

Narrativization of Trauma in Sebastain Barry's *The Secret Scripture*

The research paper studies the issue of the narrativization of trauma in Sebastain Barry's novel The Secret Scripture in order to argue how narrating one's traumatic experiences can become the source of healing. It further examines on the importance of literary writing like novel in one's act of working through the painful experiences, especially trauma. In doing so, this research burrows the theoretical concepts of "workingthrough of trauma" by DominikLaCapra along with the ideas from Cathy Caruth. The paper concludes with the finding that the traumatic experiences can be lessened by sharing it.

Key words: trauma, working through, acting out, psychological trauma

This research is an inquiry into Sebastian Barry's *The Secret Scripture*, a novel written in the context of World War II. It is basically related to the protagonist's traumatic experiences. This novel tells the story of a hundred year old lady named Roseanne Clear who has lived in mental hospital since the age of twenty five. She was brought to the hospital by her abusive husband and was never taken back home. She rather becomes a victim of sexual abuse by the doctors and visitors, specially the rebels who came to the hospital, during the war period. Dr. Grene is the psychiatrist who has been treating Roseanne from the beginning. Roseanne's husband had given wrong information about her. But when Dr. Grene talked to her, he found her creative opposed to the information given about her. It is only towards the end of the novel that Dr. Grene discovers a secret scripture that Roseanne had prepared that into this very aspect of the novel. What made it possible for Roseanne to survive so long despite she was abandoned by her husband? Though she wrote about the trauma and the abuses, she didn't want it to be disclosed before her death. If that is the case, why did she write it? What is the connection between her secret writing and her trauma?

As revealed in the secret diary, she was born to John Clear and was brought up by him till she was sixteen. After Mr. Clear was killed, a priest appears as her guardian. As she denies Gaunt's proposal of marrying with Joe Bready, she further faces trauma. Later, out of her choice, she marries with Tom McNaulty. But her husband appears abusive and her married life turns out to be a curse and the McNaulty family denies her position in family and society. Ultimately, as she is on the verge of delivering a child, she is taken to asylum in a state of mental delirium.

The Secret Scripture also sheds light on the Irish History, primarily the history of Irish Revolution for Independence. In doing so, it presents a hundred years old female Roseanne Clear's traumatic and fractured life mainly worsened by male atrocities and patriarchal norms and values. Roseanne's life is badly affected by familial disintegration, discrimination and abuse. The major thrust of this research is to explore how the protagonist of *The Secret Scripture* sustains such traumatic experiences and how could she respond to those experiences. This thesis argues that opportunity to express own traumatic experiences helps the individual to lessen the pain and rather gives a cause to live a longer life.

This thesis analyses Sebastain Barry's novel in the light of Dominik LaCapra's concept of working through of trauma. It considers how the trauma theory can be extended to the novel and how the victims are able to reduce their pain by reading and writing fictional work with the distinct notion of traumatic situation. Through the depiction of Roseanne, Sebastain Barry seems to rewrite the history of Irish women who are brought together in a common battle against life.

The Secret Scripture has attracted various critical responses since its publication in 2008. Focusing on memory, reliability and old age of the protagonist Roseanne Clear, critic Sarah Herbe makes the following remarks:

"I am an old, old woman now, I may be as much as a hundred, though I don't now, and no one knows." The aged female narrator in Barry's novel starts to write her life out of an urge to tell her version of her life before she dies.

Though she does not want her writing to be found while she is still alive, she has the desire to leave it to posterity. She has the She perceives the image of 'old woman' as something other than herself in passages. (25)

These lines suggest that despite her old age she seems courageous and strong. Roseanne is old woman but she laughs by hiding her pain and suffering. She remembers her past life. She has problems not only with remembering her own present age but also her past life. However, Roseanne's ability to remember correctly is not only affected by past, but also by her old age.

Dinitia Smith on the other hand views the novel from historical approach. She writes "In Mr. Barry's new novel [Irish] history is symbolized by secret. And it is revealed to the reader as if a thread were being slowly unrevealed from the cocoon of a silk worm to expose at its core terrible truth" (4). Smith is fascinated by the history associated with the Irish Revolutionary Movement. She views that novel *The Secret Scripture*, unfolds the thread of secret history.

Tara Harney Mahajan, another critic on Sebastian Barry goes far as to seek element of provoking forgiveness. Mahajan gives the following views in this regard:

Barry novel is dark, to be sure Barry calls upon "the necessity of reconciliation," actualized through forgiveness as a way to temper this darkness. The duality of forgiveness force its way through the disturbing novel: yet the novel presents a potential path forward by coming to terms with a woman terribly wronged, and providing her with the space to allow her to

offer forgiveness to those who were complicated by apathy and inaction, in her lifelong incarnation (57).

