* (2005), *The Remains of the Day* (1989), and *When We Were Orphans* (2000) vividly depict the impact of trauma on his characters' lives, often exploring both how they cope with and how they conceal their traumatic pains.

Ishiguro uses storytelling as a narrative strategy that reveals what his characters often hide or how they repress their traumatic experiences. His writing is mostly characterized by a sense of emotional restraint that also reflects the inner turmoil of his characters. This narrative approach allows Ishiguro to reveal the layers of trauma that his characters carry and creates a deep and emotional impact on readers. Ishiguro's exploration of trauma in his novels is a testament to his skill as a storyteller and his deep understanding of the human condition. His narrative technique, characterized by emotional restraint and revelation, mirrors the way his characters hide their traumatic experiences. Through the lenses of his characters, Ishiguro explores the coping mechanisms of denial and repression as well as the devastating effects of unresolved trauma.

Ishiguro's characters mostly cope with their traumatic experiences by resorting to denial and repression. For instance, in *Never Let Me Go* (2005), the characters that are clones raised for organ harvesting, repress the horrifying reality of their fate and choose to live in blissful ignorance as a coping mechanism. This denial

allows them to maintain normality in their lives, even though it eventually feeds their suffering. Similarly, in *When We Were Orphans* (2000), Christopher Banks represses his traumatic pains stemming from his parents' disappearance when he was a child, and he dedicates his life to solving mysteries as a detective. His obsession with solving mysteries becomes a way to escape from his painful past, which underlines the destructive power of denial as a coping mechanism.

Ishiguro's *An Artist of the Floating World* (1986) which is set in the atmosphere of post-war Japan is also a profound exploration of trauma, memory, and redemption. Through his character, Masuji Ono, Ishiguro delves into the complex relationship between individual and collective trauma. He focuses on the power of memory in shaping one's identity as well. The novel proves the fact that while trauma might affect individuals and societies, the path to healing and redemption is related to the willingness to confront the past. Ishiguro's work also invites readers to ask universal questions about the historical and cultural contexts of post-war Japan.

An Artist of the Floating World (1986) opens with the memories of Masuji Ono, an elderly artist who was once celebrated for his paintings and who played a significant role in the cultural and political atmosphere of pre-war Japan. Through Ono's introspective narration, readers are exposed to the deeply embedded trauma of a nation that is grappling with the consequences of its imperialistic past and the devastation brought by World War II. Ishiguro expertly juxtaposes Ono's individual trauma with the collective trauma of Japanese society. Ono's life is marked by his involvement with the militaristic propaganda that triggered Japan's aggressive expansion during the war. As an artist who used his talents for such propaganda efforts, Ono grapples with the weight of his past traumatic pains.

Ishiguro's works underline the fact that trauma is a universal human experience, and the ways that individuals and societies choose: to confront or repress these traumatic pains can both have profound outcomes. His novels encourage readers to reflect on their own experiences with trauma and to consider the importance of acknowledging and processing their traumas. In doing so, Ishiguro's writing serves as a useful medium for understanding the complexities of the human psyche and the continual impacts of trauma on societies.

A Pale View of Hills, published in 1982, tells the story of an old Japanese woman, Etsuko, and her two daughters Keiko and Niki. Etsuko lives in the countryside in England alone. At the beginning of the novel, it is clear that her elder daughter Keiko committed suicide by hanging herself in her apartment in London. Etsuko's younger daughter Niki visits Etsuko for five days to help Etsuko relieve her traumatic pains stemming from both her daughter's suicide and the devastation caused by World War II.

Etsuko, in the story she constructs, invents an imaginary double of herself and names her 'Sachiko' who reflects the other side of herself; Etsuko also creates 'Mariko' as a daughter who stands for her deceased daughter Keiko. Representing duality, Sachiko seems to be a counter-character to Etsuko; however, Etsuko uses Sachiko to reveal her own traumatic experiences. Etsuko is, initially, not ready to confront her traumatic war experiences. Therefore, she depicts these experiences as if they do not belong to her but to Sachiko. In other words, the story that Etsuko creates about Sachiko and her daughter Mariko helps Etsuko reveal her traumatic pains about her deceased daughter Keiko and confront her traumatic sufferings caused by World War II.

The novel opens with the news of Etsuko's elder daughter Keiko's suicide. Although the circumstances of Niki's visit seem pleasant, the shadow of Keiko's death hangs over both Etsuko and Niki. During Niki's visit, Etsuko utters that she remembers a woman named Sachiko and her disturbed daughter Mariko, whom she knew briefly in Nagasaki during the reconstruction of the city after the war. Etsuko recalls Sachiko's friendship with her for a few weeks, to explain what happened to Keiko; Sachiko's life indeed seems to mirror and foreshadow aspects of Etsuko's own life. Etsuko initially thinks that returning to this period would help her mourn for Keiko; however, the details become paradoxically both clearer and murkier as the narrative evolves.

Etsuko frequently shifts between disparate subplots and makes additional commentary with her random thoughts that occur to her. Through this strategy, the reader learns more about Etsuko's mysterious neighbor Sachiko, and her background. However, Etsuko's narration is often chaotic, fragmentary, and even in conflict with itself, making it difficult to fully comprehend Sachiko's story. Etsuko provides insights into Sachiko's life; however, then she confuses the reader by

shifting the motivations of the character. Most probably, such confusion is Ishiguro's writing strategy to transmit the blurry atmosphere and the shock in Japan caused by World War II.

Ishiguro uses first-person narration and time shifts in his narration. The novel does not have a linear timeline; Etsuko changes her narration from time to time. She constructs a border between her past and her now. As for Sachiko, Etsuko states: "I felt a kind of sympathy for Sachiko" (Ishiguro 13). This sympathy comes from the fact that Sachiko reflects Etsuko. Sachiko often tells Etsuko that Etsuko is going to be a great mother. She states: "I'm sure you'll make a splendid mother" (Ishiguro 14). This expression suggests that Etsuko has regrets about her past attitude toward her deceased daughter Keiko as a mother, and she explains the reason for her attitude toward Keiko as follows:

I feel only regret now for those attitudes I displayed towards Keiko. In this country, after all, it is not unexpected that a young woman of that age should wish to leave home. All I succeeded in doing, it would seem, was to ensure that when she finally left – now almost six years ago – she did so severing all her ties with me. But then I never imagined she could so quickly vanish beyond my reach; all I saw was that my daughter, unhappy as she was at home, would find the world outside too much for her. It was for her protection I opposed her so vehemently. (Ishiguro 88)

Etsuko's memories of her past and her present life in England are interwoven throughout the novel. The use of multiple timelines serves to illustrate the fragmented nature of memory and how the past can continue to haunt the present. There are time shifts in the narration of the novel; that is, when the novel presents some dialogues between Etsuko and her younger daughter Niki at present, the narration suddenly changes to the old days with Etsuko's elder, deceased daughter Keiko.

Etsuko's narrative presents not only a reflection of her relationship with her deceased daughter but also an attempt to come to terms with her own continued existence. Through an exploration of her past which is full of loss and pain, Etsuko seeks to find inner peace and forgiveness during a time when these qualities are hard to find. Even though the novel offers no resolutions, the reader feels a need to engage with Etsuko's story and empathize with her struggles with her profound traumatic losses.

Etsuko's traumatic sufferings are heavy for any individual to deal with. Therefore, what Etsuko can only do is construct a story to relieve her psychological pains. In other words, she survives on her story. Since a trauma victim must find a way to relieve himself/herself, Etsuko's only way of self-healing is to create a new story about herself and her daughter Keiko. Etsuko states: "Such things are long in the past now and I have no wish to ponder them yet again" (Ishiguro 91). Then she maintains: "Such things are in the past now, and there is little to be gained in going over them here" (Ishiguro 94).

Etsuko wants to believe that she was always a good mother to Keiko; only in this way, she can relieve her traumatic pains. At the same time, Etsuko criticizes her fictional character Sachiko since Sachiko does not seem to be interested in the scar on Mariko's face although Etsuko warns her about a possible fight between kids. Sachiko replies: "I have to go into Nagasaki" (Ishiguro 15). Even, Sachiko wants Etsuko to look after Mariko when she is in Nagasaki. However, Etsuko warns her: "I must say, your daughter seems quite young to be left on her own all day" (Ishiguro 15). Here, Etsuko indeed criticizes herself since she leaves her daughter alone in a wooden, small, unguarded cottage all day.

Etsuko thinks that she has been an ignorant mother to Keiko. Therefore, she blames herself for her daughter's suicide:

For the two or three years before she finally left us, Keiko had retreated into that bedroom, shutting us out of her life. She rarely came out, although I would sometimes hear her moving around the house after we had all gone to bed [...] I never saw Keiko's room in Manchester, the room in which she died. It may seem morbid of a mother to have such thoughts, but on hearing of her suicide, the first thought that ran through my mind – before I registered even the shock – was to wonder how long she had been there like that before they had found her. (Ishiguro 53-54)

Etsuko wants to believe that she has always been a good and kind-hearted mother to Keiko. She wishes to forget how harshly and recklessly she behaved towards Keiko. She wants to reconstruct her old memories with her deceased daughter. That is why Etsuko portrays herself as a good and concerned mother to all children. The story about her past, in the way that she chooses to recall, helps her relieve her traumatic pains to a certain degree.

Etsuko can never construct an ideal, deep relationship with Keiko; she never embraces her. Instead, she drowns Keiko's cat in a dark river. This is an important

reason why Keiko develops a hatred for her mother. Keiko does not want to communicate with her mother as she is grown up. She closes herself in her room and later she decides to move to London to live on her own. She is found dead in her apartment by her landlord. The reasons for her suicide are her depression and trauma. Etsuko blames herself for her daughter's suicide; however, she knows that it is too late to think about it. The only thing that she can do to relieve her traumatic pains is to verbalize her traumatic experiences about her deceased daughter. That is why she constructs her daughter's story again; this time, she depicts herself as a very concerned, prospective mother.

Sachiko is not an ideal mother. Even at times when Mariko escapes from home or gets lost around the dark river, Sachiko is either reluctant to look for her or delays the action. Sometimes, she awaits her daughter to come back home on her own. Etsuko depicts Sachiko as a reckless mother. Even when Sachiko realizes that Mariko is lost near the river, she continues to talk about her future expectations in America:

“Aren't you going to ask me anything more?” Sachiko said, catching up with me. “Aren't you going to ask me why I'm going? And who I'm going with?” “I'm very glad if this is what you wanted,” I said. “But perhaps we should find your daughter first”. (Ishiguro 37)

In a later scene, Etsuko storifies a little girl on a swing, holding chains in her hands. This girl with the chains symbolizes Etsuko's deceased daughter Keiko. She is there to convey a message to Etsuko that Keiko has now relief and she is happy where she has gone. Etsuko creates such a happy and calmy girl to convince herself that Keiko got rid of her unending traumatic pains now. The little girl on the swing becomes a medium of relief for Etsuko. Etsuko does not choose to dream about Keiko swinging down the ceiling but she wishes to recall her younger daughter on a swing holding chains and enjoying the playground.

Keiko is a Japanese name, that symbolizes Japan in the old war days. However, Niki is a Western name that reminds Etsuko of a new life in the West in post-war times. Etsuko explains the naming process of her daughter as follows: “It was he (her husband) who wanted to give her a Japanese name, and I – perhaps out of some selfish desire not to be reminded of the past – insisted on an English one” (Ishiguro 9). The reason that Keiko plans to move to London and live there comes from her past traumatic experiences. That is to say, the attitudes she had to face when

she was a child bothered her so much. Her stepfather asks her to live in a small, old cottage, like a horse or cow living in a barn. As she lived on her own, Keiko could never build social relations with people around her; in other words, she could never develop her social skills. She had her cats as friends or perhaps she regarded her cats as parents to her. The only thing that Keiko can do is walk by the river near her cottage.

When Mrs. Waters, who was an old teacher of Etsuko's daughters, asks Etsuko about Keiko, Etsuko states that she has not heard from her recently. This answer implies that Etsuko is still not ready to confront her traumatic sufferings about her daughter's suicide. Etsuko is in a manner of "pretending Keiko was alive" (Ishiguro 52). She does not prefer to face the harsh reality. Instead, she reconstructs her daughter's story. What Etsuko is experiencing, in other words, her sufferings about her deceased daughter creates huge, deep, psychological wounds in Etsuko's mind. She states as follows:

It was the landlady who had opened the door, thinking Keiko had left without paying the rent [...] I have found myself continually bringing to mind that picture – of my daughter hanging in her room for days on end. The horror of that image has never diminished, but it has long ceased to be a morbid matter; as with a wound on one's own body, it is possible to develop an intimacy with the most disturbing of things. (Ishiguro 54)

Etsuko's devotion to her marriage contrasts with Sachiko's more irresponsible attitude towards her family, and Etsuko's memory of her friendship with Sachiko might be a medium for her to review and criticize her actions. Etsuko's adherence to the traditional role of a Japanese wife and her commitment to her marriage stand in contrast to Sachiko's more carefree approach to family life. Even though Etsuko's subsequent move to England presents a more rebellious side to her personality than she has previously revealed, this rebelliousness is not evident in her recollections of the past.

Etsuko's first pregnancy coincides with her short-lived friendship with Sachiko, during which Sachiko claims to have made sacrifices for her daughter Mariko, including moving to her uncle's house. Sachiko's sacrifice echoes Etsuko's trauma of her failed motherhood, which is also reflected in her decision to leave Japan for England, a country that fulfilled her dreams but not her daughter Keiko's. Although Keiko's perspective is not directly presented in the novel, Etsuko's memories suggest that Keiko is unhappy about leaving Japan, which might have

contributed to her eventual suicide. Etsuko's ignorance of Keiko's reluctance to leave also suggests a possible responsibility for her daughter's tragic end.

Etsuko's life in England is ruined by her bothersome obsessions about her past and her continual struggle to disassociate herself from her Japanese identity. While her husband acknowledges Etsuko's cultural heritage, Etsuko explicitly states her discomfort about her past and her desire to forget her Japanese identity. Etsuko's attempts to rediscover herself suggest that her traumatic war experiences might have deeply affected her. Her trauma extends to Keiko, who feels neglected and invisible. The reader can realize from Etsuko's discourse that Keiko's major depression and eventual suicide might be attributable to her sense of displacement and alienation. This case, in turn, contributes to Etsuko's ongoing feelings of guilt and escape from her past.

Sachiko's attempts to escape to America reflect Etsuko's leave from Japan. Etsuko observes Sachiko's conflicts, seeking to understand her own later experiences. Sachiko's confessions to Etsuko about her poor mothering skills are desperate, parallel to Mrs. Fujiwara's positive attitude despite her losses during the war. All the characters in the novel aim to recreate their lives in the face of a gloomy reality after the devastating war. The difference is that older generations, like Mrs. Fujiwara and Ogata-San, try to endure their losses and struggle for their lives even though younger characters, like Etsuko and Jiro, do not wish to confront their losses but wait for their uncertain future with a hopeful look.

Another character who is deeply affected by trauma is Sachiko's ten-year-old daughter Mariko. Her mother, Sachiko, has her struggles dealing with her trauma and the monotonous life at her uncle's house after her husband's death. However, she reconstructs her life with a plan to immigrate to America. This pursuit of a new life makes Sachiko ignore Mariko's emotional state. Mariko consistently claims to have seen a mysterious woman. Mariko's hallucinations stem from a traumatic event in Tokyo, where she witnessed a young mother drowning her baby.

Etsuko portrays Mariko as a neglected and withdrawn child in her story; Mariko is resentful towards her mother and others. Mariko is, indeed, Etsuko's daughter Keiko. After she lost her husband in World War II, Etsuko gets married to Jiro who is a traditional, strict Japanese man. As a stepfather, Jiro does not let Keiko

live in his house. The only place where Keiko can live is “one wooden cottage” (Ishiguro 12). In this circumstance, Etsuko has to deal with her husband at home and look after her daughter in the cottage. One major trauma that Keiko experiences is that she lives in that cottage on her own at the age of ten. Such a trauma strikes again when Keiko gets older. Keiko lives in her room on her own and never communicates with Etsuko when she becomes a teenager.

Throughout Niki’s five-day stay, both Etsuko and Niki struggle to find restful sleep at night since they both have disturbing dreams. Etsuko’s recurring dream includes a young girl that they once saw in the park, playing happily on the swings. This young girl on the swings is a projection of Keiko. Indeed, the image of a girl playing on the swing reflects both Mariko and Keiko. They all have similar ages, and the recurring image of a rope presents unification for them. In the park, the girl on the swing relies on a rope to hold up the board; Mariko is scared by the rope that is entangled around Etsuko’s ankle; similarly, Keiko commits suicide using a rope. Furthermore, during that summer, Etsuko, Sachiko, and Mariko pay a visit to a hill in Nagasaki that overlooks the harbor. However, when Etsuko shares her story with Niki towards the end of the novel, she remembers: “Keiko was happy that day. We rode on the cable cars” (Ishiguro 182). This statement proves that Mariko and Keiko are the same children; indeed, Mariko is a fictional child who is used by Etsuko to tell a story about her daughter Keiko.

