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The Narrative Representation of Insidious Trauma and Recovery in Sebastian Barry's *The Secret Scripture*

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Declaration

I hereby proclaim that the substance and the findings reported in this dissertation are the result of my examination, and that due reference or affirmation is made, at whatever point necessary, to the work of different specialists.

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Dedication

Above all, all praises to Allah and His bountiful blessings for the completion of this
dissertation.

Indeed, everything I achieve and everything I am traces back to my family and dearest
friends.

To the source of my happiness: My mother whose selfless love and sacrifice, unwavering
support, and boundless care have been the greatest impulse to reach for my dreams.

To my father for supporting me throughout the years, financially, practically and with
moral support.

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Abstract

One pivotal indication of Irish independence has hinged on the systematic re-designation of an ideal image of a defined national identity from the position of the political state, down to family patterns, requiring a deliberate denial of any foreign constituent beside the Catholic projection of Irish culture built around morality. To accomplish this, the Catholic Church set up nationwide facilities as warehouses for those people, mainly women who tarnished such image of identity. Hence, institutions like Magdalen Laundries and Mental hospitals were a tool of social conduct to contain women's bodies. The Grand narrative followed the same maneuver by obscuring their traumatic experiences of social abuse and coercive institutionalization. Literary writers had to deal with the issues of gendered insidious traumas that reverberated throughout the twentieth century. To acknowledge and explore the ordeals that traumatized women have gone through was the driving force behind undertaking this study. This dissertation examines the prominent theme of insidious trauma in the contemporary Irish novel *The Secret Scripture* (2008) by Sebastian Barry. Using an eclectic approach that incorporates the feminist psychoanalysis approach and trauma theory, the study investigates the author's distinguished narrative representation of the hallmarks of Roseanne Clear's insidious trauma through her post-traumatic testimony as well as delineating the narrative techniques employed in the process of healing and recovery. With specific focus on the omnipresent Catholic persecution against Protestant women, disempowerment and institutionalization, this paper offers an exhaustive view on how traumatic experience can blur the line between truth and confabulation, official historical records and individual adaptation of history with respect to the question of "reliability".

Keywords: Contemporary Irish Literature, Feminist psychoanalysis, Insidious trauma Institutionalization, post-traumatic testimony, recovery, theory of trauma, traumatic memory.

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General Introduction

Background of the Study:

Since the inception of its theoretical foundations in the medical domain and psychoanalysis, the generic understanding of trauma has been connected with a response to devastating experiences that disturb the smooth surfaces of life narratives and often prompt the traumatized to be pathologically trapped in the cycle of reliving the past episodes of trauma as if they were occurring in the present. Nonetheless, recent studies of the socio-cultural dimension of trauma have broadened the range of psychic trauma conceptualizations to include the inconspicuous trauma of socially underprivileged people which results from the accumulated effects of series of prejudice, social oppression and disempowerment . Trauma studies have recently turned its attention toward trauma as coherent to cause and effect, entailing a deliberate process of constructing traumatic experiences through cumulative degradation factor. This is especially true when we properly reflect on the history of daily persecution and abuse perpetrated by a dominant entitled society against disenfranchised and disempowered community prejudiced by their own gender, color, and class.

The long-term repercussions of institutionalized sexism and micro aggressions alongside its psychological effects can be adequately grasped in terms of the feminist psychotherapist Laura Brown's concept of "insidious trauma." Brown explains the specific traumatogenic effects of oppression and widens the narrow concept of trauma as a singular acute shock to include the insidious silent experiences of women, children, and minority groups. This conceptualization of insidious trauma provides a useful framework for understanding the posttraumatic stress of the socially disempowered women and illustrates the subtleties of how a traumatic experience

insidiously becomes not only distinct threat to psychological safety but also denigratory to the self worth of the oppressed . For much of the twentieth century in the newly independent Ireland, women and girls who were perceived as morally unsound and would jeopardize the nationalist-inspired identity image of an ideal Irish citizen were repressed and shunted in reformatory institutions like psychiatric hospitals for indefinite time. The predominant influence of the Catholic Church and nationalism has swept away such less desirable people from Irish society and official historiography. Particularly for Irish Protestant women, they were doubly disfranchised because of their own narrowly defined identity as vulnerable females and Protestants in the dominant Catholic patriarchal community. The Irish literary trends of that era, mainly the Revivalist literature was also used as a tool to demarcate and enforce an official national narrative of a moral traditional civilized country. This entails that any kind of literary work that foregrounds individual histories of trauma and marginalization at the hands of the new Irish government were often doomed to be censored.