Barry's novel weaves together the concepts of memory, forgetting and happiness all of which intimately coupled with forgiveness. Mahajan assumes that Barry does not a grave disservice to the efforts of the many individuals and organizations that mobilize around the real women. Barry resurrects shadowy figures within his own family history as the basis for his fiction.

Sean O'Hagan focuses on the subject matter of the novel. He notes that *The Secret Scripture* is "interrogating these two intertwining and often, contradictory, narratives the nature of memory and writing itself" (21). O'Hagan's concentration is on the prominent structure of the novel and appears strong in showing the differences that exist between and among the writing while dealing with the same subject matter.

Joseph O'Connor comments on the evil and vile side of historical revolution—particularly the Irish revolution as depicted in *The Secret Scripture*. In regard of the Irish history, he puts "As often in Barry's work, Irish history is a malignant omnipresence. Its antediluvian hatreds and innumerable betrayals... Innocence is murdered and idealism compromised by the dirty truths of sectarianism"(54). O'Connor views the history and revolution of catastrophic and violent. However, he doesn't pay attention to the plight of majority of the females.

Art Winslow takes *The Secret Scripture* as ordinary madness and elaborates upon the Roseanne's complicated position. It is difficult to place Roseanne Clear into the asylum for decades. Winslow's view on the character Roseanne:

Despite her name, Roseanne Clear is hardly transparent. A wary reticence and since befuddlement tend to muddy her conversations with Dr. William Grene, at Roscommon Regional Hospital, whose commonplace journal renders him a

co-narrator of *The Secret Scripture*. Their incarnation, complete with its silence works its way into their respective self-searching accounts of life, forming the loose catechism of novel. Barry is doing something darker and more daring than image breaking.(4)

Though characters are manipulated realistically, setting and other narrative atmosphere remain mysterious. The hidden memoir of an elderly woman confined to a mental hospital reveals the history of her passionate get tortured life.

BeataPiatek takes a different angle of observation. Piatek considers a numbers of Barry's novel in terms of Barry's novel in terms of Barry's relationship with Irish history. Piatek notes that: "The Secret scripture to trace the developments in his fiction from a simplifies version of historical revisionism to a more ambivalent attitude to Irish History and more complex understanding of the past, in which the question of gender takes central place"(158). Piatek notes that characters to Barry's conception of history in various ways. Piatek writes against absolute certainties' of Irish history.

Although different critics and reviewers examine the novel critically from different angels and arrive at different findings, none of them raise the issue of how the characters cope with trauma in Barry's *The Secret Scripture*. Roseanne's trauma is rarely addressed and enumerated by these critics. The research focuses on the character try to reduce the intensity of their trauma through sharing with other people and reading novel. This thesis employs the theoretical concepts of trauma as discussed by Cathy Caruth and DominikLaCapra.

The definition of 'trauma' is fairly broad. The term trauma generally refers to mental injury caused by emotional shocks and the memory or which remain repressed of unhealed. Similarly, people who undergo critical psychological or mental

situations are often haunted by those memories in the later life and can't escape. Such a mental situation where the individual's behavior is distracted by those memories is a condition of trauma. Though the concept appeared in the works of Sigmund Freud, but it received critical attention very recently with critical engagements from scholars like Cathy Caruth, Dominick LaCapra and other contemporary scholars.

In her seminal work *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma and the Possibility of History*, Cathy Caruth defines trauma in the following way:

Trauma as an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events, in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed and uncontrolled repeated occurrence of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena. For example, who suffers the sight in a numbed state only to relive it late repeated nightmare is a central and recurring of the trauma in our century. (181)

A person can be traumatized by his/her past events like rape, child abuse, auto and industrial accident and disease also. Trauma is experienced after the incident occurred to the person which uncontrollable repetitive image which is unforgettable. The event repeats in flashback, nightmare and so on. Trauma is the result of an overwhelming amount of the stress that exceeds one's ability to cope or integrate the emotion involved with the experience. Though, this trauma refers to a psychological rather than a physical wound. The significance of witnessing death, human loss and chaotic situations haunt the human mind is known as trauma. In addition, she argues about the ideas of latency, "when trauma first takes place in uncertain, but that the survivors' uncertainty is not a simple amnesia; for the event remains as a trend pointed out insistently and against their will" (6). She mentioned that trauma remains in mind and it is difficult to forget the misery and pain. The event can be repressed in the unconscious and is triggered by the similar circumstances.