Etsuko begins to perceive Keiko’s bedroom as if it was inhabited by Keiko’s ghost. The memory of her deceased daughter never leaves Etsuko. The image of a recurring ghost represents a traumatic past as Anne Whitehead argues in *Trauma Fiction*:

If trauma is at all susceptible to narrative formulation, then it requires a literary form that departs from the conventional linear sequence. The irruption of one time into another is figured by Caruth as a form of possession or haunting. The ghost represents an appropriate embodiment of the disjunction of temporality, the surfacing of the past in the present. (6)

The ghost of Keiko wanders into the house. In the early morning, Etsuko states that “someone had walked past my bed and out of my room, closing the door quietly” (Ishiguro 174). She stands outside Keiko’s room and hears: “a small sound, some movement from within” (Ishiguro 88). Niki also voices her concerns about

small noises, and on the fourth day, she requests to move to the spare room since she feels unrest staying in a room next to Keiko's.

Ishiguro juxtaposes the past, present, and future events. Each one contributes to the tragic consequences of Etsuko's life and Keiko's death. The novel presents instances where Etsuko confuses her own identity with Sachiko's. Etsuko's recollections are not presented in a continual narrative and seem more random than she admits. The reader must fill in the gaps in the story and construct the relationships between the two characters. Etsuko's relationships in her memory are significant in that these relationships might help her regain a sense of peace and relief. The novel moves smoothly across different periods with past events contributing to the painful consequences of Etsuko's life and her daughter Keiko's death.

As the novel progresses, the reader realizes that Sachiko is a figure of Etsuko's imagination and that her memories of Sachiko are intertwined with her characteristics. Etsuko's confusion between Sachiko and herself causes the reader to reconsider the connection between the two women. The novel's handling of time is both specific and ambiguous. While the novel depicts the present-day English village and the past in Nagasaki, these depictions blur the lines between the two through Etsuko's recollections. The interweaving of memories makes it difficult to distinguish between the past and the present. Etsuko transitions between the English present and two overlapping Japanese pasts returning to the present at various points in the story. Despite this ambiguity, the novel often provides precise time references.

Etsuko's story is an attempt to make sense of her relationship with her deceased daughter and to find a way to live after her loss. She reflects on her past which contains many signs of trauma and loss to understand how Keiko died. Ishiguro masterfully presents Etsuko's efforts to comprehend and organize her traumatic experiences. Although the novel does not offer much hope, the reader can empathize with Etsuko by reinterpreting her story.

To understand Etsuko's psychological struggles, it is crucial to analyze the characters, Sachiko and Mariko. At first glance, their relationship seems unremarkable. However, upon closer inspection, certain inconsistencies begin to emerge. Sachiko, a newcomer to the neighborhood, is the subject of gossip. She lives

in a run-down cottage across a field of barren land, which sets her apart from the housing estate. Moreover, Sachiko is an inadequate mother, neglecting her daughter and allowing her to skip school. One day, Etsuko overhears two neighbors talking about Sachiko's unsociable behavior and her romance with a foreigner. Therefore, Etsuko is confused about Sachiko before she meets her. Etsuko states: "It was never my intention to appear unfriendly, but it was probably true that I made no special effort to seem otherwise" (Ishiguro 13). Here, Etsuko's statement about Sachiko raises suspicions about Etsuko's first impression of Sachiko.

Etsuko's recollection of Sachiko seems to blend with her characteristics, which raises doubts about the reality of their relationship. For instance, when Etsuko overhears two women at the tram stop gossiping about Sachiko, she mistakenly thinks that they are talking about her. This confusion between the two women suggests that Etsuko might have split herself into two people in her memory. Despite the similarities, the reader can realize that Etsuko's memory of Sachiko might reflect Etsuko's own repressed emotions and inner conflicts.

Etsuko's confusion of identities is also revealed during her conversation with Mariko, which seems to blur with her daughter Keiko's departure from Japan. Etsuko's memories appear more ambiguous as she associates Sachiko's experiences with her own. As a result, the reader might be uncertain about the narrator's intentions since subsequent events do not always clarify past ones. As Etsuko mourns for her daughter, the identities of the individuals in her memory become significant; their interventions might help her relieve her trauma, rather than remain stuck in her grief.

Although *A Pale View of Hills* (1982) appears on the surface to be a simple novel, its tranquillity conflicts with a deeper emotional turmoil. Etsuko adopts a quiet tone when discussing her past, particularly in the aftermath of the bombing of Nagasaki. Despite the devastating personal and historical consequences of these memories, Etsuko remains calm. However, she admits that Keiko's suicide is never far from her thoughts. As the story progresses, the reader uncovers the paradoxical clarity and obscurity of Etsuko's memories. Etsuko notices that Sachiko's life reflects and foreshadows some aspects of her own, and revisiting this period helps her come to terms with Keiko's death.

Through his masterful use of language, Ishiguro tells Etsuko's story about the vulnerability of human life in destructive explosions. The novel portrays the difficult task of reconstructing one's life in the aftermath of the destructive forces of war, and the characters are supposed to struggle with the significance of their life choices. Etsuko constructs a story that is both painful and cathartic, and her story reveals the enduring impact of loss and the enduring power of her traumatic memory.

2.2 Traumatic Memory in *A Pale View of Hills*

The story of Etsuko's life is formed with fragile threads of memory, producing a confusing and unbalanced account. Etsuko is mistaken, not only in her perception of herself as a loving and unselfish mother but also in her need to hold on to this belief. However, it becomes apparent throughout the story that Etsuko is more preoccupied with other matters than with motherhood. The novel begins with her and her British second husband deliberating over a name for their daughter:

Niki, the name we finally gave my younger daughter, is not an abbreviation; it was a compromise I reached with her father. For paradoxically it was he who wanted to give her a Japanese name, and I—perhaps out of some selfish desire not to be reminded of the past —insisted on an English one. (Ishiguro 9)

As Etsuko requests a quest for comprehension, she is acutely aware of the limits of what can be known. Despite her understanding that returning to the past cannot bring back her deceased daughter, Etsuko feels a need to reconstruct the past events to make sense of her own life. However, she also recognizes that her search for answers would not bring complete solace. Ultimately, Etsuko's narrative reflects the idea that the act of interpreting stories involves both knowing and not knowing and that the truth might be elusive even as one seeks to understand it.

In one scene, Sachiko tells Etsuko that she is finally going to America with Frank, and Mariko is strongly against the idea. Etsuko chases after Mariko when she runs away from home. Despite her doubts and confusion, Etsuko tries to reassure Mariko that everything will be okay and that they can always come back if they do not like their life in America. Etsuko's use of personal pronouns shifts between "we" and "I", indicating her merging with Sachiko and projecting her present problems onto the past. This moment is the climax of Etsuko's attempt to reconsider her

painful traumatic memories. Moreover, this shift of pronouns is also a strategy employed by Ishiguro to reflect the obscurity and confusion of identity caused by World War II. In this scene, the narrative stops suddenly, leaving the reader uncertain whether Etsuko's efforts have been successful or not. In the present, Etsuko talks to Niki and makes plans for the future, including selling the house. This decision might reflect her desire to break away from the past and start again.

Ishiguro constructs the novel by building the story around Etsuko's unbalanced memory, leaving the magnitude of her trauma ambiguous until the end. Ishiguro's interest lies not in the facts of Etsuko's biography but in her selective recollection of events to conceal the truth even from herself. Etsuko's memories of her life in Japan are so painful, filled with doubt and guilt, that she cannot frankly discuss them. Her interpretation of Niki's arrival as a reassurance that she is not responsible for Keiko's death suggests that she might be responsible, despite her attempts to dismiss the subject. Matek claims as follows:

Etsuko uses the language of self-deception and self-protection to keep her dignity and sanity in the face of such a horrific tragedy. In this way, the readers are confronted with a story that simultaneously does not want to be told and aches to be told. Such hesitation often occurs with trauma survivors in their therapy sessions which resemble an instance of (both consecutive and continuous) storytelling. The similar nature of literature and therapy arises from the fact that "literature, like psychoanalysis, is interested in the complex relation between knowing and not knowing. (140)

Although Etsuko cannot alter what happened, she seeks comfort in the idea that reality can be reconstructed and corrected in her mind. To consider her guilt about her daughter's suicide, Etsuko leaves herself in self-isolation. Mariko, much like Keiko many years later, is a troubled girl by her surroundings. Her mother is unable to teach her any moral principles, just as Etsuko was unable to fully comprehend her daughter's condition. The lack of mutual understanding between mother and daughter is evident in both cases. Mariko's constant neglect makes her a solitary child who does not respond to commands or show respect to anyone. She has a habit of running away and hiding, prompting Etsuko to visit Sachiko's cottage and persuade Sachiko to search for Mariko. This attempt is a symbol of Etsuko's desire to demonstrate her helpfulness, protectiveness, caring nature, and maternal instincts.

Throughout the narration of her past and present, Etsuko is constantly evaluating the reliability of her memories, questioning whether they bring her comfort or anguish. Etsuko questions the reliability of her memory and

acknowledges that her recollections might have become hazy over time, and she is also aware that memory can be unbalanced, colored by the circumstances in which an individual remembers. Despite her misgivings about her unclear memory, Etsuko constructs a lucid narrative that suggests she might be suppressing or hiding from her painful traumas about her life and her daughter's death. Hallucinations reside in her memories, and the gaps in her story contribute to the direction of her memory.

Etsuko confesses as follows: "It is possible that my memory of these events will have grown hazy with me, that things did not happen in quite the way they come back to me today" (Ishiguro 41). Etsuko recognizes that her memory is imperfect, and she also acknowledges that any individual's perspective has its limitations. She reveals that her second husband, a journalist named Sheringham, was unable to understand Japanese culture. While much is known about Etsuko's life with her first husband, Jiro, her life with Sheringham remains untold, leaving gaps in her story. These gaps are highly selective and intentional, drawing attention to Etsuko's omissions. Despite these gaps, the reader can construct a sensible picture of Etsuko's life in both periods.

Ishiguro seems to acknowledge the gaps and silences inherent in Etsuko's memories and he is not interested in the solid facts; instead, he focuses on the emotional upheaval of Etsuko's experiences. Etsuko not only acknowledges the limitations of her memory but also recognizes the inherent limitations of any singular perspective. She notes that her second husband, Sheringham, a journalist who wrote about Japan after the American occupation, "never understood the ways of our culture" (Ishiguro 90). Despite spending a significant part of her life with him, Etsuko does not reveal much about their time together. In contrast, she presents a more detailed account of her life with her first husband, Jiro, a traditional Japanese man. The untold parts of Etsuko's life might be inferred from the details she provides and her confrontations as she explores the past.

What is supposed from Etsuko is not basically to remember the events in their exact places, times, and ways that they happened; what is essential for a traumatized victim to recover from his/her traumatic pains is the act of recreating and retelling those traumatic memories. As Andermahr and Pellicer-Ortin also suggest, "the main step for the recovery of trauma is to verbalize the experience of suffering"; to verbalize the traumatic memories is the first step of self-healing in trauma. In the

novel, the use of storytelling helps Etsuko reveal, face, and reconstruct her traumatic memories, and find an escape to recover from her traumatic pains.

Etsuko knows that what she is telling is merely a fictional story. However, she confesses to herself that such an act of storytelling relieves her. The act of reconstructing, recreating, redefining, and narrating her story contributes to her self-healing process. Etsuko aims to get rid of her traumatic pains and psychological obsessions about the devastating war she experienced and the fact that her daughter committed suicide by hanging herself. While telling her story, she knows that the facts and characters that she is telling are not factual; they are fictional. Etsuko flexes the reality in her mind and creates her own story that she chooses to tell. She confesses as follows:

Memory, I realize, can be an unreliable thing; often it is heavily colored by the circumstances in which one remembers, and no doubt this applies to certain of the recollections I have gathered here. For instance, I find it tempting to persuade myself it was a premonition I experienced that afternoon, that the unpleasant image that entered my thoughts that day was something altogether different – something much more intense and vivid – than the numerous day-dreams that drift through one's imagination during such long and empty hours. (Ishiguro 156)

Despite the reader's attempt to put the pieces together and understand the truth, the story remains elusive and inconclusive. Ishiguro is not concerned with factual accuracy; rather, he is concerned with Etsuko's emotional confusion that leads her to migrate, which continues to haunt her with guilt for sacrificing her daughter's happiness for her desire. Despite the similarities between Etsuko and Sachiko, Etsuko's guilt indicates that she is not entirely like Sachiko. Although Sachiko's identity and fate remain a mystery, Etsuko's move to England never fully resolves her doubts about leaving Japan. Both women's stories are marked by migration and a longing for a different life.

It is not certain whether Etsuko's recollection of the past events is a conscious effort to preserve her dignity or a random fictionalization of memories. Etsuko might want to have at least one happy memory with her daughter; and, this can be the reason why she substitutes Mariko as her daughter in her retelling. Ishiguro's intention as a writer is not to uncover the truth but rather to question it. The unresolved points in the narrative allow different interpretations, and it is evident that Ishiguro is more interested in the emotional aspect of the story.

The use of anachronism in the novel and Etsuko's scattered recollections make the narrative both captivating and puzzling for readers. Etsuko's memories are not only told randomly but also contain inconsistencies that call into question the accuracy of her recollections. The suicide of a child is a deeply traumatic event, and one would expect Etsuko to dwell on it frequently. However, Etsuko tries to ignore it; the only way that Etsuko copes with this traumatic experience is to tell the story that she constructs. Narratives are essential tools in representations of trauma; however, they can also create different versions of events unintentionally or intentionally. The novel portrays Keiko's death as the key traumatic event even though it occurred outside of the narrative structure. Etsuko's reconstruction of her past functions as a therapy for her trauma; however, the sense of unending mystery dominates the novel. As a result, the reader is left to construct a coherent story from the puzzling pieces that can never be fully verified by the facts presented in the novel.

Etsuko's story is complex; however, at its core, there is trauma and loss. Apart from the pain and distress caused by her daughter Keiko's suicide, another source of Etsuko's trauma traces back to the Nagasaki bombing, an event that had a profound impact on her life. Piotrowski claims as follows:

Etsuko's story, complex and multifaceted as it may be, is in all respects marked by trauma and loss. The roots of her traumatic experience can be traced back to the Nagasaki bombing – even though it is conspicuously absent in her relation, it is the event that reshaped many aspects of her life. Not only is it problematic as a reason for so great a change, but also – what is never stated in the novel – because the protagonist may have lost her family in the atomic bombing. (29-30)

However, while Etsuko is very well aware of the devastating outcomes of the huge war, she chooses to normalize her daughter's suicide by telling stories about battered and murdered children in Nagasaki during the war:

Received with more urgency were the reports of the child murders that were alarming Nagasaki at the time. First, a boy, then a small girl had been found battered to death. When a third victim, another little girl, had been found hanging from a tree there was near-panic amongst the mothers in the neighborhood. Understandably, little comfort was taken from the fact that the incidents had taken place on the other side of the city: children became a rare

sight around the housing precinct, particularly in the evening hours. (Ishiguro 100)

Etsuko's fictional character, Sachiko also suffers from war trauma as she lost her husband in the war. She believes that it is the war that has put them in such misery. Furthermore, the devastating war also has destructive impacts on Sachiko's daughter Mariko. She sees hallucinations about a scary woman who drowns her baby in a shallow sea. However, Sachiko aims to normalize these schizophrenic hallucinations by telling Etsuko that "you know how it is with children; they play at make-believe and they get confused where their fantasies begin and end" (Ishiguro 75).

While Etsuko is storifying her past, she implies that World War II had great negative impacts on her and her family. However, as in the case of confronting her trauma about her deceased daughter, Etsuko reveals her traumatic war experiences in her story about Sachiko and her daughter Mariko. The little girl, Mariko was exposed to much destruction and saw many ruins and dead bodies during the attacks:

Week after week it went on, it was very bad. Towards the end, we were all living in tunnels and derelict buildings and there was nothing but rubble. Everyone who lived in Tokyo saw unpleasant things. And Mariko did too. (Ishiguro 73)

Although never explicitly mentioned, the aftermath of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki dominates the background of Etsuko's story. While the trauma of the atomic bombing is rarely mentioned in Etsuko's account, its impact can be felt in her distress. The tragic war in Nagasaki had a profound impact on the Japanese people; this historical context is addressed throughout Etsuko's journey to her past.

The bombing shaped many aspects of Etsuko's life, including her decision to emigrate. Furthermore, Etsuko seems to have lost her family in the bombing since she never mentions any other family members apart from her husband and father-in-law. During one particular recollection, Etsuko accompanies her father-in-law Ogata-San to Nakagawa, and they avoid passing her old family home. Etsuko offers no further details about her parents or what might have happened to them. These omissions are prevalent throughout the novel, revealing the difficulty of providing exactitude.

As a survivor of the atomic bombings, Etsuko shares the typical characteristic of suppressing feelings as a defense mechanism against the traumatic effects of loss. However, Etsuko's inner conflicts suggest a deeper presentation of this suppression. While her narrative initially appears coherent and meaningful, further examination reveals several breaks and inner conflicts that threaten its accuracy. Etsuko's effort to strengthen her confession and reconstruct a coherent story of her past indeed results in a fully fragmented and unbalanced narration.