Not until the 1990s onward which witnessed a substantial diminution of the Church's influence due to the increasing public allegations against its dysfunctional abusive system in Ireland. This is reflected through the critical liberality in media and literature that period began to enjoy , conducing many writers to embrace a much more critical stance i.e, historical revisionism towards the overwhelming ideologies like nationalism that have shadowed private lives. What is left is a nation confronted with memories of abuse and trauma and traumatized citizens perplexed of how to address their long silenced insidious trauma. In terms of the current trends in Irish literature which coincides with the development of the Trauma Studies (whose prominent figure is Cathy Caruth), the desire to negotiate and “bear witness” to the traumatic past and acknowledge its post-trauma effects on the present struggles is an essential part of the process of

working through the long concealed events of that past . Just a decade later, the renowned Irish author Sebastian Barry endorsed this historical revisionist-inspired literary trend to address the hidden reservoirs of insidious trauma that institutionalized women have lifelong endured through his successful novel *The Secret Scripture* (2008), which was inspired by a real story of his old relative.

Literature Review

Despite being a recent novel, there has been a growing interest on *The Secret Scripture* for tackling high profile issues that uncovered the dark history of Ireland towards the marginalized women. Various research works were conducted to explore them using different approaches and literary theories. Sarah Herbe's article titled "Memory, Reliability and Old Age in Sebastian Barry's *The Secret Scripture*: A Reading of the Novel as Fictional Life Writing article " (2014) discusses the theme of memoir of ageing in *The Secret Scripture*. Herbe's analysis is backed by references to findings by psychologists and cognitive scientists concerning the relationship between reliability of autobiographical memory and old age. However, our research engages with the overarching aspect of traumatic memory and offers an extended probing of unreliability conflict in the novel . Herbe opted for autobiographical approach whereas our analysis excludes any autobiographical link and accentuates more on the psychological side of the novel.

Another research conducted around the novel is Piatek Beata's critical book *History, Memory, Trauma in Contemporary British and Irish Fiction* (2014). This book devotes a section to examine the notion of trauma in Irish history as portrayed in various novels including *The Secret Scripture*. The researcher deals with this novel as exclusively historical one shedding light on the interplay of memory and history . Unlike our research, her paper does not provide a

feminist critique on the role of patriarchy in perpetuating insidious trauma among objectified disempowered women.

Statement of the Problem

There exists by now ample critical material on *The Secret Scripture* engaging with wide range of themes such as postcolonial Other ,the trauma in Irish history , the relationship between historical trauma and traumatic truth , but as shown earlier , scarce studies attempted to discern the workings of insidious trauma that plagued the central character of the novel , Roseanne as well as exploring the potential recovery through her testimony .She is a victim of the troubled relations between Catholics and protestants, and between her femininity and male domination of her Pastoral society, and her story was done away with in a mental institution. On the premise that trauma problematizes its representation in conventional narrative form, this inquiry attempts to duly examine the author's distinguished narrative representation coupling both the workings of insidious trauma and healing functions of the trauma testimony with central focus on the various literary devices used to represent each process. Using an eclectic approach of trauma theory and feminist psychoanalysis, this dissertation seeks to establish a more thorough understanding of the mimetic representation of insidious trauma in the literary text and how the act of narration can procreate cathartic release. Another constituent of this problem is interrogating Barry's employment of a parallel 'official' version of Roseanne that underscores Roseanne's unreliability.

Methodology

The nature of this research is qualitative, analytical and descriptive. The theoretical underpinnings pertinent to this research are provided primarily by literary theory of trauma and

feminist psychoanalysis approach. The choice of trauma theory as a particularly useful rubric for the reading of *The Secret Scripture* is that it arguably allows for the nuanced examination of insidious trauma and the nature of the traumatic memory via Roseanne's testimony. The use of feminist psychoanalysis is justified by the use of the feminist psychiatrist concept of "insidious trauma" that targets women's psychological suffering and vulnerability. It is further justified by identifying the feminist impulse behind the novel in giving voice to underrepresented experiences of doubly disempowered women in Ireland during twentieth century.

Research Questions

Roseanne's testimony serves as an underlying anchor for the study of the literary means used to convey insidious trauma, providing a platform to touch on the interplay between trauma history and, memory. Therefore, this study tackles three key research questions:

- 1- How does the author construct a narrative representation of Roseanne's insidious trauma and what are the specific literary strategies employed in aiding recovery potentials?
- 2- To what extent does insidious trauma affect Roseanne's post-traumatic testimony? How does that influence her recovery potential to come to terms with her past?
- 3- Why does the author explore the unreliability conflict that arises between Roseanne's personal account and 'official' historical account? Does that offer any vantage to Roseanne's position in the novel?

Structure of the Research

This dissertation consists of three chapters, each of which examines a vital part of the overall conducted problem. Chapter one establishes the theoretical foundation of trauma initially in Freudian psychoanalysis then situating its theorizations in primary contemporary studies of Cathy Caruth, Judith Lewis Herman, Dori Laub and Dominick La Capra. The chapter then

explores the feminist psychoanalytic reexamination of trauma of which issued forth the concept of “insidious trauma” and the significance of psychotherapy in a bid to introduce the contextual frame work concerning women’s insidious trauma in Ireland. Chapter two shifts to tackle the literary treatment of women’s insidious trauma and memory in contemporary Irish literature. It sets out the context for Sebastian Barry’s literary ethos and *The Secret Scripture* (2008). Having established the theoretical and contextual threads that link the pivotal research questions together , Chapter Three places Barry’s novel under close analysis with central focus on traumatic memory’s recollection through Roseanne’s testimony in order to discern the author’s means of representation and emulation of insidious trauma hallmarks. The analysis touches on the question of unreliability pertaining to Roseanne’s testimony that diverges considerably from the official records .It finally discusses the possibility of recovery by ways of Roseanne’s self-narrative engagement with her traumatic past.