Another trauma theorist Dominic LaCapra mentions two fundamental forms of remembering traumatic event: “acting out” and “working through”. He defines these processes in the following way:

Acting out in which one is haunted or possessed but the past and performativity caught up in the compulsive repetition of traumatic scene-scene in which the past returns and the future is blocked or fatalistically caught up in a melancholic feedback loop. Working through is an articulate practice: the extent one works through trauma, victims is able to distinguish between past and present and to recall in memory that something happened to him back then realizing that one is living here and how with opening to the future. (55)

In acting out, tense implode, and it is if one were back there in the past reliving the traumatic scene. Any duality of time is experientially collapsed or productive only of aporias and double. This does not mean either that there is sure opposition between past and present or that acting out whether for the traumatized can be fully transcended towards a state of closure. Working through may include mourning and modes of critical thought and problematic but still function as limits and possibly desirable resistances to undesirability, particular when the letter is the same as to confusion and the annihilation or blurring of all distinction. In acting out, the future is totally blocked but in working through the traumatic person tries to forget his past event by sharing with friends, family and so on. And he /she try to get relief from the trauma by sharing it. In working through trauma the victim is optimistic about the future so the traumatic person can continue his/her future smoothly.

The Freudian distinction between melancholic and mourning is similar to the concept of 'acting out' and 'working through'. Acting out or melancholia is a state of

mind in which the victim's notion of tenses like past, present and future implode. The traumatic past haunts people and makes them unaware of the future. It affects with the present as well as future. Acting out disables trauma survivors to express what they feel and force them to express what they cannot feel. Remembering past traumatic event and lost ones make them more traumatized.

Working through, on the other hand, is what LaCapra terms "articulating practice, necessarily an effect at testimony" (42). Slowly, the process of mourning enables traumatized people to develop a narrative memory of the traumatic event. Acting out is related to repetition even repetition compulsory on the tendency to repeat something the compulsively working through for him is a kind of countervailing force in which the person tries to gain critical distance on problems. Trauma can be articulate by working through. Trauma can be healed by writing the pain and sharing with others. But acting out is disabling dissociation because he/she can't distinguish between the past event.

Working through it does not mean avoidance, harmonization simply, forgetting the past or sub merging oneself in person critically engaging the tendency to act the past and even to recognized why it may be necessary and even in certain respect desirable at least compelling. Similarly, DominikLaCapra argues that:

Trauma brings about a dissociation of affect and representation: one disorienting feels what one can't represent; one numbingly represents what one can't feel. Working through trauma involves the effort to articulate or rearticulate affect and representation in a manner that may never transcend, but acting out, of that disabling dissociation. (77)

Trauma can be articulate or rearticulated or rearticulated by working through. Trauma can be healed by writing novel and sharing with others. But acting out is disabling

dissociation because he/she cannot distinguish between past, present and future. He /she remains in past and frequently remembers the past event.

In the novel, Roseanne has been a patient of Roscommon Regional Mental Hospital for over half a century and in the face of her death, she decides to write the story of her life. Simultaneously, her psychiatrist, Dr. Grene, needs to assess his patients in order to find out who will have to move to the new mental hospital (the old one is about to be destroyed) and who will be 'released' into community life. Trying to discover the story of Roseanne who grew up as a protestant girl in Ireland in 1920s. Who later became the wife of Catholic Tom McNaulty in Silago

Roseanne has been keeping a journal of her life which she keeps secretly under the floorboards of her room. She only takes her journals out when it is safe. It is through her journal entries that we learn about her past. Roseanne falls in love with a young man who has a domineering mother who doesn't approve of her Catholic son being with a Presbyterian young woman. Father Gaunt makes sure that Roseanne does not marry the young man she is in love with. The priest's misogyny, mistrust and dislike for women are Roseanne's downfall. Ireland history comes into play as does the different, which are sexual or deemed 'loose'. A priest's word was equivalent to a law back then and troublemakers are removed from society. As a result, tragedy, cruel treatment and prejudice ensue.

The protagonist narrator in Barry's novel starts to write her life story out of an urge to tell her version of her life before she dies. Though, she does not want her writing to be found while she is still alive. Roseanne makes the function of remembrances explicit in her attempt to write her life, saying at the beginning of her account:

No one knows I have a story, next year, next week, tomorrow, I will no doubt be gone, and it will be a small size coffin they will need for me, and a narrow whole. There will never be a head, and no matter...my hand is good and I have a beautiful biro given me by my friend the doctor...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,..Roscommon soil. (7)

Her account has the title "Roseanne's Testimony of Herself." This testimony is apt for Roseanne's story in various ways. Her communication is caused by her old age and approaching death. It turns out in the course of her report that she was put in hospital by husband after having charge with nymphomania and her time in the mental hospital equals imprisonment as her personal freedom is restricted. Roseanne's story of childhood and youth is one of poverty and constant struggle. Roseanne describes her own traumatic life as follows:

Well, all speaking is difficult, whether peril attends is or not. Sometimes peril to the body, sometimes a more intimate, miniature, peril to the soul. When to speak at all is a betrayal of something, perhaps a something not even identified, hiding inside the chambers of the body like a scared refugee in a site of war. (14)

Roseanne is excluded from community life. Roseanne tries to tell the truth about her admission to the mental hospital and the events that led up to it, reaching back to her childhood in her narrative. When she tries to remember the circumstances of her admission, she says "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" (23) she frequently wounds about the correctness of her memories.