One of the most significant aspects of the novel is its portrayal of Japanese culture and society in the aftermath of World War II. The characters are all deeply affected by the war and its aftermath, and Ishiguro portrays how Japanese culture and traditions were both preserved and changed by the destructive forces of the war. The title of the novel, "A Pale View of Hills" is important as it suggests the idea of a distorted or incomplete view of the world. This theme is echoed throughout the novel as Etsuko struggles to come to terms with her memories and reconcile them with her current life in England.

War trauma is not an experience that only Etsuko suffers. Most Japanese people experienced this trauma both during and after the war. They were taught not to see and not to ask about the reasons for war. Shigeo claims as follows:

[...] Children in Japan were taught terrible things. They were taught lies of the most damaging kind. Worst of all, they were taught not to see, not to question. And that's why the country was plunged into the most evil disaster in her entire history. (Ishiguro 147)

Mrs. Fujiwara, Etsuko's former neighbor, once led a comfortable life before the war, but her life takes a tragic turn when the bomb kills her husband and four children, leaving only her eldest son alive. Despite Mrs. Fujiwara's displays of courage in coping with this devastating loss, her busy daily routine of running a small noodle shop serves as a distraction. There are times when she even confesses to Etsuko that she wakes up in the mornings not knowing where she is. Etsuko herself is no stronger to lose, as the war makes her an orphan, leading her to be taken into the home of Ogata-San, whose son she marries later. During her early days with the Ogatas, Etsuko finds solace in playing the violin during the late hours, as if she were a tormented soul seeking release.

As a reaction to the traumatic war experiences, Mariko creates a woman character in her mind who sometimes shows herself to Mariko in scary situations and

with a worrisome smile. In a hallucination, Mariko watches this mysterious woman drowning her baby in seawater. Sometimes, this secret woman visits Mariko and speaks to her. Interestingly, Mariko does not fear this woman; her attitude towards this ghostly woman does not meet the reader's predictions. Mariko does not escape from her; instead, she regards the woman as a friend to her, and she tries to communicate with her. Sachiko explains this circumstance as follows: "It's just what children like to do. Once you become a mother, Etsuko, you'll need to get used to such things" (Ishiguro 43). Sachiko seems so reluctant to help Mariko get over her traumatic sufferings; instead, she chooses to leave her daughter alone in her traumatic situation. As Etsuko observes them, she begins to notice that Mariko displays troubling signs of neglect; she is withdrawn and inattentive. Mariko feels resentment towards her mother and others.

To the best of Sachiko's knowledge, that woman had taken her own life a few days after the act of infanticide. However, Mariko persistently insists that this woman has been following her from Tokyo to Nagasaki. Here, Mariko's hallucination proves Cathy Caruth's claim about the nature of traumatized individuals: "To be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or event" (2013, 4-5). Mariko's emotions of fear and anxiety become increasingly complex due to Sachiko's frequent absences from home, leaving Mariko either alone or in the care of Etsuko. Mariko's feeling of insecurity intensifies, particularly when she learns about her mother's plan to immigrate to America with Frank. Mariko does not approve of Frank, referring to him as a pig.

Mariko transfers her wish for a secure home to the kittens she has been nurturing. She cares for them as if they were her cherished children. However, this constructed world of warmth and comfort is destroyed by her mother on the eve of their departure. To lighten their travel load, Sachiko pitilessly drowns the kittens in the river. Mariko stands silently on the riverbank, observing every step of Sachiko's actions, like the way she had witnessed the Tokyo woman drowning her baby underwater. As Sachiko releases the box containing the kittens into the water, Mariko runs along the river in a desperate attempt to rescue them, but in vain.

Ishiguro's deliberate exclusion of certain details contributes to the purpose of effectively portraying trauma and challenging traditional narrative structures. Unlike a conventional omniscient narrator who presents a chronological plot with a sense of

completeness, Etsuko's first-person perspective carries a sense of incompleteness. Through such experimental techniques as obscurity, the narrative also functions as a witness to the events and contributes to the trauma without creating a certain version of the traumatic event. To define the exact facts is not so significant for a traumatized victim. Instead, creating alternative versions allows the traumatized victim to soften the terror of the experience; even if it distorts the truth, these reconstructed stories make the suffering easier to cope with.

All in all, *A Pale View of Hills* (1982) explores complex themes of trauma, memory, identity, and cultural difference. Through Etsuko's story, Ishiguro provides a traumatic reflection on the lasting impact of the devastating war on both individuals and societies. Etsuko's fictional story helps her bear witness to both World War II and her traumatic past. In this sense, storytelling functions as a tool to break the silence, express traumatic experiences, and create a voice for the oppressed silence in the novel.

CHAPTER 3: MICHÉLE ROBERTS' *DAUGHTERS OF THE HOUSE*

3.1 Michéle Roberts and Traumatic Memory in *Daughters of the House*

Michéle Roberts was born in England; her mother was French and her father was English. She studied English Language and Literature at Somerville College, Oxford. She then became a professor of creative writing at the University of East Anglia. In 1999, she was chosen as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. She wrote many novels for which she won many awards such as the Gay News Literary Award in 1978 for *A Piece of the Night* (1978). *Daughters of the House* (1992) which is chosen for discussion in this study, is Roberts' sixth novel. It was shortlisted for the Booker Prize in 1992 and won the W. H. Smith Literary Award in 1993.

Michéle Roberts is known for her exploration of themes like trauma, feminism, and the complexities of human relationships in her novels. Her works often explore the psychological and emotional aftermath of various traumatic experiences, weaving together intricate narratives that reflect the profound impacts of trauma on individuals' lives. Through her exploration of trauma, she sheds light on the recovery of the human spirit, the process of healing, and how individuals come to terms with their pasts. The reflections of trauma in Michéle Roberts' novels serve as a poignant exploration of the human condition, displaying the transformative power of narrative in the face of individual and collective trauma.

Daughters of House (1992) explores the essential role of storytelling in coping with Holocaust trauma. It depicts how two French girls, Léonie and Thérèse, strive to piece together the wartime events that take place in their village, especially the invasion of their house by German soldiers. Through the girls' story, Roberts examines the critical need for a narrative as a means to bear witness to the collective trauma experienced during the war. The novel presents the necessity of conclusions after traumatic war experiences, and it forms a narrative addressing both the complexity and the obscurity of trauma.

The Holocaust, one of the darkest chapters in human history, was a systematic genocide conducted by Nazi Germany during World War II. Targeting primarily Jews but also other marginalized groups such as Roma, disabled individuals, and political dissidents, the Holocaust resulted in the mass murder of approximately six million Jews and millions of others. The atrocities committed

during the Holocaust included forced labor, mass shootings, and the implementation of a vast network of concentration camps and extermination camps like Auschwitz, Treblinka, and Sobibór. The Holocaust not only inflicted unimaginable suffering and loss of life but also shattered communities, cultures, and families, leaving long-lasting scars on the collective consciousness of the nations and humanity.

The Holocaust had profound and enduring after-effects of war trauma on survivors, their families, and subsequent generations. The trauma inflicted during the systematic genocide of six million Jews by the Nazi regime left survivors with deep psychological wounds that lasted long after the end of World War II. Survivors often experience symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), including intrusive memories and nightmares. Many of them also suffered from guilt, depression, anxiety, and difficulties in forming and maintaining relationships. The cultural transmission of trauma further created after-effects since children and grandchildren of survivors often suffered from inherited trauma; they faced identity conflicts and emotional difficulties in their relationships. The study of war trauma later manifested itself in literature. For instance, the remembrance of the Holocaust is a common theme explored in trauma fiction. Kurvet-Käosaar claims:

Holocaust remembrance has been of essential importance not only with regard to the wider recognition of the significance of autobiographical representations of traumatic experience in cultural memory and history but also for the development of the field of trauma studies and theoretical conceptualizations of trauma. (305)

Holocaust fiction and the studies on the after-effects of the Holocaust greatly contributed to the development of literary trauma theory. However, the debate on the representability of trauma in fiction has remained continual. Yet, autobiographical representations of trauma, as in Roberts' *Daughters of the House*, have created a new outlook on the exploration of trauma in fiction. Kay Schaffer and Sidonie Smith suggest that autobiographical representations of the Holocaust can be regarded as a "premier instance of traumatic remembering" (21) and they maintain that "the literature of trauma in the West, exemplified by Holocaust narratives, has become the dominant paradigm for understanding the processes of victimization, remembering, witnessing, and recovery (22).

Daughters of House (1992) is narrated by an omniscient narrator and begins with Thérèse's coming back to her family home after spending twenty years in a

convent. Her sister Léonie who is portrayed as her cousin now lives in this house. Thérèse reveals that her purpose for returning back home is to write her autobiography and that she needs Léonie's help to remember their childhood experiences in the small French village of Blémont-la-Fontaine. She states:

I am writing my autobiography. I thought if I wrote down what happened when we were children it would help me to decide what it is I've got to do. But there's so much I've forgotten. You'll have to help me remember. (Roberts 23)

In the same way that Etsuko creates her own fictional story in Kazuo Ishiguro's *A Pale View of Hills* (1982) to relieve her traumatic pains caused by the devastating war, Thérèse decides to write her autobiography to face the denied, poignant truths of the devastating war. Telling their stories serves as a healing medium for both protagonists to bear witness to their war trauma. Here, Thérèse writes for her own sanity as Roseanne in *The Secret Scripture* (2008) aims to keep her sanity by writing her memoirs at the mental hospital. The reason that Thérèse has forgotten some of these traumatic events and wants help from his sister Léonie to rewrite them is that she has been away from home for twenty years.

Daughters of the House (1992) presents three separate periods together: a present-day reunion of Léonie and Thérèse stimulates vivid memories of their 1950s childhood, which in turn is deeply influenced by unresolved traumas from the German Occupation during World War II. The gap in the periods in their relationship indeed aids them in confronting the traumatic Holocaust experiences of their past. The novel does not only focus on the Jewish Holocaust since there are also broader themes presented. Roberts' narrative in her novel is strengthened through her portrayal of Léonie and Thérèse as uncanny doubles. This doubling is what stimulates both of them to bear witness to their past. That is, this uncanny doubling helps Léonie to confront the voices of the deceased Jewish family and also aids both Léonie and Thérèse to confront the trauma of Antoinette's rape. Roberts depicts Thérèse as an uncanny double to Léonie at the very beginning of the novel: "The deadness and the evil and the stink were inside Léonie" (Roberts 1). This evil is addressed with the metaphor of vomiting: "It was Thérèse she was throwing up. She vomited her forth, desperate to be rid of her and then weak and gasping relief that she was gone" (Roberts 2). However, this act of vomiting does not hinder Thérèse's existence in Léonie's life since they are presented as uncanny doubles.

The novel begins with a depiction of the girls' family house; it is the only safe place for Léonie where she can hide from her past war trauma. However, it is also a place where family secrets are revealed: "It was a changeable house. Sometimes it felt safe as a church, and sometimes it shivered then cracked apart" (Roberts 1). Roger Luckhurst claims that "the familial home at Blémont-la-Fontaine is the site for the uncanny emergence of an 'unspeakable' history" (1996, 251). The portrayal of the house in the novel addresses Léonie's denial to confront her traumatic feelings; for instance, the windows that are depicted as "eyes [that] were blinded by white shutters" (Roberts 1) suggest Léonie's ignorance of her past; and the carpet that covers the footprints of the invading German soldiers symbolize the denial of acceptance of the Holocaust.

In the beginning of the novel, Thérèse depicts herself as "not a real woman like the others" (Roberts 10). Through this expression she addresses the twenty years she spent at the convent. Convent life challenges traditional notions of womanhood. It emphasizes qualities such as compassion, humility, and service over appearance, status, and material success. By choosing this path, women assert that their worth is not contingent on conforming to societal expectations but on their intrinsic values and beliefs. According to Thérèse, the idea of being not a real woman like the others transforms into a powerful statement of individuality and purpose. It becomes a declaration of autonomy and a refusal to be constrained by narrow definitions of gender roles. The convent allows women to define their femininity on their terms, free from the pressures and judgments of the outside world.

The violence of the war still exists in the house where Thérèse returns since there are "forbidden places" (Roberts 1) in the house, which represent traumatic memories of the family members. Léonie's childhood bedroom was the place where the Jewish family was imprisoned before being murdered. Léonie's worries about confronting this traumatic past are evident in her attempts to enter this room:

The rules said you mustn't go there. It was for your own protection. Each time Léonie tried she had to halt. The terror was so strong. It pushed her away, wouldn't let her come near. Behind the terror was something evil which stank and snarled and wanted to fix her in its embrace. Better to flee, to clatter back across the bare plank floor of the landing, find the headlong stairs, and fall down them. Better to stay at the front of the house. (Roberts 1)

Here, the reason that the room was forbidden to enter for the girls is their mother Antoinette's refusal to confront her being raped by a German soldier. Antoinette does

not want to recall this ongoing traumatic rape; therefore, she chooses to keep her daughters away from this room as a defense mechanism. Roberts pictures the door of the room as if it also keeps the girls out for their own protection.

Thérèse aims to write her own story with the title, “The Story of a Soul” (Roberts 19). This title implies the traumatic pains Thérèse has had since the beginning of the war. Thérèse feels like a dumb, speechless soul due to her traumatic sufferings. Indeed, Thérèse’s rewriting of her autobiography is a kind of mourning for her losses and sufferings connected to the Holocaust. The relief she needs to heal from her traumatic pains lies in her mourning for the past. Therefore, the novel can be evaluated to be written in “a process of mourning to be repeated over and over. Writing and re-writing according to this mourning” (Lyotard 93).

The Holocaust narratives in *Daughters of the House* underline the need to bear witness to the Holocaust. By setting her novel against the historical backdrop of the German occupation of France during the Second World War, Roberts addresses Holocaust theory. Holocaust theory highlights narratives of memorials, which is also presented in Roberts’ novel. Roberts depicts a public war memorial and an annual event commemorating those who died in the war:

The names of those who had died in battle were inscribed on a stone roll of honor on the war memorial by the cemetery. Every village had one. Blémont was a heartily built stone woman in clinging robes carrying a wreath and a scroll. Her hair tumbled loose, her breasts were pointed [...] The village band, all discordant trumpetings, and squeaks, led the congregation in procession to the war memorial. The national anthem was played. Everyone bowed their heads. Later on that day, there would be the fair, fireworks, and dancing, but now they were still, quiet. (Roberts 117)

This event is not supposed to force the villagers to confront the past; instead, it breaks the silence of the villagers through the noise of fireworks and presents relief from the traumatic war experiences of the villagers with the beauty of a woman. Indeed, Roberts presents this memorial to underline the falsified representation of the Holocaust to reduce the power of its after-effects. Even, the names of those who had died in battle were displayed on a stone of honor to defend the legitimacy and deny the atrocity of the Holocaust.

The return of the traumatic memory is addressed in Léonie’s opening nightmare about Antoinette: “buried in the cellar under a heap of sand. Her mouth [...] stuffed full of torn-up letters and broken glass” (Roberts 1). This dream

underlines Léonie's burial of her mother's war experiences. The return of the traumatic memory is also emphasized in Léonie's dream since Antoinette is "tunneling her way out [of the cellar] like a mole" (Roberts 1). The description of Antoinette in the cellar is similar to the description of the devastated statue since it is kept in the cellar as well. Furthermore, the reference in this dream to Antoinette's "Nazi laugh" (Roberts 1) symbolizes the violence of the German soldiers towards Antoinette and the Jewish family. Therefore, these repressed past images arise to spoil Léonie's safe and comfortable life.

The return of the traumatic memory continues throughout Léonie's nightmare about her mother:

She moved under the heap of sand. She clutched her red handbag, which was full of shreds of dead flesh. She was trying to get out, to hang two red petticoats on the washing line in the orchard. Sooner or later she would batter down the cellar door and burst up through it on her dead and bleeding feet. (Roberts 1)

In this dream Antoinette is portrayed as a rape victim lying on the ground. The expression "dead flesh" here symbolizes the loss of her soul. Léonie's nightmare presents her knowledge about Antoinette's rape that she aims to repress in her traumatic memory. However, despite her attempts to deny it, this traumatic memory disturbs Léonie and makes her physically sick. Léonie tries to relieve her traumatic pains by vomiting; however, it is only when Thérèse comes back home and asks Léonie to confront and tell her traumatic life story that Léonie finds a way to reveal and present her traumatic pains.

In the novel, the obscurity between foreign and familiar leads to Léonie's eventual confrontation with her traumatic past. She needs to learn that the Jews cannot be marginalized and separate from herself. As a child, Léonie learns from Victorine about the villagers' widespread hatred toward Jewish people, which is a sentiment that Thérèse later explains:

Léonie was confused: Jesus was a Jew wasn't he?

Yes silly, but then he invented Christianity, didn't he, so all the Jews were supposed to stop being Jews and be Catholics instead. Only they wouldn't. They had Jesus put to death. It was their fault, really, that Jesus was on the cross. They were as bad as the communists. (Roberts 48)

This anti-Semitic attitude towards the Jews leads Léonie to deny her friendly attitudes towards her Jewish friends in England: "[Léonie's] Catholic primary school

in the North London suburb had many Jewish pupils. When she went home to tea with them, she ate delicious food [...] But now she denied that memory [she] said nothing” (Roberts 48). When Léonie first hears the ghostly voices of the Jewish family as a child, she refuses to understand them. She denies any connection to the Jewish and affirms their otherness. She regards herself as distinct from them. However, Thérèse’s return back home stimulates Léonie to finally listen to the messages of the Jewish family. That is, it is only through her realization of the connection between her and the Jews, and her reconstruction of a coherent story of her traumatic war experiences that Léonie can bear witness to those who were murdered in traumatic circumstances in the war.