Research Objectives

The primary aim pursued through this paper is to unravel the complexities that confront the process of narrative representation and emulation of insidious trauma due to the fragmented, almost unrepresentable nature of the traumatic memory. By highlighting the problem of insidious trauma as a output of persistent persecution against Protestant women during the heydays of the absolute power of Catholic Church , this paper contributes to an ongoing discussion of the traumatic history of Ireland. Furthermore, it addresses the necessity of restoring the female voices of those long silenced by insidious trauma .*The Secret Scripture* ’s haunting dialectic between alternative adaptation of history by the left out traumatized and the official narrative of history creates a cultural need to closely examine the terrain of self-narrativization of trauma as

an instrument to create a historical space for them and through which they can sow the seeds of recovery.

**Chapter One: Insidious Trauma in Literary Theory and in the Irish
Context**

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1.1 Introduction

Emerging originally in Holocaust studies, the poststructuralist theory of trauma has retained a prominent status in the Irish literary context since 1990's. A number of scholars specialized in the field of trauma studies attempted to trace the genesis of contemporary theories of trauma and explicating literary studies' growing interest with it. Among the most comprehensive works that acquired a canonical position in trauma studies are Cathy Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* where the term "trauma theory" was first appeared, Ruth Leys' *Trauma: A Genealogy*, and Dominick LaCapra's *Writing History, Writing Trauma*.

This chapter aims to examine the entangled concepts of trauma, memory, PTSD and narrative in the psychoanalysis theory. The notion of women trauma is then explored from a psychoanalytic feminist perspective, shedding light on the therapeutic element crucial to the treatment of trauma among women. Institutional abuse and its impact on the female victims is examined within the context of Magdalene Laundries and mental asylums in order to set the context for the subsequent chapters. Understanding the complicated relationship between trauma, memory and testimony is necessary to discuss the literary means of expression employed by Sebastian Barry to convey and represent insidious trauma in *The Secret Scripture* and eventually assess the probability of incorporating a therapeutic aspect of the main character's "Self Testimony".

1.2 The Anatomy of Trauma Theory

The term "trauma" designates multiple components: a mental illness, a historical event and a combination of symptoms. Trauma is originally a Greek term for a surgical wound or shock. However, the term acquired a more psychological meaning when it was employed by J.

M. Charcot, Pierre Janet, Sigmund Freud, and other pioneering psychoanalysis figures to characterize the wounding of the mind caused by sudden, severe and emotional shock (Leys 2). Most centrally for Freud, trauma, otherwise in his own nomenclature “traumatic neurosis” (Caruth 2), is perceived as “a wound inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind” (3). It implies that what causes, trauma, then, is a shock that appears to work very much like a bodily threat but is in fact a dysfunction in the mind’s cognition and memory. Freud’s understanding of trauma has been influenced by the early psychoanalytic preoccupations of the British physician John Erichsen, who identified the trauma syndrome in victims suffering from the fear of railway accidents, and he imputed the distress to a concussion of the spine. Traumatic experiences can include sexual abuse, institutional abuse, domestic violence and traumatic loss , to name a few, with regard to the scope of this study

1.2.1 The Dynamics of Trauma in the Freudian Psychoanalysis

In her seminal monograph titled *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, And History*, Cathy Caruth describes trauma as “an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena” (11). Caruth's conceptualization of trauma profoundly convolutes the relation between the experience and event. Inadequately grasped at the time of its occurrence, trauma does not lie in the grip of the individual, to be recounted at will, but rather acts as a haunting ghost that not only incessantly and intrusively returns but is, moreover, experienced only in its tardy repetition.

Caruth draws on Freud’s case studies of hysteria in women upon which he concluded that hysteria contains traumatic symptoms including hallucinations (Bulut 1). From Freud’s perspective, hysteria, as a disorder of memory of women, is akin to traumatic neurosis in terms

of symptoms. In 1895, Sigmund Freud and a Viennese physician Joseph Breuer published *Studies on Hysteria* in which they introduced the concept of *Nachträglichkeit*. It is translated into English as “deferred action”, “belatedness” or “afterwardness”, to refer to a temporal lacuna arising only to the memory of a traumatic event, not during it. For Freud, trauma was constituted by a temporal dialectic between the traumatic event and its belated consciousness, neither of which was intrinsically traumatic, and a temporal delay or *latency* through which the past is available only by a deferred act of understanding and interpretation. This latency generates the sort of a wavering behavior manifested in amnesia. Trauma, hence, is a narrative of a belated experience whereby it disrupts memory and melts down barriers of present and past, as the past is reenacted in the present (Robson 18, Ifowodo 71).