While Roseanne says that her father first used to be gravedigger and then a rat-catcher, Dr. Grene finds conflicting information in which her father is presented as a policeman who was killed by a rebel. Roseanne says about her admission to the mental hospital, "I remember terrible dark things, and loss, and noise, but it is like one of those terrible pictures that hang in churches, God knows why, because you cannot see a thing in them," (30). This is traumatic memory of Roseanne. The traumatic memory of having been betrayed by her husband and her family would thus explain Roseanne's inability to remember certain events of her past correctly. Since no one in the hospital seems to be familiar with Roseanne's story, it stands to reason that she has not had a chance to deal with her traumatic experiences in the course of her long institutionalization.

Roseanne has a problem not only with remembering her past but also how old she was when certain events took place, or she is not completely certain about other people's ages. A typical passage of her traumatic past events is as follows:

I don't know if the Plaza existed just at that time, it must have done, because I had seen Tom McNulty playing, but if it did it would have been 1929 or after even, so I wasn't exactly a girl, but I am confused about this. It is hard to know a person's age in a bathing suit, in the riot of the sunlight, and I can't see what age I was, I am peering back with my mind's eye, and all I see is fabulous glitter. (40)

The centrality of the theme of trauma is further supported by Roseanne's repeated references to her aged body. Though the narrative of Roseanne's life contains many gaps and uncertainties, she speculates about the nature of her trauma.

While Roseanne's account is affected by her traumatic experiences. She speaks with Dr. Grene, a psychiatrist:

I suppose it is off that I am trying to write out my useless life here, and resisting most of his questions, I suppose he would love to read this, if only to lighten his own task. Well, when I am dead, and if someone thinks to look under the loose board, he will find it. I don't mind him reading it as long as I don't have to be questioned closely, as no doubt he would if it fell into his hands now. (69)

Roseanne's child, the existence of whom was hitherto subject to doubt: she only remembered that she gave birth to baby on the seashore, in the midst of a thunderstorm and that the baby was then somehow taken from her side, whether dead or alive reminded unclear.

Roseanne is traumatized by violent death of her father. In Roseanne's narratives, he died by his own hand after a series of personal misfortunes consequent on having lost his job at the towns cemetery. This incident made her astonished time and again. The news about the sudden death of her father comes as a shock to her. The tragic event intensifies the mental burden she faces:

It would be thought as they came in that they had bullets aplenty, at least they leveled their guns at us in their own fierce moments of concentration, look out through my father's leg the six or seven faces that entered the temple looked only terrified in the light of the fire. The brother of dead man was right behind him, maybe in his grief demanding his of himself. It is difficult to describe the noise that guns make in...first bullets, and then a thin falling cascade of lightest blood over my uniform, my hands, my father, my life (50).

Roseanne is haunted by the premonition death of Joy Clear. Why she was unable to save her father? At the moment his death continuously gets repeated in her memory. During the fire, her father was lying down beside the wall with blood in his uniform.

The brutal incidents suffer in the mind of the Irish citizen. Such pathetic and terrible death of her father brings trauma in her life.

In connection with World War II, Roseanne including Joy, Dr. Grene and other several other characters are mourning for the loss and pathetic harmony the terrorists hit the Silago. Observing no more option after her horrible assault, they traumatized and spend their times as patient in the hospital. "I write this to stop my tears. I stab the words into the page with my hire, as if pinning myself here" (33). Roseanne seems as if she had lost her feelings. Certainly as a result she seems traumatized. In the beginning her testimony, she makes the following observation: The terror and hurt in my story happened because when I was young I thought were the authors of my fortune or misfortune. I did not know that a person could help up a wall made of imaginary bricks and mortar against horrors and cruel, dark tricks of time that assail us and be the author therefore of themselves (7). She titles her writing "my story" and thus claims it as her own. The version of events she narrates is cut off from the influence of generalized "other" that would impose version. Roseanne has fallen victim.

Roseanne and the other traumatize women she represent are among these victimized by the violent linearity of this arc. They are the people that history silences and omits in the name of nation. Interestingly, Roseanne's life from something of an arc of her own. Barry has imagined the unlikely circumstance that a woman as vulnerable and traumatize and as marginalized as her has been preserved for a century. And that her life has extended for long enough to at last these who determined its path in service of past independence Irish tyranny of sexually conduct.

To be born into a family with such a father, and a mother who with such a succumbed to insanity, would have provided Roseanne with a position in the world

already undermined by uncertainty. Approximately mid-way through the novel she remarks, “I am looking for my mother in these memories and I can’t find her she has simply disappeared” (124). It is later that her mother suffered a fate similar to that of father that was committed to and that she died in what was then called the “Silago Lunatic Asylum” (30). When Roseanne herself is committed to herself is committed to the institution, she asks in her distress to see her mother to which the reply is “ you can’t see her, no one can see her, and she is beyond the seeing”(214). This is obviously true that Roseanne is living traumatized life.