Roberts portrays Léonie and Thérèse as more than twins in her depiction of their relationship. To exemplify, when Léonie is waiting for her sister to return home at the beginning of the novel she feels a threat to her identity:

The mirror opposite flickered a warning. Which of us is which? For twenty years she had cohabited peacefully with her reflection [...] Yes, she existed, the mirror told her over those years [...] Now that other one was turning up, to disrupt her steady gaze. (Roberts 4)

This expression is also addressed in Léonie’s claim that she “hasn’t got a soul...Thérèse stole it” (Roberts 19). Furthermore, Léonie’s confusion about her unique identity is referred to in her questioning of the difference between the words one and two: “Two was an odd word anyway. It did not express twoness. It was as short, round and compact as one” (Roberts 97). The expression “the mirror opposite” addresses the fact that Thérèse and Léonie have two distinct personalities and stories. Thérèse is cheerful, Léonie is troubled; Thérèse is single, Léonie is married, and she has children. Thérèse is fat, Léonie is slim. Furthermore, Thérèse chooses to go to the convent to avoid confronting her mother’s death; however, Léonie does not leave her settlement. Indeed, Léonie and Thérèse are two girls who are encrypted to each other with their secrets. Roger Luckhurst claims as follows:

The daughters of the house are penetrated and to some extent ventriloquized by the encrypted secrets of their parents’ generation; they suffer the phantom of a history illegally buried but leaking from the edges of the crypt in disruptive ways. (253)

For Léonie, Thérèse serves as a medium of confronting her individual and collective traumas. However, she also wants to get rid of Thérèse since she does not feel ready to confront these traumatic sufferings. Léonie regards Thérèse as strong as

a father figure; in other words, she sees Thérèse as a person to get help when she is psychologically troubled: “Thérèse stood for the father, for God, for suffering. For everything that Léonie wanted to forget. But Thérèse had returned, she wouldn’t be got rid of, she foretold a groan and heave of change” (Roberts 171). Here, even Léonie regards Thérèse as a medium of her salvation, she wants to escape from Thérèse since she depicts her as “the bad flesh from an apple” (Roberts 171) and “the rotten spot in her” (Roberts 171). Léonie is annoyed with Thérèse since she blames Thérèse for leaving her alone and unattended when Antoinette died.

Léonie initially does not feel ready to confront her traumatic past, and she opposes to Thérèse by accusing her to be jealous of her:

[...] all those lies you tried to make me swallow about Madeleine not being my real mother. About being adopted. About Antoinette being raped by a German. Your big hysterical drama. Just because you were jealous. Your nose put out of joint. (Roberts 158)

With these expressions, Léonie labels Thérèse as ‘hysteric’. She believes that Thérèse has returned back home to break her piece. Thérèse appears to return home “to lie in the bed in which she’d been born and to quarrel with Léonie” (Roberts 157). Later, Léonie understands that Thérèse has returned to ensure the self-healing process for them by recalling and reconstructing their traumatic past experiences about the Holocaust.

These expressions are also parallel to Léonie’s former sentiments about facing the reality about her real mother. When Thérèse submits Antoinette’s letters about revealing the truths of her true maternity to Léonie, Léonie chooses to destroy them not to confront this shocking reality: “She wrenched the lid off the biscuit tin and tipped her mother’s letters into the range, stuffing them well down with the poker until there was nothing left of them but black ash” (Roberts 148).

On the other hand, Antoinette’s denial of the past and Victorine’s hesitation to reveal it to Léonie and Thérèse transform their traumatic wartime experiences into a fictionalized narrative embedded within the girls. This is also reflected in Léonie’s nightmare, indicating her subconscious awareness that Antoinette is her real mother and that this secret is meticulously kept by Antoinette, like a suitcase, to ensure that it remains hidden. Léonie’s dream about this suitcase is depicted as follows:

Antoinette’s suitcase was bound in scarlet cloth. She was weighed down by it. She dragged it across the Customs Hall. She had got off

the boat and was looking for the way out. Léonie followed her. None of the uniformed customs men would touch the red suitcase, let alone chalk a squiggle on the side and let it through. Back and forth Antoinette went, ever more urgently. Léonie crept behind, red and dangerous, that suitcase. The Customs men knew it. They'd been tipped off. A bomb inside it timed to explode and tear them all to shreds. Red shreds of flesh. Antoinette began to run. Watched by the Nazi soldiers through plate-glass doors. (Roberts 52)

In the dream, Léonie's subconscious awareness that Antoinette is indeed her real mother is evident when she replaces Madeleine with Antoinette at the French Customs Office. The suitcase in the dream symbolizes the secret of Antoinette's rape and the birth of her twins. The consequences of keeping this secret are highlighted by the customs officials' reluctance to open the suitcase. Indeed, the secret is portrayed as a timed bomb; therefore, Antoinette's attempt to keep it to her death appears to be useless.

3.2 Storytelling and Rediscovery of the Second World War

Thérèse and Léonie's story begins with their childhood, illustrating the Martins' family life which is built around avoiding the secrets of Antoinette's rape and the harrowing war. As the narrative delves into the past, a family photograph reveals the denial of Antoinette's rape. The photo, taken before her rape and marriage to Louis, shows a young Antoinette who now appears worn out. Victorine explains to the young Léonie, without elaborating, that "her terrible experiences during the war had sapped her physically" (Roberts 27). When Léonie inquires about these experiences, her questions are either ignored or dismissed with the remark that the war was "terrible for everybody" (Roberts 27).

This disregard for the past is also evident when Madeleine and Léonie arrive at the Martins' family house from England, and Léonie tells Antoinette that she is scared of the voices she hears at night in her bedroom. Antoinette responds to this in fear: "Antoinette's eyes flew wide open, like a doll's. She stared. Her voice was high and cross" (Roberts 39). However, rather than confronting these voices, she silences Léonie: "There are no dead people in this house I assure you. Dead people can't talk. They're in the cemetery, at rest. Don't be silly" (Roberts 39). On the other hand, Antoinette's ignorance of these voices cannot indeed silence them since when she leaves the room the voices are depicted again:

Something kicked in the shadows over by the door [...] Now it was a shuffle, as of worn loose slippers. A slack tread. Back and forth. Back and forth. And

then the voices. That cried out and chanted, and mourned. In a language she did not want to understand. (Roberts 39)

These statements underline that Léonie does not want to hear and take the deceased Jewish family's messages.

The narrative continues to reveal past ignorances with the story of the Priest's efforts to stop the villagers from worshipping the saint in the woods. He destroys the shrine and directs them to pray in the church's designated area instead. Victorine explains this act of denial to the girls while showing them where the shrine once stood:

She is, was I mean, a very ancient saint [...] her statue used to stand on that ledge of rock, just there above the spring [...] People used to come here all the time, in those days, before the war, to ask for things. (Roberts 41)

The connection between the statue's destruction and the villagers' attempts to deny the horrors of the war is clear when Victorine admits that she does not know how the statue disappeared. She states: "It happened during the war, everything was topsy-turvy then. The statue just vanished" (Roberts 42). Victorine's vague statements about the war prompt Léonie to ask more questions about that time; however, Victorine refuses to explain, telling the girls that they are "too young to understand" (Roberts 43). Furthermore, Victorine's appearance reveals that these traumatic war experiences are still recognized in her: "She was red in the face. She twiddled a strand of fizzy blond hair. She screwed up her mouth and regarded them. Let's go and pick blackberries" (Roberts 43).

Victorine tries to shield the girls from the horrors of the war but ends up increasing their curiosity by giving them some irrational explanations. For instance, while the girls are helping her clean the house, Victorine points out the marks left on the floor by the Germans soldiers' boots. These marks are remnants of the war that persist despite Antoinette's efforts to conceal them with a carpet:

Léonie peered at the pockmarks on the red surface. The memory of the house was made visible. Scars that would never fade. The injuries of the house lived on, under the carpet which concealed them. Once you knew they were there, you could not forget. (Roberts 44)

These statements are important in that they address the futility of the family's attempts to conceal their traumatic past for the first time. However, the physical presence of the past is evident in the house. Eventually, Thérèse and Léonie have to face this traumatic past to bear witness to the devastating war.

Victorine's avoidance of discussing the traumatic experiences of the war mirrors the actions of Léonie's adoptive mother Madeleine. Instead of exposing the girls to the atrocities of the war, Madeleine turns these traumatic events into comforting narratives. This is evident when she reinterprets the traumatic events of Antoinette's rape with a happy ending, emphasizing the soldiers' heroic efforts to hide the village's wine in the family's cellar:

It was when Paris fell and the Germans were occupying everywhere. People in the village could imagine what it would be like, the Germans taking all their supplies. So they got together and decided to hide their cider and wine [...] Our cellars are so big, they put it there [...] the Germans never found them. Well, once they nearly did. When Antoinette, when she ... Well. But it was alright in the end. After the war, everybody got their wine and cider back. (Roberts 49)

The family's attempt to protect the girls from the trauma of the war is illustrated when Antoinette becomes heavily sick. Instead of explaining their mother's illness to the girls, the family ignores the situation and the girls continue their play when Antoinette turns back home from the doctor. Thérèse's conscious escape from her mother's approaching death is also evident in her request to change her bedroom to another one that is not too close to Antoinette's bedroom where she is lying sick. When Antoinette dies, the family seeks to shield the girls from facing their mother's death by not allowing them to attend the funeral, believing it "would upset them too much" (Roberts 81). The cemetery where Antoinette is buried symbolizes this denial of her death:

The cemetery was a square plot of ground, enclosed by a high wall with ornamental turrets at the corners. The dead lay inside this fortified enclosure in rows as neat as those in Martin's kitchen-garden [...] Here and there women tended the graves, just as they tended their houses [...] Most [of the graves] looked like dolls' houses [...] where the women played at rearranging the clean furniture. (Roberts 107)

Following her mother's death, Thérèse falsely claims to have seen a saint, a figure that Léonie actually sees in the woods. Thérèse describes the saint as resembling the Virgin Mary, indicating that her claim is a response to Antoinette's sudden death. In other words, Thérèse replaces her love for Antoinette with veneration for the Virgin Mary. This substitution is further demonstrated when Thérèse believes that she is conversing with God as a reaction to her mother's loss: "She was rapt in a frame of fiery clouds. She no longer spoke to anyone except God. She chose silence, obscurity, poverty. She chose him who was everything, her

hollow in the rock, her desert refuge” (Roberts 115). Although Thérèse tells lies about seeing the saint, Léonie sees her:

Something outside her, mysterious and huge, put out a kindly exploring hand and touched her. Something was restored to her which she had lost and believed she would never find again. The deepest pleasure she had ever known possessed her. It started in her toes and across her shoulders and squirmed through her, aching, and sweet. (Roberts 86)

The act of seeing the saint is portrayed as a communicative feeling Léonie already knows: “A language she heard once but had forgotten about, forgotten ever hearing, forgotten she could speak [...] She had heard it spoken long ago [...] The secret language, the underground stream that forced through her like a river” (Roberts 86). In this context, with the use of the saint Roberts associates the past with the present between Léonie and Antoinette.

When Léonie turns back home she cannot depict the image of the saint to Victorine and Rose. She states that the saint looks “as though she were made of fire. And she had yellow stars around her head” (Roberts 89). This expression leads Victorine to ignore this circumstance and Victorine replies that it is “just an excuse. Or your imagination. Overtired. Staying awake too late chatting to poor Thérèse (Roberts 89). Instead of confronting Léonie’s depicted image of the saint, Victorine and the villagers choose Thérèse’s simple and familiar depiction of the saint. Léonie does not insist but chooses to remain silent about her vision. In other words, she chooses to escape from her image of the Virgin Mary instead of bearing witness to the denied reality.

The village priest tells the villagers that their saint is actually the devil and decides to perform an exorcism to banish it. He demolishes the stones remaining from the original statue to ensure “that this pagan nonsense [is] completely done away with” (Roberts 110). While the villagers are destroying these stones, they discover that the statue covers “a shallow grave. Inside this was a mess of human skulls and bones” (Roberts 116). Instead of facing their traumatic war experiences after this significant discovery, the villagers continue to deny their past by allowing the priest to take the bones away “for a quick burial in the cemetery with as few people as present as possible” (Roberts 121). Additionally, when Léonie tries to find out who the bones belonged to, the adults respond with dismissive answers. For

instance, Madeleine silences her by saying “You and your questions can’t you see I’m busy” (Roberts 118).

However, the discovery prompts one villager, Rose Taille whose husband was killed along with a Jewish family, to question the past. She uses this opportunity to tell Léonie the truth about the genocide of the Jews in the concentration camps:

The Germans were highly organized, she said, [...] they hunted up all the Jews they could find. Regular round-ups. The really big one in Paris, we called it la grande raffle [...] they kept the Jews in a sports stadium outside Paris. Packed in with hardly any food or water. Of course, lots of them died. Then they were sent to the camp at Drancy, and from there they were put on trains and sent to Auschwitz to be gassed [...] Freight trains [...] people jammed in standing up, into trucks. Without food or water. For a journey that took three days. Afterward, we found out. Those who wanted to know that is. (Roberts 126)

Rose tells Léonie about a Jewish family that she and her husband hid, revealing that a villager betrayed them. As a result, the Germans captured the family and Henri, shooting them mercilessly. Rose’s account highlights the villagers’ refusal to acknowledge the atrocities of the concentration camps and the murders of the Jewish family and Henri. She also confides to Léonie that she can never forget how her husband’s murder led to her baby being stillborn.

Léonie, however, remains unable to confront these traumatic past events. When Baptiste tells her that the room she stayed in as a child was where the Jewish family was kept, Léonie realizes that the voices she heard were the ghostly echoes of the deceased family. Léonie’s trauma from these ghostly voices is depicted as follows:

Somewhere a massive pendulum swung to and fro. It counted the minutes before the dawn. There was no escape from it. So heavy it would crush you as it pushed from side to side. It was the blood in Léonie’s chest. Her heart pumped so strongly she felt she’d burst. (Roberts 137)

The ghostly voices heard by Léonie are parallel to the hallucinations seen by Sachiko’s daughter Mariko in Ishiguro’s *A Pale View of Hills* (1982). Mariko sees a ghostly woman drowning her baby in the sea within an after-shock of the devastating war. This woman shows herself again in various scenes later. These ghostly voices and images heard and seen by the two characters in the two novels symbolize the horror and the atrocity of the war. Roger Luckhurst defines the figure of the ghost as “the stubborn trace of [...] unspoken history” (1996, 243). Then he maintains as follows:

The ghost that fractures the enclosure of the home is the trace of a disavowed history, specifically, of a genocidal history. The ghost irrupts between the terms of that oxymoronic phrase, for it is genocide that dominant historiography has tried to erase, while history, and the subjects who might speak it, are denied to the victims of genocide. (243-244)

In this sense, the images or the voices of the ghost presented in both *A Pale View of the Hills* (1982) and *Daughters of the House* (1992) address the hidden secrets of the war. While the settings of the two novels are different, the outcomes and the trauma of the devastating war remain the same for the victims of the Holocaust.

The effects of Madeleine's recounting of war trauma are illustrated through her action of cutting patterns in a piece of cloth: she "snipped serenely. Her scissors took long delicate strides. The cloth fell apart as they advanced" (Roberts 49). Madeleine's narrative of this traumatic event has significant consequences, as the girls' curiosity about the story leads them to enter the cellar. This cellar is a place which Antoinette has forbidden them to go in an effort to deny what happened to her there. When the girls venture into the cellar, Antoinette hears their footsteps and cries out in fear, reliving her traumatic experience. Antoinette's efforts to deny her trauma fail once more when the girls enter the cellar again and discover her shoe which fell off during her struggle with the soldier and remained there since. When they show the shoe to Antoinette, she immediately takes it and throws it into the fire, hoping that destroying the physical evidence of her trauma will erase the event from her memory.

Towards the conclusion of the novel, Thérèse realizes that her anger towards her mother led her to replace her mother with the Virgin Mary. She also understands that she secluded herself in the convent to avoid confronting the traumatic pain of her mother's death.:

Thérèse had done the best she could. She'd found herself another mother, she'd been sold one ready-made by the priests of her Church. Perfect, that mother of God, that pure Virgin, a holy doll who never felt angry or sexy and never went away. (Roberts 165)

To accept her real mother, Thérèse sets fire to the statue of the Virgin Mary in the church: "She jumped clear of those rags and tatters of flame. She cried *Maman*, and flung herself at the church door" (Roberts 166).