1.2.2 Psychic Trauma, Traumatic Memory and Narrative Memory

Freud connected the notion of psychic trauma; particularly the trauma of sexual abuse with his “seduction theory” (Leys 18). In fact, his original emphasis was on the significance of the sexual abuse during infancy on the traumatic memory, and this was a point of contention among the psychoanalysis community (Leys 18). He postulated that the memory of the traumatic event is tucked in the unconscious of the infant and activated at a later time, during adolescence, when the traumatized victim is confronted with a similar occurrence (Piatek 34). In 1899, nevertheless, Freud rejected the seduction theory, concluding that the adult’s memories of sexual trauma are sheer unconscious sexual fantasies, yet without denying the existence of children sexual abuse. However, he maintained the presumption that traumatic memory is inherently unstable or mutable owing to the role of unconscious motives that confer meaning on it (Leys 20).

Freud examined the centrality and complexity of trauma theory in two significant and controversial works: *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* and *Moses and Monotheism*. Among contemporary psychoanalysis critics including Caruth, these two essays address a straightforward connection between Freud's theory of trauma and historical violence (Caruth 58). It is in these two controversial texts that Freud's initial attempts to describe and conceptualize individual and historical trauma were against the backdrops of Jewish collective memory and the rising Nazi persecution of the Jews (Leys 275).

A comprehensive reading of Freud's explanation of the history of Jews in *Moses and Monotheism* reveals how Freud's perception of history as "survival" in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* extends beyond the stricture of the individual psyche and delineates the trajectory of Jewish historical experience. What Freud enigmatically contends is that trauma consists not only in facing death but also in having survived without consciously realizing it. The history of the Jews in *Moses and Monotheism* significantly resonates with the theory of trauma in its endeavor to explore the collective trauma of the Holocaust (Caruth 67). From the traumatic experience of Holocaust victims and survivors, Freud calls for understanding the individual trauma in the context of collective trauma in order to grasp the full complexity of the problem of trauma and survival at the core of human psyche. Therefore, Freud's theory of trauma that focused on the historical experience of a survival, additionally engages a notion of collectively experiencing massive trauma exceeding individual memory bounds.

Freud's theorization of trauma as a disassociation of memory is not only echoed in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, but also was reflected in the works of his contemporary, Pierre Janet and in contemporary trauma theory subsequently. Like Freud, Janet propounds that trauma exceeds one's consciousness. Due to this, the traumatic memory is not available in the conscious

recall, but is rather thrown into the “alternative split-off consciousness”. It is worth pausing here at two significant notions in an attempt to distinguish between them: the traumatic memory and the narrative memory. While traumatic memory is inflexible, unspeakable and thus unreliable, the narrative memory is molded in the form of a story telling (Robson 19).

In *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, Dominick LaCapra observes that even though traumatic memory is not reliable, it saves the silhouette of the traumatic past and so cannot be eschewed. Such memories “may involve distortion, disguise, and other permutations relating to . . . narrative shaping,” but such failures in strict accuracy “[can]not invalidate [a narrative] in its entirety.”(qtd.in Sullivan 8). In literary criticism, considerable attention is currently paid to various forms of narrative representations of traumatic memory and their potential therapy. Conventional forms of life-writing such as testimony and autobiography along with fictional life accounts undergo fundamental metamorphosis to address the issue of the “unrepresentability” of traumatic memories. Hence, such understandings of the nature of traumatic memory and narrative memory pose particularly acute challenges to the verbal and literal representation of traumatic memory (Leys 21).

Freud characteristically divides trauma into two representational phases: the traumatic event – given Freud’s example of an impending railway accident, and its latent symptomatic responses that emerge ultimately (Whitehead 162). The study of the symptomatic aftermath of trauma culminated in the emergence of the officially recognized psychiatric symptoms of trauma known as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

1.2.3 Contemporary Trauma Theory and PTSD

The focus of contemporary trauma theory and studies has notably shifted to the post-traumatic testimonies and their psychotherapeutic nature. The provenance of contemporary trauma studies is originally traced back to 1980, when post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a clinical offspring of trauma theory, was first affiliated to the diagnostic canon of the medical and psychiatric fields (Whitehead 4). Post-traumatic stress disorder is the term coined by the American Psychiatric Association in the same year in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* journal's third edition to what had formerly been termed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as "shell shock, combat neurosis, or traumatic neurosis". It incorporates the same fundamental symptoms that Freud mentioned in his researches on the feature of *latency* or belatedness. He further categorizes these symptoms into: "positive symptoms" mainly flashbacks and hallucinations and the "negative symptoms" including numbing, amnesia, and avoidance of triggering stimuli (Caruth 130). These symptoms are latent in the traumatized person's consciousness and reenacted in deferred actions.