According to Kathleen Miriam, “The victim of trauma is miserably hunted by depressive inclination, identity problem, guilt and shame” (13). In a telling incident, Johan Kane, the institution’s mentally handicapped janitor, and Roseanne’s apparently self-appointed protector, asks her to assert her identity by telling him her name:

What is your name??He said.

I don’t know, I said, in a sudden panic. I have known him for decades. Why was he asking me this question?

‘I don’t know own name’?

There is no need, he said, and taking the dust into his dustpan neatly, began to leave the room. ‘Anyway I know your name’.

I started to cry. Not like a child, but like the woman I am. Slow, slight tears that no one sees, no one dries. (32)

The simple act of stating her name is complex. Her name is not her name, and it is rather the ironic mark of her absence and of her not being “anyone” seems traumatic. The striking aspect the repressed memories come out sporadically making her the pathetic victims.

The women in the workplace are sexually harassed to the intolerable extent. The lingering trace of trauma gets projected in a sporadic way. That is why Roseanne is haunted and tormented but the sporadic and unexpected irruption of fear and anxiety attack. When Roseanne reaches the age of eighteen, she get limit to the household activities. Picturing the helpless condition of the fragile, helpless and traumatize condition of Roseanne she expresses:

I am completely alone, there is no one in the world that knows me now outside of this place, , all my own people, the few farthings of them that once were, my little wren of a mother I suppose in chief, they are all gone now. And my persecutors are gone in the mind I believe, and the reason for all this is that I am an old, old woman now; I am only a thing left over remnant woman, and I don't even look like a human being any more, but a scraggy stretch of skin and bone in a bleak skirt and blouse. (4)

Roseanne expresses her resentment and trauma that she is not considered as a human being. Beauty and energy of woman keep their value and worth to be respected in the society. There is no attachment and relationship. Rather there are desperate situations she undergoes in her age. This is a trauma in terms of gender. Thus gender discrimination and trauma permeates in this text. The various psychic journeys undertaken in trauma literature “involve a move from fragmentation to wholeness marked by struggle in which survivors fight ideological battles over a struggle for meaning. Tal often sees remarkable unities between the diverse narratives she examines” (65). Notion of the representation of trauma have been plaguing philosophers, historians, psychologist and other, each in their respective fields, as they attempted to solve problems on the subject. The representations are commonplace and completely conscious to our minds. Tal delivers the following view:

However trauma affects, the mind no body's response to an extreme event, can't be represented directly in the same manner as common thought and emotions. The complexity of traumatic damage on the brain separates the traumatic event to the unconscious mind, thus the commonplace first-person narrative that conveys both the historical and emotional context of an experience becomes unusable. (48)

While the two approaches contrast in methodology and medium, each allows various aspect of trauma to be represented. These theories ill also attempt to show that the representation yield by these means will not cause identification for the subject attempting to understand the traumatic event and further suffering in him or her.

Roseanne has spent 50 years in this institution and, that there is a psychological reason for her to be there. Roseanne begins her narrative with description of the town where she was born, it seems traumatic:

That place where I was born was a cold town...There was a black river that flowed through the town, and if it had no gracefor mortal beings, it did for swans, and many swans resorted there, and even rodethe ...That is Sligo town I mean.Sligo made me and Sligo undid me, but then I should have given up muchsooner than I did being made or unmade by human towns. (3)

A woman who has been subjected to repeated trauma by the representatives of Ireland Roseanne's narrative around the time of the Civil War, when personal and National identity, loyalty, and the complex colonial relationship between England and Ireland werein violent flux. Roseanne is Irish by birth, but not the right kind of Irish for Sligo, or post-Civil War Ireland for that matter. As Ireland seek her own identity.

Her mixed heritage means that she is not wholly Irish, and yet, she feels a deep connection with her country.Shebecame a representative character for thousands of

Irish who were victimized by the process of decolonization and Nationalism. So people who straddle the boundaries, like the Clear's, are excluded from the community.

Barry's *The Secret Scripture* reveals trauma and misery of women in the narratives. Barry demonstrate that social gap and discrimination of women. The Irish society is represented by Barry's novel. It embodied the whole of the then Irish society that treated women as if they were animals. It became clear in the extract as presented "A man which in his every utterance seemed to long for the banishment of women behind the front doors of their homes, and the elevation of manhood into a condition of sublime chastity and sporting prowess. There is something humorous about it now; there was nothing humorous about it then" (142). The exile of women unjust and cruel from society in general from home is particular. This shows the oppressive temperament of men over women.