Like Thérèse's confrontation with the past, Léonie eventually confronts the voices in her childhood bedroom. This confrontation is stimulated by Thérèse's return to their family house:

The words she [Léonie] was frightened to say were fastened up inside this room. She'd thought she'd lost them, she'd forgotten she'd put them away in here. For twenty years. For thirty. Until Thérèse had arrived back and reminded her. (Roberts 170)

Léonie's decision to enter the room symbolizes her responsibility to bear witness to the past. She tries to recall the words that the Jewish family uttered. Then she remembers that they "called out their names and the name of the informer who had betrayed them" (Roberts 171). She realizes she kept these memories locked away in her childhood room out of fear. She then forbade her own children from entering that room, just as she was forbidden from entering the cellar as a child. However, Thérèse's return from the convent has led her to discover that the past cannot be ignored as "history was voices that came alive and shouted" (Roberts 171). Now, she chooses to recall the words that once she chose to forget. She decides to bear witness to the past and attends the inquiry "to tell the lawyers the names of the slaughtered Jews" (Roberts 171) and to reveal that it was the priest who betrayed them. Léonie understands that she needs to enter the bedroom, join the conversation, and listen to what is being said; thus, the novel concludes with Léonie stepping into the room:

She twisted the handle of the door. She opened it. She paused in the doorway, then went in. The voices came from somewhere just ahead, the shadowy bit she couldn't see. She stepped forward, into the darkness, to find words. (Roberts 172)

All traumatic war events in the novel are denied by the villagers who avoid facing their traumatic war experiences. Léonie and Thérèse's parents are depicted as having raised their daughters shielded from the war's effects. This protective effort buries the deep secrets of the unspoken past in the girls' subconscious. When Léonie and Thérèse eventually uncover the truths and impacts of the war's trauma, they initially mirror the villagers' denial by trying to forget what they have learned. However, as adults, Thérèse's return to the village prompts them to confront these unspoken experiences and reconcile with their traumatic past. Thérèse explains her returning to her family house "to put the record straight about the past" (Roberts 158).

Alongside the disclosures about the brutal war, Thérèse also uncovers a family secret when she reads her mother's letters which reveal the rape and that Léonie is her daughter. Thérèse is initially unable to confront the contents of these letters: "Words from the letters banged about in Thérèse's head [...] Cellar. Hiding it. He found me. Dark. Held. Couldn't escape" (Roberts 132). Struggling to face the truth about her true identity, Thérèse flees to the woods in search of the Virgin Mary. Eventually, she shares her findings from the letters with Léonie. Despite acknowledging their sisterhood, Léonie refuses to believe Thérèse's account of Antoinette being raped by a German soldier: "Oh, I think I'm wholly French, she said: I've been working it out. I don't think it was a German soldier at all. I'm sure Thérèse made that up. I think it was Louis all along" (Roberts 152). Rather than acknowledging the painful emotions caused by the truth, Léonie seeks comfort by blaming Thérèse for forcing her to confront the past:

The pain burrowed through Léonie, tore at her with sharp claws [...] Really it was all Thérèse's fault. She'd insisted on telling Léonie. She'd taken everything from her. Then she'd said they were sisters. Like a slap. Léonie would scratch back. Rescue herself. She wouldn't be caught, trapped in the darkness. She wasn't a Jew. It wasn't her fault. She was French. (Roberts 152)

Léonie's rejection of the truth that Thérèse reveals is also highlighted in the novel's final part set in the past. In this way, the past events of the novel illustrate the link between Léonie's denial of her history and her refusal to acknowledge the collective past, as it is also illustrated through her insistence on being different from the Jews.

In the final section which returns to the present, the girls confront their traumatic war experiences through storytelling. Thérèse faces her past by accepting the story of the saint, altering the vision of the saint in her mind, and confronting her mother's death. To affirm this confrontation, Thérèse decides to destroy the false image of the saint in the church. By doing so, she also expresses her trauma over her mother's death. She blames her mother for abandoning her: "Thérèse had been right behind her, forced to halt when Antoinette disappeared, left there alone on the brink, and thrown back. Antoinette had pushed her away, hadn't let her come too, hadn't needed or wanted her company" (Roberts 165).

Ultimately, Léonie's choice to join the deceased Jewish family in the room reveals her connection to them. This is a connection she previously denied in the

beginning of the novel. By reconstructing, modifying, and retelling the Jewish family's story, Léonie realizes that she is no different from the Jews. This realization allows her to take on the responsibility of bearing witness to the ignored and denied traumatic past. Such confrontation and acknowledgment of the past are achieved through storytelling. Through three different stories, Roberts creates a form of testimony that enables the girls to confront the traumatic past that their family had covered up, ignored, avoided, and denied during their childhood.



CHAPTER 4: SEBASTIAN BARRY'S *THE SECRET SCRIPTURE*

4.1 Sebastian Barry and Traumatic Memory in *The Secret Scripture*

The distinguished Irish playwright and novelist, Sebastian Barry, explores the complexity of human experience as well as the sufferings of individual and collective trauma. Barry's works delve into the depths of individual and collective traumatic experiences and present profound reflections on the human condition. The main focus and themes of Barry's novels are mostly the complexities of collective trauma, personal suffering, and the quest for redemption in his novels and plays.

One of the central themes in Barry's works is the exploration of Ireland's chaotic history and its lasting impact on individuals and Irish society. In his novels such as *The Whereabouts of Eneas McNulty* (1998) and *The Secret Scripture* (2008) Barry skillfully weaves the personal narratives of his characters concerning historical events such as the Irish War of Independence. Through these narratives, Barry highlights how collective trauma affects the lives of ordinary people, shapes their identities, and directs their preferences.

The Irish Civil War, which took place from June 1922 to May 1923, emerged as a bitter conflict following Ireland's War of Independence against British rule (1919-1921). The primary catalyst for the civil war was the Anglo-Irish Treaty of December 1921, which established the Irish Free State as a self-governing dominion within the British Commonwealth but also led to a split within the nationalist movement. Proponents of the treaty, led by Michael Collins and the Provisional Government, argued that it offered a practical path to independence and stability. On the other side were anti-treaty forces, including prominent figures like Éamon de Valera, who believed that accepting the treaty compromised Irish sovereignty and failed to achieve true independence.

The civil war erupted when anti-treaty forces rejected the authority of the Free State government and seized the Four Courts in Dublin. What followed was a brutal conflict marked by guerrilla warfare, reprisals, and atrocities on both sides. The Free State's military superiority eventually led to the defeat of the anti-treaty forces but at a heavy cost in terms of lives lost and deep divisions within Irish society that persisted for generations. The Irish Civil War remains a poignant chapter in

Ireland's struggle for independence, highlighting the complexities and sacrifices inherent in the quest for self-determination.

The Whereabouts of Eneas McNulty (1998) is a former novel to Barry's *The Secret Scripture* (2008). As the title suggests, the novel depicts Eneas McNulty's story. This character is later presented in Barry's *The Secret Scripture* (2008) which is the novel to be discussed in this chapter. Eneas is Roseanne's (the protagonist in *The Secret Scripture*) brother-in-law in the novel. As for Barry's *Days Without End* (2016), this novel is published eight years after the publication of *The Secret Scripture* (2008). It depicts the story of Thomas McNulty who was formerly presented as Roseanne's husband in *The Secret Scripture* (2008).

In *The Whereabouts of Eneas McNulty* (1998) the protagonist's experiences during the Irish War of Independence exile him from his community. The novel explores the loneliness of a man cut off from his roots and condemned to live outside of society and it presents the profound complexity of political conflict. Barry's portrayal of collective trauma goes beyond mere description of the events; he illustrates the emotional aftermath and the enduring scars that exist in the hearts and minds of his characters. Isolation is a central motif in the novel and it is presented both physically and emotionally. Eneas's physical exile to the small island of Mauritius mirrors his emotional isolation from the community that he once called home.

The Whereabouts of Eneas McNulty (1998) is a sorrowful exploration of identity, displacement, and the existential journey of the protagonist, Eneas McNulty. Published in 1998, the novel is set in the Irish War of Independence and its aftermath. Eneas McNulty's search for identity becomes a metaphor for the broader struggles of a nation, and Barry's narrative addresses themes such as belonging, loyalty, and the permanent milestones of history.

The novel opens with Eneas McNulty's decision to join the British-led Royal Irish Constabulary during the Irish War of Independence, which is a choice that means exile and dislocation for the protagonist. Eneas's identity is questioned in the societal and political upheavals of the time. Barry skillfully portrays Eneas as a man who is stuck in a space between conflicting loyalties. As Eneas suffers in a society that distrusts him for his betrayal, the reader witnesses the internal struggle of a man

who bears the consequences of choices made in a complex and unforgiving political landscape. Barry's exploration of Eneas's identity crisis invites readers to consider the slippery nature of identity in the face of historical and personal reformations.

The Whereabouts of Eneas McNulty (1998) reflects the collective trauma of Ireland, and Eneas, the protagonist, is a mirror of the nation's collective suffering. His life becomes a reflection of the broader consequences of political and social reformations. Barry skillfully presents Eneas's struggles with the traumatic events of the time, and he shapes a narrative that underlines the relationship between individual and collective trauma. The impact of the Irish War of Independence on Eneas's life is profound; it leads to his state of exile. Barry's reflection of collective trauma goes beyond a mere reconstruction of events; it becomes a cure for the pains of the individuals who find themselves caught in the political fight.

The Whereabouts of Eneas McNulty (1998) stands as a testament to Sebastian Barry's narrative ability to explore the complexities of identity, history, and the human condition. Through Eneas McNulty's existential journey, Barry constructs a narrative that presents universal themes such as displacement, trauma, and the eternal quest for belonging. The novel directs readers to confront the obscurity of history and consider the profound impact of societal and political forces on individual lives. In Eneas's search for his identity, Barry presents an exploration of the perfection of the human spirit and the nature of the intricacy of history.

In his works, Sebastian Barry's characters often find moments of salvation and redemption in the face of overwhelming trauma. In *Days Without End* (2016) there is an exploration of identity, love, and the human spirit set against the harsh political atmosphere of the 19th century America. Published in 2016, the novel follows the life of Thomas McNulty, an Irish immigrant who, along with his companion John Cole, experiences the devastating chaos of the Indian Wars and the American Civil War. Thomas McNulty and John Cole suffer from the trauma of war and societal prejudice but find solace in their deep bond and shared humanity. Barry suggests that even in the darkest moments, there is the potential for redemption through human communication. Barry's narrative strategy which includes storytelling, challenges the traditional notions of love, family, and belonging.

Days Without End (2016) presents Thomas McNulty's journey from a young Irish immigrant in the American West to a soldier in the brutality of the Indian Wars and the Civil War. His identity changes in response to external forces. With this novel, Barry skillfully tackles the transformative nature of human identity and suggests that identity is not fixed but rather shaped by the circumstances and relationships that define an individual's life. Thomas's ability to adapt to different roles, as a dancer in a saloon, a soldier on the battlefield, or a transient father to a young Sioux girl, underlines the fluidity of identity in a chaotic world. Barry's portrayal of his protagonist invites readers to question the established norms and appreciate the nature of the human spirit in the face of profound transformation.

Days Without End (2016) challenges the conventional notions of love and companionship through the profound relationship between Thomas McNulty and John Cole. Their bond goes beyond the traditional definitions of friendship and love. Barry presents the complexity of their relationship and depicts a love that is deep and enduring in the background of war and social problems. Barry's portrayal of Thomas and John's connection also invites readers to reflect on the transformative power of love and strength. Barry depicts the horrors of violence of the war, and Thomas McNulty bears witness to the brutality of armed conflict. Thomas's internal struggles with guilt and his quest for redemption address the violence of war. The novel, however, goes beyond mere war narrative; it becomes a meditation on the aftermath of violence, trauma, and the possibility of redemption.

Sebastian Barry's exploration of trauma in his novels and plays provides a profound and multi-faceted understanding of the human experience. In examining either individual or collective trauma, Barry's works explore the complexities of traumatic suffering and offer redemption and salvation. Through his storytelling, Barry invites readers to confront the enduring impact of trauma on individuals and communities while pointing to the possibility of healing and redemption. As an important literary figure, Barry contributes significantly to the exploration of trauma and its transformative power in the realm of contemporary literature.

As Dominick LaCapra claims in his *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, traumatic memory "may involve distortion, disguise, and other permutations relating to processes of imaginative transformation and narrative shaping, as well as perhaps repression, denial, dissociation, and foreclosure" (88-89). In Sebastian Barry's *The*

Secret Scripture (2008) the protagonist of the novel Roseanne Clear McNulty's confrontation and revelation of her traumatic past experiences involve contradiction and ambiguity. However, Roseanne's recollections are uncertain and reflect the fragmented nature of traumatic memory.

The Secret Scripture (2008) does not only present traumatic memory but also reflects Irish society of the period that shapes Roseanne's life story. Roseanne's experiences, omissions, inconsistencies, and uncertainties contribute to her reconstruction of her traumatic life story. As an assertion of personal truth, her narrative also challenges the dominant historical narratives of the period. Roseanne's narrative also reflects the healing properties of narrativizing trauma as only by writing her life story - whether what she is writing is true or not – Roseanne finds a way to confront, reveal, and present her traumatic experiences.

Barry's protagonist Roseanne McNulty is a one-hundred-year-old patient in a mental hospital in Sligo, Ireland. She suffered the Catholic pressures of Irish society and their strict policy about women's bodies. Roseanne was orphaned as a teenager by her father's death and also her mother's mental breakdown after the loss of her husband. Then, Roseanne finds herself at the mercy of the local Catholic priest, Father Gaunt, who forces her to convert from Presbyterianism and to marry urgently. Roseanne marries a Catholic man but does not convert from her religious faith. One day, she is seen walking out with an Irish Republican, and Father Gaunt assumes that she has an affair with him. Later, Father Gaunt arranges her imprisonment in her house in Strandhill and decides on an abolishment of her marriage. Years later, when Roseanne becomes pregnant from a one-night affair with her erstwhile brother-in-law Eneas, Father Gaunt arranges her hospitalization process as he diagnoses her to be a nymphomaniac.

Roseanne describes herself as an "old, old woman now, [...] a scraggy stretch of skin" (Barry 4); her doctor, Dr. Grene also refers to her as "Old lady. The cailleach of the stories. So ancient, and yet, one of those faces that is so thin" (Barry 118). Costello-Sullivan suggests: "The reference to Roseanne as the 'cailleach' not only evokes the idea of Roseanne as an older woman but also highlights her role as a character in a story and the supernatural imagery that subsequent religious language invokes" (86). For much of her life, Roseanne does not have control over her life.

The novel reflects the social contexts that influence Roseanne's life and the twentieth-century Irish society in general.

Father Gaunt's controlling power over Roseanne indeed presents his repressed attraction to her. He states: "Roseanne, you are the most beautiful young girl we have ever seen in Sligo" (Barry 99). More importantly, it also reflects the supreme authority of Catholic priests in the Irish state. Roseanne states: "The word of a man like that was like a death sentence" (Barry 100). Roseanne's doctor, Dr. Grene, describes Father Gaunt as an "all-knowing, stern-minded, and entirely unforgiving" (Barry 236) priest who fears Roseanne's both Presbyterianism and femininity:

He betrays at every stroke an intense hatred if not of women, then of the sexuality of women, or sexuality in general. For him, it is the devil's cloak and hood [...] It is also crystal clear that he regards her Protestantism as a simple, primal evil in itself. His anger that she would not let herself be made a Catholic [...] is absolute, long before she married her Catholic husband, and likewise remained what she was. This in itself for Fr Gaunt is a real perversion. (Barry 227-230)

As a non-Catholic woman, Roseanne is oppressed and silenced. Father Gaunt's utterance about Roseanne's beauty as "a mournful temptation" (Barry 94) to the men of Sligo reflects all the women in the city who live as slaves due to their physical attractiveness. As Dr. Grene also claims: these women are often "sectioned for social rather than medical reasons" (Barry 27). Both in the world outside and in the asylum Roseanne is unprotected. The physical conditions in the asylum are miserable. Roseanne's room is so cold that it is covered with "rheum of frost" (Barry 24). She has to wear all four of her dresses to stay warm. Dr. Grene also thinks that many parts of the hospital are unacceptable: "The rooms have gone beyond the beyond, with the ceilings endangered, horrible swathes of dampness up the walls. Anything iron, such as bedsteads, rusts away" (Barry 44).

Roseanne reveals that Dr. Grene has been inattentive to her for years; only recently he has been dealing with her as a doctor is supposed to. She states as follows:

It is only so recently he has been coming up here to me regularly. I do remember when I only saw him twice yearly, at Easter and Christmas, when he would come in quite briskly, ask how I was, not really listen to the answer, and go off again. (Barry 126)

Dr. Grene and the other staff members of the asylum do not want to accept the violence that was applied in the hospital before; however, Dr. Grene confesses:

“Somewhere in the distant past, in just such an institution as this, Roseanne suffered in some way at the hands of her nurses” (Barry 117). Roseanne, too, acknowledges that the hospital employee John Kane is a potential sexual threat. When a patient is sexually abused, Dr. Grene and the staff worry about the asylum, not the patient:

And of course, the worst was suspected, as it always is [...] All thoughts turned to John Kane because of course he has been implicated in such matters before, and let off [...] But there is no proof, nothing, and we must simply all be vigilant [...] The staff seems to gather together and roll itself into a ball, needless outward. I must confess I feel the same myself. Perhaps it would shock an outsider the level of things going wrong we feel we can tolerate [...] Things are best handled in-hospital. (Barry 163-164)

Dr. Grene reflects the social injustice and the ignorance of Irish society of the patients of the asylum. On the other hand, Father Gaunt symbolizes the hypocrisy of Irish society towards Irish women. Roseanne regards herself as a “thing left over, a remnant woman” (Barry 4). She is forcibly separated from her husband, and she thinks that she becomes “more and more like a ghost” (Barry 205). Roseanne positions herself as a lost woman; she recognizes her own social invisibility and cultural erasure in terms of gender.