According to Leys, in her acclaimed book titled *Trauma –A Genealogy*, Post traumatic stress disorder, as a type of trauma, is fundamentally a disorder of memory .The idea is that, owing to the emotions of terror and shock caused by certain occurrences, the mind is split or dissociated. It is incapable to register the wound in the conscious because the conventional processes of memory and cognition are damaged. (Leys 2). As a consequence, the victim fails to retrieve and integrate the traumatic experience in ordinary consciousness. The traumatic memories rather break into his mind and haunt it suddenly by any trigger of that traumatic event. The victim's inability to remember adequately the event is interpreted as a symptom of the traumatic disorder. Thus, dissociative amnesia came to be recognized as a pivotal symptom of trauma. Like Kathryn Robson, Leys also stresses the idea that the incidence of the trauma, fixed

in time, refuses to be represented as past, but is perpetually reexperienced in a painful, dissociated, traumatic present. Caruth views that post-traumatic stress response “reflects the direct imposition on the mind of the unavoidable reality of horrific events, the taking over of the mind, psychically and neurobiologically, by an event that it cannot control” (131). By its very definition, PTSD seems to provide the most direct relation between the psyche and the exposure to external violence and to be the most destructive psychic disorder.

1.2.4 Post-traumatic Testimony:

The notion of “post-traumatic testimony” is central to contemporary trauma studies. Once the traumatic memory is articulated, it enters the metanarrative path. The narrative of the victim afterwards takes the form of a testimony that allows the reader to witness her / his experience (Piątek 30). For Ricoeur, pieces of articulated traumatic memory become testimony and enters the public sphere; as testimony becomes an impromptu document of history. Irene Kacandes in her work titled *Talk Fiction* attributes post-traumatic testimony to a mode of “talk fiction” (01) that is associated with novels that deal with the post-traumatic testimony of a victim. She labels them “witness narratives” (90) for they engage the reader in “cowitnessing” and partaking the secondary witness.

Cowitnessing is a form of enabling the traumatic memory to be transformed into a narrative memory, and thus it helps the traumatized victim to construct mental schemes that piece out the experience, which will eventually lead to working through trauma. Some texts explicitly invite its readers to engage in cowitnessing through second personal pronouns (you). Others employ narrative techniques such as anachrony (either flashbacks or flashforwards) , ellipses or repetition to imitate post-traumatic symptoms (Kacandes 111). Through the process of cowitnessing , the traumatised’s memories are fragmented, inconsistent and incomplete and in

order to draw up a coherent story out of them ,the reader must carry out a task very comparable to that of a therapist listening to the testimony of a trauma victim. S/he looks closely to inconsistencies, understand the importance of the repetitions, and fill in the gaps .Moreover, even when a trauma narrative is burdened by the tricks of memory, Felman and Laub insist on the possibility of nonetheless instilling truth in the new space offered up by testimony. Testimony thus constitutes a literary attempt to come to terms with these gaps in memory and shattered consciousness that characterize trauma. Having said that, Felman argues that this testimony does not provide a completed jigsaw puzzle picture and a pristine account of traumatic event due to this unspeakable trauma that exceeds one's frame of reference and can never be completely grasped.

1. 3 Contemporary Understanding of Woman's Insidious Trauma: Feminist-Psychoanalytic Reexamination of Trauma

Trauma has become a paradigmatic reservoir of personal testimonies about the enigmas of torment, identity, psychic shattering and memory. Trauma in the lives of women in particular has moved from the private domain of the home to the public arena as a result of the women's movements in the 1970s. Trauma theory contributed to an already existing body of feminist critique of the disproportionate levels of violence and trauma against women in European patriarchal communities. A diverse range of feminist scholars has sought to expand the analytical possibilities of trauma theory to include feminist constructions of trauma .Among many feminist theorists, therapists and researchers who have actively addressed the women's insidious trauma issue, we highlight the critical reflections of Laura Brown and Judith Lewis Herman.

Central to the gendered trauma question and feminine psyche, it is noteworthy to refer to Simone Beauvoir and her early revolutionary 1949 treatise, *The Second Sex* that reflected on the

trauma of sexism. She discursively pointed out that trauma and mental instability in women are not only due to the oppression of the male counterparts but the inner ingrained patterns of gender roles from which man and woman cannot escape. These stereotypical imprints in the psyche mark the beginning of her trauma (KR and Chitra 1587).

Writing about traumatized women from a feminist-hybrid perspective, the American psychotherapist Laura Brown in her essay titled "Not outside the Range: One Feminist Perspective on Psychic Trauma" promotes for the social context of gender inequality to be taken into consideration in psychiatric diagnosis allowing for a more rightful understanding of women's trauma. Brown also reexamined the androcentric definition of trauma. She elaborates that unlike men, who fight in wars, women frequently suffer from "insidious trauma", a concept drawn from the work of feminist psychotherapist Maria Root. Insidious trauma is caused by long-term "traumatogenic effects" (Brown 128) of oppression that are not necessarily overtly violent or threatening to the physical well-being but that are violent to the psyche and spirit of the socially disempowered such as of women, children, and minority groups who have been overlooked in the construction of trauma theory. As Root demonstrates, insidious trauma is "usually associated with the social status of an individual being devalued because a characteristic intrinsic to their identity is different from what is valued by those in power" (Qtd in Hwangbo 21). Brown further challenged the narrow pathology of PTSD that neglected the traumas of women. Brown elaborates that rape, incest, and battery were for a long time not regarded traumatic events because they were primarily experienced by women(Brown 121). She explains that this gendered classification of human traumatic experiences was heavily drawn on the androcentric norm that hinges on what is usually experienced by men.