The patriarchal society is oppressive towards women. Women with delicate sensibility like Cissy cannot endure the jolt and lacerations which the rigid structure of society generate. This short of analytical insight is expressed by Judith Herman. To quote Herman following excerpt is used " despite these differences, there is often little recognition and theory of the actual condition of many women's lives or the effect of gender inequality, sexism, female socialization class and race that influence women's psychological development" (141). So long as the society is harsh and exclusionary, individual should identify the hostile factors which are detrimental to them. It is really difficult to guess at what time hostile forces of society erupt and ruin the delicate society. That is why it is necessary to be cautious about time in which unprecedented hazards and pitfalls occur in life.

Moreover, trauma affects the memory even after the incident takes place, the victims by experiencing such familiar events also get traumatized in their life. By resist out the trauma by working through because of what might almost be termed fidelity to trauma, a feeling that one must somehow keep faith with it. The situation may be remaining in unconscious as trauma. DominikLaCapra in *Writing Histor*, *Writing Trauma* describes the concept of acting out and working through:

These traumatized by extreme events, as well as those empathizing with them, may resist working through because of what might almost be termed a fidelity to trauma a feeling that one must somehow keep faith with it. Part of this feeling may be the melancholic sentiment that, in working through the past in a manner that enables survival or reengagement in life one betraying... (22-33)

LaCapra says that psychological trauma resists working through. The victims involve in mourning and derived towards isolation as well. Trauma in a person can be triggered by any given number of events, and its severity depends on the catastrophic that has befallen them. A traumatized person is unable to get past those painful memories of the tragedy that has befallen him or her, and this shatters the individual's sense of security and peace.

The Secret Scripture strongly shows the trauma and post- traumatic experience through the life of victims in the text. As a victim of this social policing, Roseanne has learned that her voice carries very little authority, regardless of the truth of her narrative. Barry uses her story to illustrate how the rhetoric of postcolonial nationalism constructs its particular image of morality. The devaluation of voices like Roseanne's is an active policy undertaken to reinforce historical narrative that attempts to dictate how future generations will remember the past. Faced with an

unpredictable, but inevitably close death due to her advanced age, her desire to write down the story of her life is not just an alternative to speaking with Dr. Grene.

Although her writing is eloquent and unreserved, she assumes that she alone will find value in her memories or her endeavor to “write out [her] life on unwanted paper - surplus to requirement ... some kind of brittle and honest-minded history” (4-5). Even if she does not intend for any other person to ever find it in her lifetime, her written account will last far longer than her spoken words to Dr. Grene will, and as a written account it leaves little room for interrogation of those memories, something Roseanne is frequently concerned about.

Her name is Roseanne McNulty, but that is no longer a rightful title anymore. The difficulty of this indeterminate identity, the constant reopening of this wound, is exhausting for Roseanne, “I was then too weary to explain yet again, for the millionth time in sixty years and more, that I wasn’t Mrs. McNulty. That I wasn’t anybody wasn’t anybody’s wife. I was just Roseanne Clear” (244). Of all the things that Roseanne has forgotten, this may be the one thing she wishes she could, but is unable to because the ‘official’ record lists her married name only.

Despite her decades as a patient at Roscommon and Sligo hospitals, and the years of isolation. She frequently takes the opportunity to not only find the beauty and peacefulness in the world around her, as she writes “it is always worth itemizing happiness, there is so much of the other thing in a life, you had better put up the markers for happiness while you can” (Barry 141), but she also offers understanding to the people who had been involved in the difficulties of her life. After reading her account of her life, Dr. Grene calls her “a surprising celebrator of life and people” (278). Even with regards to Fr. Gaunt, who is intimately involved in each traumatic event of her life, she feels anger towards him. Importantly, while Roseanne appears to

have forgiven those who have harmed her, and though her memories have been distorted by trauma.

Caruth defines trauma as a wound and that cause great emotional anguish in the individual. According to Caruth:

Trauma is generally understood as wound or external bodily injury in general. It is also defined as mental condition caused by severe shocks, especially when the harmful effects last for a long time. In its later uses, particularly in the psychiatric literature, the term 'trauma' is understood as a wound inflicted not upon the body but the mind.(124)

Here, Caruth emphasizes the meaning of trauma from psychological. When the victims when researcher addresses is emotional injury and unexpected mental sufferings. The same as Caruth about the theory has been applied in the text that Barry's characters were not only physically sufferer but also psychologically traumatized.

The analysis of Sebastain Barry's *The Secret Scripture* the research demonstrates the struggle and cope of characters through the text. Though the images of protagonist, Roseanne Barry shows the traumatic distress and chaotic consequences were visibly draws in the novel. The core finding of this research is that when Roseanne struggle to change his life and complication resulted from the assault can be cope through the narrativization of trauma.

Barry through the character like Roseanne, Joy Clear, FrGuntDrGreene and Cissy Clear and other various minor characters portrays the terrific scenario of World War II. Roseanne witness the scenario of war who scape from the brutal assault. She is steadily traumatized and suffers from fragmented identity. The text involves with the shame, guilt, psychic instability and various setbacks in the character mind. This

text features the group of people who had survived the World War II. The text hovers around the traumatic and post-traumatic situation of the character aftermath of devastation and destruction.