Roseanne’s aim to storify her account serves as a kind of counter-narrative to the official version of her past that is stored in the asylum. Her testimony also symbolizes the personal voice of an individual’s own story that challenges the official story of Ireland. Costello-Sullivan claims that “*The Secret Scripture* uses Roseanne’s story to represent all those women silenced and forgotten by Irish history; the overwriting of her narrative by Father Gaunt’s “authoritative” version reflects the experience of many women in Irish history” (78). Roseanne’s silence is related to her traumatic past; she states: “All speaking is difficult, whether peril attends it or not, [...] when to speak at all is a betrayal of something, perhaps a something not even identified” (Barry 76). In this context, Roseanne implies that speaking about the impacts of her traumatic experiences is problematic.

Roseanne’s challenge with trusting anyone is related to her traumatic past. Even if she thinks Dr. Grene is kind to her, she sometimes hesitates: “At least Mrs. McNulty was always openly hostile, whereas Jack and Fr. Gaunt always presented themselves as friends [...] Now I am having a bad thought, for doesn’t Dr. Grene also present himself as a friend?” (Barry 127). Her challenge with trust is also related to her captivity in the asylum since prolonged captivity destroys all human

relationships and contributes to the development of trauma. Roseanne's silence, fears, and distrust of her memory are all related to her traumatic experiences and abuse.

Roseanne is, still, willing to accept the responsibility of her past. She feels powerless and vulnerable. Although she claims that "no one is ever quite so old as a fifteen-year-old girl" (Barry 66), Roseanne's inner power stems from her severe traumatic pains. Even while talking to Dr. Grene, she feels a huge shame, although she is a victim: "Violently ashamed. It was as if some wood and leaves were suddenly cleared from a spring, and the head of water blossomed up. Painful, painful shame" (Barry 80). Even while she is storifying her past, Roseanne often feels a tendency to defend the individuals who have caused her so much suffering. She notes: "I don't mean to describe all this in a bad way. God forgive me" (Barry 159). Then she maintains: "I must be careful to write of her fairly" (Barry 160) in commenting on her mother-in-law. In narrating about Father Gaunt who ruined her life she states: "I know [...] that he was trying to do his duty [...] I know this" (Barry 92-93). This expression suggests Roseanne's vulnerability and fear of Irish society.

Indeed, Roseanne fears speaking, she chooses to storify her traumatic past. She does it for her sanity. She claims: "For dearly I would love now to leave an account, some kind of brittle and honest-minded history of myself, and if God gives me the strength, I will tell this story" (Barry 5). Noting that no one even knows that she has a story and she writes on unwanted paper, she underlines the significance of the act of storytelling and the importance to her that she can get it right: "Oh, I must remind myself to be clear, and be sure I know what I am saying to you. There must be accuracy and rightness now" (Barry 31).

Even so, Roseanne is not a reliable witness. Some of her memories seem to be inconsistent. Roseanne's traumatic memory is parallel to Etsuko's traumatic memory in Kazuo Ishiguro's *A Pale View of Hills*. Both characters do not recall and storify what they have lived and experienced during and aftermath of the devastating war. In one scene, Roseanne claims that her father experiments by dropping hammers and feathers from the cemetery tower to test their speed of fall. However, Father Gaunt contradicts this memory with an official record he has presented to the mental hospital. Father Gaunt claims that it is a traumatic episode in which Roseanne's

father was beaten with hammers in front of her by the members of the Irish Republican Army (IRA). Dr Grene summarizes Father Gaunt's account as follows:

[Her father's] mouth was stuffed with white feathers [...] He was beaten with hammers, and an effort was made to push him out the little window at the top of the tower. Roseanne herself was below looking up. Awful noises no doubt of horror from the small room at the top [...] The hammers had not really killed him either, and as he roared, the feathers burst from his mouth [...] One of the men flung the bloody hammers out the window. (Barry 180)

In various scenes in the narrative, Roseanne questions these memories considering that Father Gaunt might be correct in this case. The first confirmation is stimulated by Roseanne's thoughts about IRA soldiers' experiences with violence. She states: "They had charged into an unknown place with God knew what danger, and now it seemed the thought of lugging John's brother Willie was a feather too far. Or a hammer" (Barry 53). Moreover, as Roseanne tries to explain the past of her ancestors, she states that her grandfather "thought of the Protestant religion as an instrument as soft as a feather transformed into a hammer by the old dispensation, and used to batter the heads of those that labored to live in Ireland" (Barry 62). These instances reveal Roseanne's traumatic pains that she unconsciously denies.

Roseanne's denial of her father's murder by the members of the Irish Republican Army is parallel to the villagers's denial of the murder of the Jewish family in the Holocaust in Michèle Roberts' *Daughters of the House* (1992). Furthermore, Etsuko in Kazuo Ishiguro's *A Pale View of Hills* (1982) hides the suicide and the death of her elder daughter Keiko from her daughters' old school teacher Mrs. Waters in an attempt not to confront her traumatic pains about this sorrowful loss. All in all, these characters initially choose not to confront their traumatic war experiences and fear that they might suffer more when they reveal them. However, reconstructing their stories eventually helps the protagonists of the three novels to reconsider and come to terms with their traumatic war sufferings.

Mostly, Roseanne is aware of the unreliability of her memories. She utters that individuals, the writers of their own stories, can "hold up a wall made of imaginary bricks and mortar against the horrors and cruel, dark tricks of time that assail us, and be the author therefore of themselves" (Barry 3-4). Similarly, she suggests that at times a "foul and utter lie is the best answer" (Barry 26). These expressions suggest a resistance to some stories as they are too painful to tell.

Although Roseanne is reluctant to speak about her past, she is willing to storify it. Rogers claims as follows:

Narrative can become the means to achieve healing for those who have suffered a traumatic experience as it allows the subject to order their experience into a chronological story which is able to construct meaning out of a seemingly overwhelming event. The transformation of traumatic experiences into a narrative also allows the events of the past to become witnessed; this is particularly necessary for traumatic historical events such as war and genocide which tend to be dismissed or falsified by the historical record. (340)

In Roseanne's case, the transformation process of her traumatic experiences into a chronological story allows Roseanne to bear witness to the devastating Irish Civil War and to heal her psychological wounds about the sorrows and losses she experienced both during and aftermath of this war.

Roseanne's uncertainty about the details of her narrative reflects the power and elusiveness of traumatic memory. Dori Laub claims that "The horror of the historical experience is maintained in the testimony only as an elusive memory that feels as if it no longer resembles any reality" (34). Roseanne aims for accuracy; however, she is aware of the failures of her memory, and she is unable to recall some details. She makes an effort to produce a story that is emotionally true but necessarily not completely accurate.

The novel acknowledges the fallibility of memory. Roseanne recognizes that even when one aims to tell the pure truth, the truth cannot be wholly pure. She states: "Friend or enemy, no one has the monopoly on truth. Not even myself, and that is also a vexing and worrying thought" (Barry 127-128). Roseanne also knows that the ability to create such personal stories cannot work well under the dominant official narratives. Roseanne claims that the truth is always subjective and disputable. She states as follows:

The fact that I never saw the soldiers, never spoke to them, never even thought of doing so [...] is in the informal history of Sligo neither here nor there. For history as far as I can see is not the arrangement of what happens, in sequence and truth, but a fabulous arrangement of surmises and guesses held up as a banner against the assault of withering truth. (Barry 54-55)

With her uncertainty, avoidance, and awareness of the limits and contradictions to her assertions, Roseanne reflects the traumatic memory. She addresses her traumatic memory stating as follows:

To this day, I swear by my God, I do not know how it happened. Someone else or others surely know or did while they lived. And maybe the exact how of it is not important never was, but only, what certain people thought had happened. (Barry 50-51)

Roseanne also knows that her memories are influenced by Irish society. Moreover, she implies that the official history itself is doubtful; it is not the careful ordering and recording of certain facts.

Roseanne's traumatic memory still discomforts her; she states, "I sit here dry and old with measly shins writing this. It is not like long ago [...] it is not like it is over and done. It is all to do" (Barry 265). Then, she maintains: "Now memory stops. It is absent. I don't even remember suffering, misery. It is not there" (Barry 276). The next phase that Roseanne experiences is to reconstruct her traumatic memory in her fictional story. That is to say, Roseanne changes the form and flow of the traumatic events she experienced, to relieve herself from her traumatic pains. For instance, Roseanne alters the truth in the death of her father. Even though her father was beaten with hammers and his mouth was stuffed with white feathers, Roseanne wishes to believe that he hung himself in a house in the neighborhood. Roseanne aims to make this traumatic event more endurable and innocent, reconstructing her traumatic memory about the experience. Dr. Grene explains this case as follows:

But Fr Gaunt has him being murdered by the rebels, the first attempt in the very round tower Roseanne so fondly remembers, his mouth stuffed with feathers and him beaten by mallets or hammers, which in terms of post-traumatic stress, sounds like what really happened, and suggests that Roseanne for survival's sake has sanitised it completely, even moving the event back to a time of relative innocence. (Barry 289)

Then Dr. Grene "identifies Roseanne's memory as a traumatic one, with details transposed and corrupted, and the ages changed, was even if unlikely, actually too simple" (Barry 291).

Roseanne's aim in writing her account of her past is to reveal the truth about her traumatic war experiences. Similar to Thérèse in *Daughters of the House* (1992) who returns to her family house to rewrite her autobiography and reveal the truth about the denied crimes committed during the Holocaust, Roseanne attempts to reveal the truth about her father's murder during the Irish Civil War and her imprisonment after the war due to her religious faith. In this sense, creating modified autobiographies, in other words, storifying their past helps both characters to relieve their sufferings about their traumatic losses and pains caused by the devastating wars.

Dr. Grene discovers the powerful symptoms of Roseanne's trauma when he reads her fragmented and unbalanced narrative. Roseanne explains: "I do remember terrible dark things, and loss, and noise, but it is like one of those terrible dark pictures that hang in churches, God knows why, because you cannot see a thing in them" (Barry 101). After reading this expression, Dr. Grene claims: "That is a beautiful description of traumatic memory" (Barry 101). Traumatic memories do not have verbal narrative and context; instead, they are uncovered in the form of vivid sensations and images. Roseanne's mind is unclear not only because she has some social restraints but also because she has some emotional restraints stemming from her trauma. The nature and uncertainty of Roseanne's memories prevent her from presenting a reliable and coherent narrative.

Barry's novel presents how storytelling becomes a strategy to confront, reveal, present, and come to terms with Roseanne's trauma. The novel also presents parallel journal entries written by Dr. Grene that reflect his traumatic pains. He is a sixty-five-year-old doctor who is the head of the sanatorium of the asylum where Roseanne has been staying for years. Roseanne secretly writes her life story that she does not want to share with anyone apart from Dr. Grene. At the same time, Dr. Grene notes his thoughts to determine Roseanne's mental state in the process of the destruction of the asylum and the patients' relocation to another, newer hospital. Besides these recordings, Dr. Grene writes about the loss of his wife and his traumatic experiences due to this tragic event.

Although journals seem to be reliable accounts as they depict the personal daily routines of the writer, they might sometimes be unbalanced if the writer of the journal has a traumatic memory. Judy Nolte Lensink claims:

[the journal] is obviously not a literal transcription of a day. The diarist too selects what to describe and creates what I call "diary time" – giving a full page to a lover's single sentence, while describing fourteen hours of the day with the single telling phrase, "did usual work". (42)

Therefore, journals can be considered as organic texts as they are not constructed through planning an outline. Lensink maintains: "there is not always a correlation between what a diarist writes about and what really matters [...] Therefore we need to read between the lines as well as count sentences" (41). Lensink's assertion highlights the complexity and subtlety involved in interpreting personal diaries, suggesting that the overt content might not always fully represent the diarist's true

concerns or experiences. Diaries often reflect the writer's immediate thoughts, emotions, and contexts, but these entries can be influenced by various factors such as self-censorship, societal norms, and the diarist's selective memory. As a result, what is explicitly stated in a diary might omit significant aspects of the writer's life or internal world.

Reading between the lines involves looking for implicit meanings, underlying emotions, and contextual clues that provide deeper insights into the diarist's true feelings and experiences. For instance, the frequency of certain topics, the tone of the writing, and even the gaps or omissions in the narrative can reveal what truly preoccupies the writer. Counting sentences and analyzing the structure of entries can help identify patterns, such as recurring themes or notable absences, that might indicate underlying concerns or preoccupations not directly addressed. Thus, Lensink's claim underscores the importance of a nuanced approach to diary analysis, where both explicit content and subtle subtext are considered. This comprehensive reading method allows for a more accurate and empathetic understanding of the diarist's reality, recognizing that the full significance of their experiences often lies in the interplay between what is said and what is left unsaid.

As the narrative evolves, it becomes clear that these two characters have a mysterious resemblance in terms of the way that they tell stories. They are both aware of the uncertainty of their memories, and they both aim to find an emotional conclusion for their past traumatic experiences. At the end of the novel, when it becomes clear that Roseanne and Dr. Grene are both victims of injustice, the reader understands the social mechanisms that brought them to their tragic ends. The reader also realizes that the stories of these two victims will never be wholly certain and complete.

Dr. Grene's story is not only the reconstruction of Roseanne's story; he also writes about his sorrow about his deceased wife and his unfaithfulness to her. Dr. Grene's narrative about his betrayal is parallel to Roseanne's meeting with John Lavelle. Roseanne asks: "Why did I go up to Maeve's cairn that very Sunday following to meet Lavelle?" (Barry 176); and Dr. Grene asks: "Why did I have to betray Bet in Bundoran of all places?" (Barry 177). Moreover, his narrative about the loss of her brother presents a similar narrative of Roseanne's repression and loss:

I am astounded to read back over what I just wrote. I have made an anecdote out of the tragic death of my brother, for which, as is clear to me from the cooled syntax, I obviously blame myself [...] I never discussed this [...] It is a scandal in the halls of myself. I see that clearly staring at the bare facts. But how on earth would I [...] ever heal myself? [...] I am clearly content to be beyond help. It is disgusting. I am not only crying now, [...] but trembling also. (Barry 182-183)

Dr. Grene's narrative, like Roseanne's narrative, is underlined with uncertainty and confusion. He appears to be unaware of his sense of guilt until he writes; and, he questions his memory as his writing evolves. His process of narration reflects Roseanne's process in terms of storifying his life. Although Dr. Grene does not know that he is Roseanne's son, he grasps a sense that Roseanne's story carries something from him. He writes: "Mrs. McNulty is rather a touchstone for me. She has been a fixture, and not only represents the institution but also, in a curious way, my own story, my own life" (Barry 16). Besides, Roseanne confesses: "Maybe the truth is, I am writing it for him, as he is the only person I know, in any full sense of the world" (Barry 126). Roseanne does not even know that she is storifying her life to be read by her son.

Dr. Grene and Roseanne also use similar language in their stories. As Roseanne refers to her story as written on "unwanted paper", Dr. Grene reveals that he lacks an audience: "Whose sleeve do I have to grip, to tell my story to?" (Barry 47). Roseanne claims that she has "not looked in a mirror for about fifteen years" (Barry 138), Dr. Grene also reveals that he had not looked in the mirror for many years stating that "I had glanced every morning in the mirror, [...] but had not looked in it at myself" (Barry 116).

The parallelism between Roseanne's story and Dr. Grene's story is not only addressed in the characters' stories but also in their self-discoveries in their storifying processes. Their use of language, traumatic pains, and uncertainties of their memories are also similar. The unreliable memories about Roseanne's father's death with hammers and feathers can be exemplified. Dr. Grene records that Roseanne's father was beaten with hammers and his mouth was "stuffed with white feathers no doubt to characterize his former work" (Barry 180) as a police informant. Later, Dr. Grene realizes that he added this detail about the feathers:

I find to my absolute astonishment and even shame that in his (Father Gaunt's) account of the events in the tower, he doesn't actually say Roseanne's father's mouth was stuffed with feathers, just that he was beaten

by hammers [...] My own brain must have supplied this detail, stealing it from Roseanne I would like to think, except at that point of course I hadn't read her account yet. (Barry 279-280)

Dr. Grene, here, admits his fallibility of memory and irrelevance of actual truth in storytelling. Costello-Sullivan expresses the parallelisms between Roseanne's and Dr. Grene's narrations as follows:

The parallels between Dr. Grene's narrative and Roseanne's narrative occur on multiple levels – word choice, self-revelation, process of writing, recording of trauma, and uncertainty of memories – culminating in this moment when their stories literally blur into one another and reject the need for strict accuracy in narrative. (87)

The novel suggests that trauma recovery can be achieved through the use of storytelling as a narrative strategy. Both Roseanne's and Dr. Grene's reconstruction of their stories contribute to their recovery from trauma. The focus of their writings is not on the reader or any audience; rather, these two characters are, indeed, storifying their lives for their well-being. They are very well aware that the act of writing requires a degree of talent and authoring. They both address a 'reader' but do not know who the reader is. Roseanne states: "Dear reader! Dear reader if you are gentle and good, I wish I could clasp your hand [...] Although I do not have you, I have other things" (Barry 23). Similarly, Dr. Grene expresses: "Oh, and I forgot to say (but to whom am I saying it?)" (Barry 254).