1.3.1 The Necessity of Psychotherapeutic Self-narration for Traumatized Women

Such feminist scholars have taken up the moral obligation to bring the post-traumatic testimonies of traumatized women to the forefront. Furthermore, they attempt to promote a psychotherapeutic treatment of women's insidious trauma in their critical studies, as it has been obliterated from public discourse. Due to this, psychoanalytic Feminists have insisted on the employment of the abreactive model of trauma therapy that was first introduced in 1890s by Freud and Breuer to treat female hysteria. During World War I the model had been resurrected by William Brown and others to treat the shell-shocked in an attempt essentially to get rid of traumatic memories. Psychotherapy, however, does not root out trauma. The prime aim of recounting the traumatic experiences is integration and coping. Theorists increasingly viewed psychotherapy as a process of "forming, reforming and revising life stories" (Borg 456.) In the process of cathartic-abreactive cure through self-narration, the traumatic memory does undergo a transubstantiation, but only in the sense of becoming present and more real; a mechanism Freud labeled as "working through". By being induced to recall and narrate them, the traumatic memories are broken down— into specific images, words, or even parts of words— and transformed into narrative memories. The narrator works through his / her traumatic experiences by remembering and narrating them in order to break free from the trauma of his past. Caruth emphasizes that this analytical process may involve a tendency to repeat the trauma narrative in various forms of expression.

From another angle, other trauma researchers such as van der Kolk, van der Hart and LaCapra claim that it is through distorting traumatic memories—consciously or unconsciously— that they can be narrated and integrated in one's life story, and this allegedly constitutes a major part of the healing process. The modification of traumatic memory works to soften the grim, unmitigated traumatic events. In that case; therefore, the act of narrativization of trauma is

therapeutic not because it conveys what happened but because it is adjusted and filtered, representing the past in a less disturbing fashion (Robson 21). It is worth pausing here to put forward one of the most challenging questions that remains hanging in the air, if the narrative representation of trauma is modified, how can one testify its truthfulness? In *Moses and Monotheism*, Freud suggests that even the extreme distortions or delusions of the traumatic memories contain historical truth within (Leys 282). However, there is no consensus in the fields of trauma and memory research regarding such untheorizable claim. Thus, it is not a prerequisite to repress traumatic truths in order for one to overcome the past. Yet dealing with the trauma of sexual abuse through an extreme form of dissociation in memory i.e., amnesia would cause repetition, fragmentation, gaps and incompleteness in the narrative of trauma, thus rendering it justifiably dubious.

For psychoanalytic feminists, the choice for the abreaction therapy of post-trauma stress disorder is because it stresses the necessity to evoke or abreact through narrative recollection of the traumatic incidences via flashbacks. However painful this might be, it paves for a primary avenue to recovery. As a psychoanalytic clinician and a feminist, Janice Haaken concurs in her paper titled "The Recovery of Memory, Fantasy, and Desire: Feminist Approaches to Sexual Abuse and Psychic Trauma" that psychoanalytic feminists have a special affinity with this model for its emphasis on the preservation of veridical accounts of traumatic events. The model provides a language for articulating the pain and injury of women while maintaining their essential normalcy and rationality (Haaken 1078). In this sense, they can then develop a personal narrative of understanding that allows them to continue with their lives. Judith Lewis Herman concludes in her influential work titled *Trauma and Recovery* that "remembering and telling the

truth about terrible events are prerequisites both for the restoration of the social order and for the healing of individual victims” (qtd.in Caruth 109).

Herman is a notable contemporary feminist and psychiatrist whose aforementioned work has contributed to a body of feminist critique of Freud’s prejudiced etiological findings on women hysteria. According to her, hysteria among women does not emerge from a compulsive desire to be raped and abused as Freud pronounced, but it was a traumatic symptom of sexual abuse and violence. Moreover, Herman acknowledges that, “the hysteria of women and the combat neurosis of men are one” (qtd.in Robson 18). Between 1970 and 1980, before the PTSD was medically acknowledged, a growing interest in women’s liberation concerns has propelled feminist organizations to demand for the recognition of the traumatic consequences of rape, abuse and institutionalization. After the official recognition of PTSD, the researchers discovered that PTSD symptoms experienced by war soldiers were identical to those felt by women who have been confined in asylums (Zetterberg 3). It is further confirmed that institutionalization in mental asylums can trigger PTSD, according to a recent study published by the *Psychological Medicine* journal (Black .para 1).