The researcher highlights the notion of acting out and working through of trauma propounded by Dominik LaCapra. For him acts out of trauma the victims unable to forget his past memories; experience is repeated as I was fully exacted and indulges in the victim's life. Though the victims exists in present as he/she is fully in the past where the event held. Here, Roseanne was the witness of the World War II. She was psychologically haunted by the images of attacks. Moreover, working through trauma, the victim tries to gain critical distance on the problem and to be distinguishing between past, present and future. It tries to lesson past trauma. However, Roseanne wants to be poker player and always think about other survivor. Roseanne lives become double whether to live with her husband or to continue in the hospital.

Roseanne is compelled to act in accordance with their principles and thought about life. The conversation that goes between Roseanne and her father clarifies how women are considered to possess lower position in the entire structure. She hardly can do anything on her own. Barry in elucidates:

Father, I can't do what you say. I can't do it. In your grief you may poor decides. I understand this. My own father died five years ago of a cancer, it was a terrible death, and I mourn him still. Remember, Roseanne, a grief is two years long. You will not make a good thought for a long time. Be advised by me; let me advise you in loco parentis, do you see, in place of your father let me be your father in this, as a priest ought. We have had so many dealings,

he and I, and you, that you are almost in the fold already. It will save your immortal soul, and save you in this valley of sorrows and tears. (100)

Roseanne's father very forcibly tries to convince his daughter to listen to listen him and go ahead accordingly. There is a hot conversation between the father and the daughter that results in binding the woman to certain outdated personal principles of life. The father presents himself as a protector and defender to his daughter and tries to ensure her that she does not need to worry since he is there with her in all sorts of complications.

GadibalBenezer is another trauma theorist who marks out relationship of trauma and life. A trauma victim was haunted by the internal and external reality, such reality clash in their life and guilt, shame cause them various hindrance in their life. "It is used by psychologist, psychoanalyst and researcher in a variety of meanings ...the external and internal reality is put together through the common reference to a traumatic state or situation which is their nexus. (54) Traumatic experiences are very personal. It focuses' victims to enables to share his\her intimate experiences through guilt, shame which are not easy to express with other. It also enables the victim to reconstruct the meaning of traumatic experiences.

There is severe victimization of women during critical time in Ireland. The very bitter experience of women is depicted here to convey message to readers of all ages in general. Rape and knocking of the narrator indicates the violation of women right in the contemporary Ireland as depicted in the novel. Despite age, people do not forget the moments of their youth. Rather they play with the memories of the past. Roseanne is now an old lady whose memories are still alive and she enjoys with them. Barry speaks through the narrator:

So ancient, and yet, one of those facts that is so thin she bears the bears the look of her youth yet, what she was. Oh, she is shrunken as she must be, when the woman washes her no doubt she is skin and bone, everything that was once beautiful and fruitful about her empty and sere. Can I say, Bet was spared that? It is worthless talking about what we have been spared that? It is worthless talking about what we have been spared by death. Death grins at that I am sure. Death of all creation knows the value of life. (124)

Roseanne still has attitude towards life as it is much worthy. She philosophizes meaningfulness of death and life and thus makes sure it is death that enlivens the value of life. Both life and death are opposite pillars and they carry sense in the presence of each other. The women's socialization is a bit different in patriarchy as that pushes them to margin and periphery in respect of all aspects of life cycle. Work as waitresses delightfully and do not see any harm due to this kind of activity.

Likewise the study intends to disclose the narrativization of trauma. Barry's *The Secret Scripture* carves out trauma that has the representation of women in the customary stereotyped patterns:

Myself and Chrissie and the other girls from the Café Cairo... Mrs. Prunty always tried to employ good girls for the café, but good girls that looked good, which is a different thing. I think we looked like young goddesses. Mary Thompson could have been a picture in a magazine; Winne Jackson was a picture once, in the silage champion. 'Miss Winne Jackson Enjoys the Fine Weather at Steandhill'. Here in her beautiful once-piece bathing suit sent down to her in a box from Arnott's Dublin, on the Dublin to Silago train. (146)

This quote suggests that in Ireland at that time women were traumatized also their workplace. The people are often in the habit of viewing women from the perspective

assets. If women are physically good, otherwise practice is due to the fact women in patriarchy are judge in terms of beauty and therefore they are compared with goddesses in case they are attractive and their physique. Therefore, women life in the Irish society was traumatic.

This present study does focuses on the trauma in Barry's *The Secret Scripture*. In this regard, Barry mentions on vibrant situations that traumatic condition of women in Irish society, "but married women never worked in those days. We were like the Muslims in those times, the men wanted to hide us away, except on occasion like that, when there were a good film to be seen" (182). Not letting women to work outside the house was practice of depriving women of their freedom for expression and public performance women couldn't have the life of their choice. Their life was traumatic. As a result they didn't appear in public. This kind of trauma and discrimination on the part of women discouraged them from doing something productive. Thus this study captures the trauma of protagonist Roseanne Clear through Barry's *The Secret Scripture*.