4.2 Memoir Writing as a Form of Storytelling for Trauma Recovery

Roseanne states: "I did not know that a person could hold up a wall made of imaginary bricks and mortar against the horrors and cruel, dark tricks of time that assail us, and be the author therefore of themselves" (Barry 4). She claims in the opening of the novel that she is the writer of her own story. In this sense, Roseanne is similar to Thérèse in Michéle Roberts' *Daughters of the House* who is the writer of her autobiography. Roseanne defines herself as follows:

I am only a thing left over, a remnant woman, and I do not even look like a human being no more, but a scraggy stretch of skin and bone in a bleak skirt and blouse, and a canvas jacket, and I sit here in my niche like a songless robin – no, like a mouse that died under the hearthstone where it was warm, and lies now like a mummy in the pyramids. No one even knows I have a story. (Barry 4)

Here, Roseanne describes her solitude and trauma. She is probably suffering from her traumatic pains, recalling her old war days frequently. She maintains:

I have a bundle of paper that I found in a store cupboard among other unwanted things, and I have a floorboard loosened where I hide these treasures. I write out my life on unwanted paper – surplus to requirements. I start with a clean sheet – with many clean sheets. For dearly I would love now to leave an account, some kind of brittle and honest-minded history of myself, and if God gives me the strength, I will tell this story, and imprison it under the floor-board, and then with joy enough, I will go to my own rest under the Roscommon sod. (Barry 5)

After these statements, Roseanne begins to tell her story. As the narration evolves, it goes and comes between first-person narration, that is, Roseanne's storytelling, and Dr. Grene's notes. Dr. Grene's notes reveal his traumas about his losses such as the loss of his wife, Bet. The shift of narration presents how two people from different ages, backgrounds, and genders can have similar traumatic experiences when they both survive a devastating war.

The legacy of the Irish Civil War (1922-1923) as depicted in the novel underscores the profound and enduring psychological impact experienced by those caught in its tumultuous grip. The harrowing violence, profound losses, and unfathomable brutality of the conflict inflicted deep-seated emotional wounds on combatants and civilians alike, lingering long after the cessation of hostilities. Symptoms of war trauma, including but not limited to anxiety, depression, pervasive guilt, and the debilitating effects of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), pervaded the lives of many who endured the horrors of that era. These psychological scars not only afflicted individuals but also reverberated throughout the collective consciousness of the Irish populace, shaping societal attitudes and political dynamics for years to come.

Trauma is related to memory and narrative. Considering the loss of her child, her confinement, and her years of physical abuse in the asylum all contribute to Roseanne's individual trauma. The impacts of both the Irish Civil War and the World Wars also strengthen Roseanne's collective trauma. Roseanne depicts the moment of hot war stating that "we were like a set of hidden woodlice then inside, scattering away in different directions" (Barry 51). Roseanne is sure that the Irish Civil War had devastating impacts both on her and her family. She addresses her war trauma with these words:

The next thing my father knew, the civil war was upon us. I write this to stop my tears. I stab the words into the page with my biro, as if pinning myself there [...] the civil war was definitely fought in Sligo, and all along the western seaboard, with fierce application. (Barry 34-35)

With these statements, Roseanne addresses the power of writing in bandaging war wounds. She depicts the traumatic war atmosphere in Sligo as follows:

There was a lot of hatred in Ireland in those times. I was fourteen, a girl trying to bloom up into the world. Fumes of hatred all about [...] in the time of that war there were no doubt many deaths, and many deaths that were no better than murder. (Barry 35)

Roseanne believes that silence might be a safe way to survive. She notes that her “secrets are fortune and sanity” (Barry 23). That is the reason that she storifies her secrets and past in her “secret scripture” and hides these documents in her room. She wants these documents to be discovered and read by only Dr. Grene and after she is dead. Revealing, presenting, and confronting her past traumatic experiences by storifying her history contributes to Roseanne’s healing process. In other words, Roseanne writes her memoir to realize her trauma recovery.

The use of the word ‘story’ is repeated several times in the novel. Roseanne frequently refers to her ‘story’ but hides her manuscripts in her room, under a floorboard. The word ‘story’ covers not only her process of narration of her own life but also the process of narration of others involved in her life. Roseanne tells about Eneas’s “dark story” (Barry 134), “the epic story of Jack” (Barry 134), “the presence of [...] unwashed characters in Sligo” (Barry 128); and, the “strange chapters of this country’s bewildering story” (Barry 181). Dr. Grene also notes: “We are missing so many threads in our story that the tapestry of Irish life cannot but fall apart” (Barry 183). Here, the novel seems complex both with the nature and the unreliability of traumatic memory, and with the fictional nature of its stories.

Writing a memoir not only helps Roseanne in dealing with her traumatic war pains but also helps Dr. Grene in speaking about what he cannot speak. Dr. Grene explains this case as follows:

Tremendously busy attending to all the arrangements at the hospital and not much time to write here. I have missed the odd intimacy of it. As I characteristically have probably a poor sense of myself, that is to say, a rather miserable sense of my own slowness as a person, as a soul, keeping this book has somehow helped me, but how I can’t say. It is hardly therapy. But it is at least a sign of ongoing inner life. Or so I hope and pray. (Barry 93)

Dr. Grene later maintains: “For my sanity, I am writing here” (Barry 122). When he is writing about his brother’s death, which he considers he caused, Dr. Grene realizes that he has created a small story of the event:

I am astounded to read back over what I just wrote. I have made an anecdote out of the tragic death of my brother, for which, as is clear to me from the cooled syntax, I obviously blame myself. Even when I was at Durham, and we students used to practise analysis on each other, I never discussed this. I never even think about it, I have given it no valency at all in the last fifty years [...] I am clearly content to be beyond help. It is disgusting. I am not only crying now, for the record, but trembling also. (Barry 190)

Here, Dr. Grene confesses that he has hidden this feeling of blame in himself for about fifty years. It is only through his storytelling process that he can reveal and present his traumatic pains about his deceased brother. Roseanne experiences a similar process as well. She claims: “Memory, I must suppose, if it is neglected becomes like a box room, or a lumber room in an old house” (Barry 208). To take out memory from where it is put and neglected is only possible through verbal construction of it. That is to say, to storify her past traumatic experiences helps Roseanne come out of this dark and gloomy room in that old house.

Both characters’ stories merge at the conclusion of the novel. The reunion of the mother and the son presents a fantastic ending. The intertwining of Roseanne’s and Dr. Grene’s narration suggests that “the tapestry of Irish life cannot but fall apart” (Barry 183). Costello-Sullivan comments on the ending of the novel as follows:

What arises is not a unified, authoritative, and comprehensive narrative but rather a patchwork of meanings that, when presented equally, is both legitimate and curative without necessarily even being assured truth. In addition, it is the process of storytelling itself that forges this communal, healing narrative. (89)

Roseanne confirms that her stories are small and personal but important as she depicts her writings as “little scraps of stories” (Barry 119). Similarly, Dr. Grene refers to Roseanne’s writings as “little apocryphal gospel as may be” (Barry 120). These descriptions suggest that even small, personal records have the importance of scripture, and they might serve as an alternative way of healing for the person who is composing them. Similarly, Roseanne makes use of storytelling as she wishes to cry out her traumatic pains. She states:

I wanted to cry out but cry out what I could not say. Cry out against my father’s fate, my mother’s silence, but also, cry out in praise of something, the beauty of my mother that was going but still there. (Barry 69)

Such personal narratives also challenge dominant historical narratives in their claims of truth. These narratives, whether they are true or untrue, might provide

some degree of emotional, post-traumatic salvation. Dr. Grene takes notes on his mother's narrative when he finds it: "What is wrong about her account if she sincerely believes it? Is not most history written in a sort of wayward sincerity? I suspect so" (Barry 278). The ending of the novel is not a happy ending; however, it carries hope for the future. The novel ends without Dr. Grene's revelation to Roseanne that he is her son. This makes the ending of the novel inconclusive. Dr. Grene might realize that he will destroy Roseanne's mental health if he reveals this fact suddenly. He states: "Professional man though I am, I confess to feeling very sorry for her. And retrospectively, rather guilty [...] I tried to tell her, there and then. But I hadn't the words. I will have to wait for the words" (Barry 291).

Although Roseanne's account is not completely justified throughout the novel, Dr. Grene knows that her story is true since at some level Irish society is aware that most Irish women have similar stories. They are lost women and they have so many things to say; however, nobody wants to hear their stories. This is why the novel presents Roseanne's story regardless of its truthfulness. In this context, Roseanne's story serves as a healing medium for her trauma on personal and communal levels. They create a space and opportunity to break the silence of oppression and inferiority.

The novel, through Roseanne's and Dr. Grene's stories, presents the unreliability of traumatic memory as a vehicle of self-protection and suffering. It also suggests that the individual lives in Ireland are directly or indirectly reflected in such stories. Roseanne and Dr. Grene make use of storytelling as a trauma victim needs to bear witness to his/her traumatic experiences: Dori Laub claims that "The testimony [...] is the process by which the narrator (the survivor) reclaims his position as a witness: reconstitutes the internal 'thou', and thus claims the possibility of a witness or a listener inside himself" (161). Only through bearing witness to her traumatic war experiences and the reconstruction process of these experiences in her memoir that Roseanne and Dr. Grene find solace in the face of their individual and war traumas.

All in all, the intertwining narratives of Roseanne and Dr. Grene in Sebastian Barry's novel offer a profound exploration of trauma, memory, and the healing power of storytelling. Through their respective journeys, both characters grapple with the aftermath of individual and collective traumas, including the Irish Civil War and World Wars, which leave enduring scars on their psyches. Roseanne's

meticulous recording of her life story, hidden beneath the floorboards, and Dr. Grene's reflective journal entries serve as therapeutic acts, enabling them to confront and articulate their suppressed memories and emotions. Ultimately, *The Secret Scripture* advocates for the recognition and validation of personal histories, asserting that through the act of bearing witness to one's own and others' stories, individuals can find a semblance of peace and redemption amid the shadows of their pasts.



CONCLUSION

The first conclusion drawn from this study is that all the three novels and their individual protagonists imply that storytelling can be employed as a self-healing medium to break the silence of trauma victims and make the unspeakable speakable. The three contemporary novelists Kazuo Ishiguro, Michèle Roberts, and Sebastian Barry fictionalize trauma effectively through their narrative strategies. Their presentation of the plots and the protagonists in their novels illustrates that both individual and war trauma can be represented in contemporary fiction.

Trauma is relatively a new subject matter in terms of its representation in fiction; and, it is more evidently represented in the latest novel of this study, *The Secret Scripture* (2008). Moreover, considering the three novels, it is only in *The Secret Scripture* (2008) that the term “trauma” is used as a psychological wound for a fictional character. How and why traumatic events occur, the after-effects of traumatic experiences, how and why individuals conceal, reveal, and even confront their traumatic sufferings, and how trauma victims might hide and change the actual flow of the traumatic events to avoid facing their traumatic experiences are more clearly presented in this novel.

This study has also proved the transgenerational nature of trauma; that is, the novels discussed in this study have displayed that war trauma is transmitted among generations. Marianne Hirsch’s postmemory theory suggests that traumatic memory can be transferred to the following young generations who indeed have not experienced the traumatic event in the place and the time of its occurrence. This trauma becomes a part of cultural identity for this group. In other words, postmemory is formed through the traumatic experiences transmitted from the younger generations’ parents or former generations to the following generations. This trauma is mostly revealed in the generations whose families experienced catastrophic events such as the Holocaust and the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

In *A Pale View of Hills* (1982), Etsuko’s war trauma is transmitted to her older daughter Keiko. Because of her mother’s traumatic war sufferings, Keiko becomes an outcast and decides to live in another country alone. Due to these traumatic pains again, she commits suicide by hanging herself in her apartment. Etsuko’s war trauma transforms into Keiko’s individual trauma that haunts her. In

Daughters of the House (1992), Thérèse and Léonie both suffer from traumatic war experiences of their family members. Their village is occupied, their house is surrounded, and their mother Antoinette is raped by a German soldier during the occurrence of the Holocaust. Even, Thérèse and Léonie are the children of this rape. Therefore, proving Hirsch's postmemory theory, their family's traumatic war sufferings constitute an essential part of Thérèse and Léonie's cultural identities. Hirsch's postmemory theory is not addressed in *The Secret Scripture* since Roseanne is a one-hundred-year old war survivor herself and her traumatic war experiences are not transmitted to a younger person.

Another conclusion drawn from this study is that storytelling as a healing medium for the three protagonist Etsuko, Thérèse, and Roseanne makes them more courageous in terms of confronting their individual and war traumas. Only through constructing a story about what she lived in the war that Etsuko breaks her silence and reveals her true sufferings. Etsuko also feels ready to revisit her deceased daughter Keiko's room only when she constructs a coherent and reasonable story about her traumatic sufferings. A similar circumstance is also valid for Roseanne since only when she begins to write her memoirs of her traumatic war sufferings that she can accept the true flow and occurrence of her father's murder by the Irish Republican Army (IRA). Roseanne does not want to confront this scene of assassination initially and she wants to believe a scenario in which her father hangs himself deciding to finish his life. However, as the narrative evolves and Roseanne begins to write about the details of her father's traumatic death, she becomes more courageous to acknowledge the fact that he is murdered by the IRA during the Irish Civil War. Thus, through their storytelling process, both Etsuko and Roseanne seem to have initiated their self-healing process from their traumatic sufferings.

As for Léonie in *Daughters of the House*, she is not ready and willing to confront her traumatic past in the beginning of the novel. However, when her sister Thérèse turns back from convent and declares that she is planning to rewrite her autobiography to confront the Holocaust that their family witnessed, Léonie feels more courageous to break her silence about what she has experienced. Therefore, storytelling in the form of autobiography writing in *Daughters of the House* helps both Thérèse and Léonie to reveal their traumatic sufferings. Through reconstructing their stories, the two girls finally have the courage to open the door of the room that

is told to be the place where their mother Antoinette was raped. This room was banned for entrance in their childhood as a precaution to keep the girls away from the harrowing war secrets of the family. Therefore, storifying their past appears to have initiated a healing process from trauma for Thérèse and Léonie alike.

This study has also illustrated that Etsuko, Thérèse, and Roseanne's individual traumas stem from their war traumas; in other words, these protagonists' individual traumas are pieces of their cultural traumas. This conclusion addresses a relationship between individual and collective traumas. Ishiguro, Roberts, and Barry all regard individual trauma as a piece of collective trauma. These two traumas cannot be separated since these characters who are trauma victims suffer from their traumatic pains as a whole. In *A Pale View of Hills* (1982), Etsuko misses her old days in Nagasaki that has been destructed by the war. In *Daughters of the House* (1992), Thérèse and Léonie's mother Antoinette becomes heavily sick and later dies because of her traumatic war experiences, which affects the girls deeply. As for Roseanne in *The Secret Scripture* (2008), she loses her father in the fights of the Irish Civil War. These protagonists do not directly take part in these wars; however, they suffer from the atrocities of the wars indirectly. These sufferings give birth to their individual traumas for the rest of their lives.

The writers of the three novels depict individual and war traumas skillfully in their novels through the use of storytelling. Their novels display how literary devices and stylistic features of fiction can take part in depicting historical, cultural, and social problems of societies. Their writing style, choice of words, fragmented narration, unbalanced narrators, and use of storytelling strengthen the impact of their novels on their readers. The masterful representation of trauma in their novels makes readers feel empathy towards these fictional trauma victims and consider about their own traumas in reality. Therefore, the depictions of Etsuko, Thérèse, and Roseanne with their stories addressing their individual and war traumas change readers' perception of trauma.

The protagonists of the three novels, Etsuko, Thérèse, and Roseanne, use storytelling as a working strategy to confront, reveal, and come to terms with their traumatic war experiences. Through their choice of words, observation, writing processes, and reconstruction of their memories, these characters ensure transformation and healing. Whether creating a version of their traumatic story or

rewriting their autobiography, each protagonist finds a means to reconstruct their life narratives in the face of collective trauma. With their fragmented memories, the past of these characters is reconnected with their present. Therefore, storytelling emerges as a medium through which these protagonists navigate their traumatic pasts and ensure a path toward recovery. Through the act of speaking or writing, they confront the complexities of their traumatic experiences, find solace, and understand the chaos of the devastating war's aftermath.

All three novels discussed in this study present their portrayal of individual and war traumas as a means of asking questions about the relationship between trauma and narrative. These novels importantly uncover questions about both the limitations and the necessity of narratives about trauma. Traumatic experiences can be regarded to be unrepresentable as Freud and Cathy Caruth also suggest; however, the act of storifying trauma highlights an awareness that trauma narratives can construct working versions of traumatic events, which contribute to the self-healing processes of trauma victims.