1.4 Insidious Trauma in the Twentieth-Century Ireland

During the middle of twentieth century, especially the 1960s, which is widely known for the emergence of the women's liberation movement in the western world, there were thousands of Irish women who were stigmatized and confined by society for transgressing from the Irish Catholic moral norms. Grounded in Victorian ideals, which emphasized moderation and chastity, Ireland was throttled by an extreme religious prudery. Furthermore, Catholics desired to assert their moral superiority over their morally corrupt Protestant English colonizers. Under gendered systems of dominance and subordination, women were engineered to be nothing more

than wives and mothers. (McGrath 1). This moral bureaucratic apparatus operated as a bulwark to the state's emerging national identity that was premised on conservative Catholic moral values. Given the omnipresent threat posed to the national Irish identity, women's bodies were deemed problematic according to the Catholic Church perceptions of the feminine sexuality. Their social behavior and sexuality were, hence, subjected under intense scrutiny. Single mothers and their illegitimate children thus constituted a growing threat to the moral fiber of the Irish society

1.4.1 Institutional Confinement of Feminine Sexuality

The Roman Catholic ideology, being a major precept in the construction of such traditional family frameworks and roles, bolstered the Catholic Church of Ireland to set up institutions known as Magdalene Laundries. Magdalene institutions, in fact, stretched out across Europe and North America and operated as psychiatric, residential, industrial, and for-profit institutions. The Irish Magdalene institutions were, however, distinctive in their prolonged lifespan and particularly coercive conditions into the mid-twentieth Century. With hardly any supervision or restrictions from the Irish state, the laundries extensively operated in Ireland from 1922 until the last remaining institution closed in 1996. Governed by the Catholic Church and managed by nuns, these Irish Magdalene Asylums became a place to rehabilitate and redeem "fallen women", those who lost their chastity and fallen from the grace of God (Mercier 32). These institutions were based on the Christian Belief that women could be absolved and saved as Mary Magdalene. It was believed that she had been a prostitute who had forsaken her sexual sins in order to become a virtuous follower of Jesus Christ and a patron saint. In the mindset of religious people, Mary Magdalene, hence, served as an evidence that uncontrolled feminine sexuality could be rectified and remolded into a feminine symbol of sexual purity.

In these Catholic-run asylums, fallen women were condemned to purge their sinful souls by figuratively cleansing the besmirched laundry of Ireland. At the dawn of the twentieth century, an increasingly growing number of women were incarcerated against their will at the hands of their family members or other private individuals, including clergymen; as a consequence of perceived sexual immorality such as adultery, illegitimate pregnancy, rape, and incest (McGrath 5).

1.4.2 Historiography and Remembrance

Over the past two decades, Ireland entered the arena of Memory studies, which is an academic discipline within historiography— which is concerned with the narration and examination of history through palpable evidence as the only basis for understanding the past—, to assess the effect of Irish trauma at both the individual and the societal levels. Contemporary Feminist historiography examines particularly the effect of shaping national identity in the period following Ireland’s independence in forging Catholic perceptions of female sexual morality in ways that were traumatically oppressive for Irish women. Synergistic efforts from a number of historians were exerted to explore the silences and suffering of the past in reference to the Magdalene Laundries. Maria Luddy’s book titled *Women and Philanthropy* (1995) is considered among the earliest inquiries that exposed the abusive system of Magdalene laundries (Sullivan 10). James. M, Smith’s polemical book on the subject, *Ireland’s Magdalen Laundries and the Nation’s Architecture of Containment* (2007), offers a firsthand account of women entering these institutions in the twentieth century. Smith argues that these laundries were operated to enforce Ireland’s national representation. He further levies a direct challenge to the tripartite patriarchy—the Catholic Church, Irish state, and society—to admit its complicity in Ireland's Magdalen ethical injustices and to bid an offset to the female victims and survivors equally (Smith 10).

In spite of the existing documents regarding Magdalene and lunatic asylums and of the nineteenth century, the Catholic ascendancy that controlled these laundries in the twentieth century have retained the official records after 1900. Accordingly, the majority of data about the conditions of those penitentiaries has been collected through personal testimonies. Women in these institutions suffered traumatic conditions and brutal treatment. In many testimonies of these institutions' survivors, there is a palpable sense of oppression. They were not only physically imprisoned, but also spiritually, psychologically and socially. "You didn't know when the next beating was going to come", reported survivor Mary Smith in her oral testimony. She was confined in the Sundays Well laundry in Cork after a rape incident. She was compelled to cut her hair and assume a new name, to symbolize a deprivation of her former identity. She was silenced all the time and was assigned backbreaking tasks in the laundry, where nuns constantly beat her for minor misdemeanors and obliged her to sleep in the cold.

Due to the trauma she passively endured, Smith does not recall precisely how long she spent in Sundays Well. "To me it felt like my lifetime," she recounted. Although Smith managed to reclaim her own personal life, she was affected by the damage that long-term institutionalization can inflict. She recalled, "My body went into shellshock when I went there. When that door closed, my life was over... You see all these women there and you know you're going to end up like them and be psychologically damaged for the rest of your life." (Blakemore para 1-3). Six other survivors reported that the loss of liberty, social isolation and the deprivation of identity had a traumatic impact on them alike. After years of incarceration, most of these elderly women are too institutionalized to return to society. The majority of these women stayed reticent about this traumatic chapter of their past. Unlike survivors of the reformatories and industrial schools, with effort few Magdalen women volunteer to recount their testimony. This

implies that most of them were unable to vindicate themselves from the iniquity that was impinging on them due to the rooted stigma associated with these institutions. This misconception would only feed off sense of culpability, silence, and death (Smith19).