Roseanne's dividing version of past is traumatic such as witnessing her father's death, her mother's insanity, being abandoned by her husband after a charge of nymphomania was brought against her, giving birth to a child alone on the seashore before being sent to the mental hospital without knowing anything about the child's whereabouts, and then being sexually abused by an orderly in the mental hospital. Roseanne says about her admission to the mental hospital.

This research paper explores the traumatic experiences of protagonist Roseanne Clear. The death of loved ones is the main cause of her traumatic sufferings. Roseanne moves to the past of her father's memories in which she 'acts out' disorderly after the death of her father and 'work through' later sharing her

experiences and pain with other but doesn't gain critical distance nor she gets complete healing from it. Her refusal or inability to speak shows her unwillingness to cope with traumatic past. Her behavior can be characterized as the process of 'acting out' that encompasses that victims urge to hide to live bodily in the present but to remain psychically in the past and constantly that cannot waste out from her mind which is registered unconsciously in the mind. She cannot go far from the recurring memory her even beloved husband marry another girl. On several occasion she wants to avoid remembrances of past but can't help herself. The paradox between forgetting and remembering comes to the fore in Roseanne's own account of the destruction of World War II. Roseanne prevents herself from sharing her traumatic experiences, refusing to speak and remain in process of 'acting out'. She suppresses her memories of past when she is awake but past events haunt her in her dreams.

Roseanne's process of coping with her trauma has been doubtful from the start. She narrates and shares her traumatic experiences with DrGreene. She gets more relief after letting Dr. Grene read the last event of her father's death and being abandoned by her husband. But she doesn't work through her traumatic past properly because most of the time she feels the urge to hide away under the bed and escape from the world. In this desire to hide, she resembles the melancholic and goes through the process of 'acting out' of her trauma. With her loyalty to trauma and inability to share her past, she is clearly melancholic. She acts out her trauma than cope with it. She does not get proper health even if she tries to share and narrativize the horrible events from the past.

Though healing of trauma is not possible, she try to have a new life and engage in present situation directly or indirectly. In Roseanne's case, she stops roaming in the city. She gets more relief after letting Dr. Grene listen the voice of her

father. But she doesn't work through her traumatic past properly because most of the time she feels the urge to hide away under the bed and escape from the world. In this desire to hide, she resembles the melancholic and goes through the process of acting out of her trauma. She does not get the proper health even if she tries to share and narrativize the horrible events from the past.

She does not gain critical distance after writing her secret but while visiting the people like her in the hospital she slightly works through or shares her trauma with them. Her action of hiding secret scripture recorded in her diary is acting out her trauma. She finally works through her trauma by taking it to her psychiatric Dr. Grene to read it. Roseanne works through her traumatic experiences with others, communicating with people, writing her own past event and becoming more practical.

Though healing of trauma is not possible Roseanne tries to have a new life and engage in the present situation directly or indirectly. She stops roaming in the hospital. She communicates with other patients. When she was completely alone in the hospital's room she wrote about her past in her secret diary. Such activities show signs of relief of the traumatic suffering. It also shows the solidarity of trauma victims.

In this way protagonist Roseanne does different activities to reduce the intensity of trauma. Such as, Roseanne goes to support group for mental patients in the hospital. She reads books based on her life to overcome her trauma. By spending time with the group in the hospital Roseanne gets relief from there and lives some happy moments before she leaves the world. She is the old woman, she has acknowledged her death and does every short of activities she wanted to do in her life. She was not traumatized by her early fixed death. Hence, she makes herself busy on discussing, reading and writing her feelings concerning her pain. Though the protagonist Roseanne was deeply distressed, she is trying to cope with the sufferings

and painful circumstances. She exchanges her traumatic experiences with each other and the healing process is initiated through reading, writing and sharing. These activities facilitates in the working through of the trauma in the life of Roseanne. So in the novel she is using self-process like 'working through trauma' as well as 'acting out' her trauma.

One of the major finding of the research is that trauma is somehow lesser by the narrator through the work of narrativization the real event. Therefore, this research through the novel exposes and explores the situations of people suffering from social discrimination, loneliness, fear, betrayal and so on. Hence, the text from 'working through' and 'acting out' tries to show the traumatic condition of the protagonist Roseanne and the way she tries to come in the normal situation. The process of working through and acting out does not lead the character to completely heal trauma but it minimizes her trauma. The major thrust of this research is to explore how the protagonist of *The Secret Scripture* is traumatized by the various practices of dehumanization, subjugation, alienation and concerned with her attempt to cope with her traumatic past by means of narrativization.

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