As the novels discussed in this study have proved, autobiographical narratives are effective mirrors of trauma. Sue Vice explains the fruitfulness of autobiographical narratives in terms of representing trauma as follows: "The traceable effects of trauma in autobiographical works are the direct and unplanned expressions of a psychological state" (364). The spontaneity of narration beneath the traumatic event contributes to the power of reflection of trauma in fiction. Rosanne Kennedy states that "literature [...] is a powerful medium and carrier of cultural memory" (61). Similarly, the stories presented in Ishiguro's *A Pale View of Hills* (1982), Roberts' *Daughters of the House* (1992), and Barry's *The Secret Scripture* (2008) prove that literature is indeed a powerful medium to represent trauma in its most representable form. These stories also support Kennedy's claim that literature is a carrier of cultural memory since the collective traumas of these three protagonists stem from real traumatic wars. In this way, this study has demonstrated how these novels categorized under trauma fiction come to terms with real historical events, suggesting an essential relationship between fact and fiction.

The role of fictional autobiographies of Thérèse and Roseanne is to contribute to forming their collective memories and war traumas. These autobiographies serve as mediums of remembrance since fictional autobiographies are powerful mediums

for the representation of trauma in fiction. Leigh Gilmore states that “autobiographical representations of trauma [...] offer indispensable eyewitness accounts of largescale and everyday violence and, through their specific elaboration of specific scenes of terror and trauma, provide an antidote to universalizing narratives about evil, suffering and history” (367).

Etsuko, Thérèse, and Roseanne all use their traumatic memories in their reconstruction processes of the traumatic events they have experienced. In some scenes they conceal, deny, or change the truth intentionally or unintentionally to feel a kind of relief from the overwhelming psychological pains caused by their traumas. Etsuko’s concealing her daughter Keiko’s suicide from her daughter’s old teacher Mrs. Waters, Thérèse’s denial of her mother’s death and considering the convent as a place to escape and hide from this fact, and Roseanne’s changing the way and the reason of her father’s murder, are the outcomes of the coping mechanisms of these characters in the face of their deep traumatic sufferings. In this sense, these characters, through storytelling, can work through and bear witness to their traumas.

Etsuko, Thérèse, and Roseanne all present emotional and psychological developments. The stories of Etsuko, Thérèse, and Roseanne not only help them recall the past but also create sympathy for the reader. The narrative strategies of the three novels which include word choice, self-revelation, process of writing, recording of trauma, and uncertainty of traumatic memory contribute to the formation of an alternative version of the war experiences avoiding a homogenous and fixed version of the occurrence of the war.

After telling their stories, Etsuko, Thérèse, and Roseanne feel more ready and courageous to reveal and confront their traumatic sufferings. In the end of *A Pale View of Hills*, after telling her fictional story, Etsuko feels confident to face the harsh realities of the devastating war and her wrong attitudes towards her deceased daughter Keiko. Initially, she presents these traumatic pains as if they are Sachiko and her daughter Mariko’s sufferings; however, Etsuko alternates between using “we” and “I”, suggesting her fusion with Sachiko and projecting her current issues onto her past. This moment represents the peak of Etsuko’s effort to revisit her painful, traumatic memories. Additionally, Ishiguro uses this pronoun shift to convey the blurred and confused sense of identity resulting from World War II. The narrative abruptly halts in this scene, leaving readers unsure about the success of Etsuko’s

attempts. Thus, telling her story ensures Etsuko's transformation and makes her more courageous to challenge her individual and collective traumas.

Similar to Etsuko, in the end of *Daughters of the House*, Thérèse feels safer and more courageous after finishing to rewrite her autobiography. Thérèse initially declares to Léonie that her aim to rewrite her traumatic war memories is to reveal and confront her and her family's traumas related to the Holocaust. The verbalizing process of her traumatic sufferings also help Thérèse to face her individual traumas. Only after reconstructing these memories, Thérèse feels ready to accept her mother Antoinette's death and reveal the harrowing details of the murder of the Jewish family. Furthermore, only after writing their stories Thérèse and Léonie feel encouraged to get into the room where Antoinette was raped. Their stories of war also help the two sisters present the reality about the Saint and the devastated statue. All in all, rewriting her story of the war ensures Thérèse's transformation and makes her more courageous to face her individual and collective traumas.

Like Etsuko and Thérèse, in the end of *The Secret Scripture*, Roseanne feels more courageous to confront her individual and war traumas after writing her memoirs. It is only when Roseanne writes about her traumatic war experiences that she can truly accept the atrocity of her father's murder by the Irish Republican Army (IRA). Initially, she avoids confronting this assassination and prefers to believe that her father chose to end his life by hanging himself. However, as the narrative progresses and Roseanne delves into the details of her father's tragic death, she becomes more resolute in acknowledging that he was killed by the IRA during the Irish Civil War. Furthermore, after writing the story about the loss of her baby, she feels more relieved. Writing her memories, in this way, ensures Roseanne's transformation and makes her more courageous to bear witness to her individual and collective traumas.

The after-effects of war trauma were profound and long-lasting for individuals who experienced combat during World War I and World War II. Ishiguro depicts such a war trauma stemming from World War II through his protagonist Etsuko in his novel *A Pale View of Hills* (1982). The conflicts in the two World Wars indeed introduced unprecedented levels of violence, brutality, and psychological stress, causing war trauma that lasted for decades. Many soldiers returning from these wars suffered from 'shell shock' that would later be recognized as post-

traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Symptoms included flashbacks, nightmares, anxiety, depression, and difficulties in social and occupational functioning. Families and communities also felt the outcomes of war trauma as they struggled to support returning veterans and cope with the psychological scars of conflict. The study and treatment of war trauma became an important area of research in psychology and literature, leading to advancements in understanding the human response to extreme stress and the process of recovery from these traumatic experiences.

The Irish Civil War (1922-1923) that is addressed in Barry's *The Secret Scripture* (2008) left a lasting impact on the psychological well-being of those involved, leading to important after-effects of war trauma. The violence, losses, and brutality of the war left many fighters and civilians with psychological scars that endured long after the fighting ceased. Symptoms of trauma such as anxiety, depression, guilt, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) were commonly reported among veterans and survivors of the Irish Civil War. The psychological burden of the conflict extended beyond individuals, affecting the collective psyche of the Irish people. The outcomes of the war influenced social and political dynamics for years. The study of war trauma in the context of the Irish Civil War has contributed to a deeper understanding of the enduring psychological consequences of civil conflict and the importance of addressing the mental health needs of those who were traumatized by the war.

The Holocaust, which is addressed in Roberts' *Daughters of the House* (1992), is one of the darkest chapters in human history. It had profound and lasting after-effects of war trauma on survivors, their families, and subsequent generations. Those who endured the horrors of concentration camps forced labor, and persecution faced unimaginable physical and psychological suffering. Survivors often experience symptoms of severe trauma, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety, guilt, and profound grief. These traumatic experiences not only impacted the survivors themselves but also had intergenerational effects, influencing the mental health and well-being of their children and grandchildren. The study of Holocaust trauma has contributed significantly to the field of psychology and literature, leading to a better understanding of the long-term psychological consequences of extreme trauma. Efforts to address the after-effects of war trauma in Holocaust survivors have underlined the importance of acknowledging the enduring

legacy of historical trauma and representing these traumatic experiences in literature by breaking the deep silence caused by war trauma.

Trauma fiction, a subgenre of contemporary literature, delves into themes of trauma and its aftermath, exploring the psychological and emotional reflections of traumatic experiences on characters. As awareness of trauma has grown and scholarly interest has intensified, trauma fiction has gained interest as a medium for examining the societal, cultural, and political dimensions of trauma since trauma has become a medium of connection for all victims. Avril Tynan claims that “trauma not only provides the connection between here and there, but between past, present and future” (378). Trauma connects individuals, societies, places, and time in the face of its overwhelming after-effects. In this sense, trauma fiction serves as a way of revealing awareness and dialogue about trauma and its after-effects, while also providing a platform for writers and readers to process their own traumatic experiences.

Eaglestone questions the possibility of healing in trauma. In all three novels discussed in this study, the protagonists initially deny or hide their traumatic sufferings. However, apart from Etsuko in Kazuo Ishiguro’s *A Pale View of Hills*, the other two characters, Thérèse and Roseanne, confront their traumatic secrets and pains. It is hard to claim that a total healing process is achieved for all these characters’ traumatic sufferings; yet, it is certain that through storytelling and reconstructing their traumatic pasts, these characters feel a kind of relief in the face of their individual and war traumas.

Writers of trauma fiction underline the power of storytelling to depict and illuminate their characters’ traumatic experiences. In this regard, storytelling serves as a form of testimony, relying on the collection and recollection of memories from the past. Recalling and reconstructing traumatic events might serve as a means of revealing, confronting, controlling, presenting, and eventually overcoming trauma. Therefore, storytelling emerges as an essential narrative strategy in fiction, allowing characters in trauma narratives to break the silence surrounding their experiences, and to bear witness to the past traumatic events they once might have chosen to deny or keep as secrets.

Storytelling holds a profound effect on societies, tracing its roots back to humanity's earliest days. It serves as a bridge to connect individuals to their past and their communities. Through storytelling, listeners often find fragments of themselves mirrored in another's tale. Storytelling not only entertains but also fosters awareness, and it preserves cultural heritage across generations. Additionally, storytelling serves as a means of representing individuals, documenting history, and even directing political powers.

Through storytelling, individuals engage in a multi-faceted process that includes cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions of resilience. Psychologically, storytelling facilitates meaning-making by allowing individuals to construct coherent narratives of their experiences, integrating challenges into their life stories in a way that promotes growth and adaptation. Emotionally, storytelling serves as a cathartic outlet for processing and expressing emotions related to adversity, contributing to emotional regulation and well-being. Socially, storytelling fosters connections, empathy, and social support, creating a sense of belonging and collective resilience within communities. Annie Brewster claims that "storytelling is a powerful form of resilience training" (168). Therefore, storytelling not only enhances individuals' ability to bounce back from setbacks but also contributes to the resilience of communities by strengthening social bonds and empowering individuals to navigate complex and challenging circumstances.

Ann Rigney explains the role of stories in trauma as follows: "Stories 'stick'. They help make particular events memorable by figuring the past in a structured way that engages the sympathies of the reader" (347). Readers of the three novels discussed in this study, find themselves in the aftermath of a recently finished, devastating war, and they empathize with the protagonists. Indeed, the aim and focus of trauma fiction is to depict traumatic experiences with their psychological implications on trauma victims. "Literature of trauma is written from the need to tell and retell the story of the traumatic experience, to make it real both to the victim and to the community" (Tal 137). The gloomy atmosphere, the trauma of the war survivors, and the psychological states of the victims are all depicted in the novels discussed in this study to reveal the agonizing outcomes of the war.

In the realm of literary trauma studies, scholars argue that storytelling and narrative play an essential role in the healing process of trauma. It enables the

transformation of traumatic experiences into coherent narratives. Therefore, verbalizing the suffering is regarded as a crucial step towards recovery, with storytelling that is a working narrative strategy in fiction to initiate this process. Storytelling can be considered as group therapy, providing a platform for trauma victims to break their silence and share their traumatic experiences. As listeners engage with these narratives, they become active participants in the storyteller's traumatic past, fostering empathy and solidarity. By moving from silence to speech, storytelling serves as a medium for confronting trauma. Furthermore, storytelling empowers victims to create new narratives, identities, and perspectives, enabling them to confront and even transform their traumatic experiences.

The relationship between trauma and storytelling is relatively strong. Literary characters in trauma fiction frequently undergo traumatic losses or are oppressed by overwhelming guilt. For many of these victims, who have often endured oppression in the past, storytelling serves as a strategy to break their silence and communicate their pains. There exists a profound connection between trauma and narrative. Traumatized individuals might find themselves enslaved by their traumatic experiences, and recounting these experiences can serve to liberate them from their psychological traps. The horrors and shocks of these traumatic experiences might cause profound suffering for the victims, fostering anxieties and fears. José M. Yebra claims that “the victim of trauma suffers from a collapse of understanding” (184). Yet, the act of verbalizing these experiences through writing not only provides a language for the pains of trauma victims but also fosters a sense of dignity and resilience, aiding victims to communicate even in the most harrowing circumstances. Additionally, written narratives serve as testimonies that contribute to the healing processes of traumatized individuals.

Collective trauma, which is presented in the three novels chosen for this study, refers to the psychological reflections of a traumatic experience that affects society as a whole. It arises from a historical event and eventually disrupts the well-being of a community. Trauma questions the established social structures and norms, and it poses a challenge to shared beliefs and values; Caruth suggests that “trauma itself may provide the very link between cultures” (1995, 11). Both individual and collective traumas cause feelings of fear and vulnerability. Like individual trauma, collective trauma can have enduring effects on a society or a nation, making it unable

to ignore or dismiss the traumatic experience. The circumstances resulting from trauma persistently resurface in the consciousness of individuals or societies. In this sense, similar to the situation of a rape survivor who undergoes profound and lasting transformations due to trauma, a nation might experience profound and lasting changes as an outcome of collective trauma.

The collective consciousnesses of several nations were profoundly affected due to the two World Wars. Terms like “shell-shock” and “Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder” (PTSD) emerged from the harrowing experiences of the soldiers in the trenches during World War I and II. Therefore, the impacts of war trauma extended beyond the battlefield, leaving permanent traces in the narratives transmitted across generations. Not only did the soldiers of the World Wars struggle with memory gaps, but also they grappled with traumatic episodes such as flashbacks, nightmares, and hallucinations, which lasted for months or even years after the occurrences of the events. These recurring experiences serve as essential coping mechanisms for PTSD. Narrative can be a medium to achieve self-healing of trauma victims as putting traumatic experiences into words in chronological order can challenge the impacts of the overwhelming traumatic events.

The verbalization process of traumatic experiences allows trauma victims to bear witness to traumatic historical events such as war and the Holocaust. The verbalization process of traumatic experiences is crucial for trauma victims as it enables them to bear witness to and articulate the profound impacts of historical events such as war and the Holocaust. Through storytelling, victims can externalize their internal anguish, transforming silent suffering into shared narratives that acknowledge and validate their experiences. This act of verbalization serves as a form of testimony, preserving individual and collective memories that might otherwise be ignored. By sharing their stories, trauma victims not only assert their individual histories but also contribute to a larger cultural and historical understanding, fostering empathy, awareness, and social change. Thus, the verbalization of traumatic experiences plays a vital role in both individual recovery and the collective memory of traumatic historical events.

Storytelling renders the unrepresentable representable, the unspeakable speakable, and the untranslatable translatable. Through narrative structure, storytelling can encapsulate feelings and experiences that might otherwise be too

overwhelming or nuanced to express directly. Storytelling helps trauma victims create a narrative that gives form to their fragmented memories and emotions, making it possible to communicate their experiences to others. This process not only helps in the personal integration of their trauma but also in educating and fostering empathy in listeners or readers. By rendering the unrepresentable representable, the unspeakable speakable, and the untranslatable translatable, storytelling becomes a powerful medium for connection, understanding, and healing.

The novels explored in this study, Kazuo Ishiguro's *A Pale View of Hills*, Michèle Roberts' *Daughters of the House*, and Sebastian Barry's *The Secret Scripture* demonstrate the profound role of storytelling in addressing and healing trauma. Through their narrative strategies, these contemporary writers depict the intricate relationship between individual and collective traumas, illustrating how individual suffering intertwines with historical and cultural upheavals. The protagonists' journeys underscore the transformative power of storytelling, enabling them to confront, articulate, and integrate their traumatic experiences. These fictional accounts provide valuable insights into the psychological and emotional aftermath of war, the transgenerational transmission of trauma, and the therapeutic potential of narrative. By rendering the unspeakable speakable, these novels contribute significantly to the broader discourse on trauma, memory, and recovery, highlighting the essential role of literature in bearing witness to the past and fostering empathy and understanding in the present. Thus, the act of storytelling emerges not only as a means of individual healing but also as a vital tool for preserving collective memory and facilitating cultural resilience.

The emergence of trauma theory has significantly influenced the way novelists approach the representation of trauma in literature. Before the rise of trauma theory, the portrayal of trauma in literature was often centered on factual recollections of traumatic events and memories. However, with the advent of trauma theory, novelists have gained greater insight into the psychological, emotional, and narrative dimensions of trauma and the process of the remembrance of trauma. Fiction, in particular, has proven to be an important medium to explore cultural wounds, allowing for the nuanced discovery of collective trauma and its profound psychological and emotional implications. Ishiguro, Roberts, and Barry fictionalize trauma effectively in their novels through their narrative strategies; their writing

style, choice of words, fragmented narration, unbalanced narrators, and use of storytelling contribute to the representation of trauma in fiction. All in all, this study has illustrated that individual and war trauma can be revealed and confronted through storytelling that serves as a medium for presenting and confronting both individual and collective trauma, as depicted in Kazuo Ishiguro's *A Pale View of Hills* (1982), Michèle Roberts' *Daughters of the House* (1992), and Sebastian Barry's *The Secret Scripture* (2008).



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RÉSUMÉ

Full Name: İsmet TOKSÖZ

Educational Status:

Degree	Major	University	Year
Undergraduate Degree	English Language and Literature	Ege University	2011
Master Degree	English Language Teaching	Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy University	2019

Work Experience:

Workplace	Position	Year
Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy University	English Language Instructor	2012-2023
Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam University	English Language Instructor	2023-

Foreign Languages: English

Publications:

Toksöz, İsmet. "Patriarchal Oppression and Liberation of Woman in Elizabeth Inchbald's Plays". *International Journal of Media Culture and Literature*, vol. 8, no. 2, 2024, pp. 91-105.

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