Cinematic documentation took also a major part in breaking silence on such secretive past elided from official records of Irish history. Peter Mullen's 2002 film, *The Magdalene Sisters*, is a modern depiction of the Magdalene Laundries of the mid-twentieth century. Set around 1964, *The Magdalene Sisters* recounts the story of four women who are forcibly incarcerated to a laundry for various reasons regarding their feminine sexuality. The film shines light on their exploitation by the most apparent antagonist which is the Catholic Church itself, particularly personified in the merciless, sadist Sisters of Mercy. Mullan based the film on significant testimonies he received from survivors. His primary motivation for creating the film was to commemorate and recognize the morbid experiences of asylums' victims (McGrath 13).

Conclusion

Trauma theory denotes a resonant interdisciplinary field spreading across psychoanalysis, deconstruction, feminism and postcolonial theory, each mobilizes the concept of trauma according to its own precepts. The incorporation of trauma in feminist psychoanalysis has allowed for a wider representational affinities of trauma and psychotherapy targeting minority groups, women and children. Under Brown's concept of insidious trauma, this chapter also traced the traumatic history of Ireland's reformatory institutions that internalized insidious trauma in its patients' lives. It was silence from the part of traumatized women that facilitated the maintenance of Ireland's romanticized identity. The Institutional abuse of women has contributed to the containment of feminine sexuality critical to the project of post-independence Irish identity. The cases of the Magdalene Laundries and mental asylums elucidates how the

Irish state has configured cultural and religious narratives of gender and permitted a continuous sexist violence toward women formerly incarcerated in asylums. The crucial function of cultural collective memory in constructing these gendered identities is considered in the context of how the circumscription of official records and public silence have expunged the institutionalized women from Ireland's endorsed historical narrative, throwing them in low-profile past.

In addition to the significant contribution of cinema and media, the emergence of historiographical feminist literature that seek to uncover the historical and social injustices towards women within the traumatizing “architecture of confinement” provides a valuable addition and a literary engagement with the history of asylums in Ireland. Critics of contemporary Irish literature remark an unprecedented prevalence of thematic preoccupation with the hidden female wounds of the nation’s past in Irish novels. The inquiry into the Magdalene asylums has urged researchers in Irish historical studies to delve in an equally notorious architecture of confinement casting light on psychiatric asylums whose system was not any better than the laundries. Both the Magdalene laundries and mental hospitals incarcerated women for nuanced reasons other than failing to conform to the moral Catholic conduct. This another gap in Ireland’s history of “coercive confinement” of women is considered a vast terrain for Irish Literary men to excavate the painful secretive history behind the walls of Irish sanitariums and to provide a social commentary in their novels . Such prominent literary voices like Sebastian Barry seems to be absorbed in the recondite Irish twentieth-century history, gendered and insidious trauma of women and art of testimony through skeptical lenses of historical revisionism. His novel *The Secret Scripture* effectively encompasses these focal aspects.

Chapter Two: Trauma and Memory of Institutionalized Women in the Irish Literary

Context

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2.1 Introduction

As was previously demonstrated, trauma's reality becomes so intensely repressive that in the immediate aftermath the victim may totally forget the event and slips it into oblivion.

When the memories of the trauma come back, they remain unspoken and unheard. However, Caruth corroborates the significant role of literature in imparting a voice to traumatized individuals and bear witness to their belated traumatic experiences. Trauma denotes a kind of knowledge that has yet to attain the narrative form that would make it amenable to memory, as Caruth suggests. Hence, theory of trauma spells out an evident endorsement of the commemorative function of literature. The emergence of trauma literature creates a viable means to explore the theme of *trauma* and convey its profound impact on the narrative through various literary techniques that simulate the PTSD symptoms.

Similarly Roger I. Simon regards literature as an excellent testimonial method for raising public consciousness and recognition of personal traumas. Foundational to the significance of literature in dealing with trauma, writing therapy is considered one of the means to promote psychological healing whom James W. Pennebaker has been its leading advocate for the past thirty years or so. Likewise in *The Secret Scripture*, Sebastian Barry, as this chapter expounds, takes on simultaneously the approach of the historical revisionist and empathetic therapist role to deal with the insidious trauma that emerges out of the triad patriarchy: the state, the society and the Catholic Church and is furthermore shrouded in "architectures of confinement", erased from the history of twentieth-century Ireland and even from his own family history.

2.2 A Microscopic Perspective of Unclaimed Women's Experiences of Trauma in the Contemporary Irish Fiction

The historical trajectory of Ireland covering the bouts of reclaiming complete

independence had not only affected the political and social landscapes of the island, but it did also nurture a nationalistic propensity of the then literary scene. With the commencement of the war of independence in 1916, the avant-garde literary men including George Sigerson and W.B. Yeats embarked on pursuing an Irish nationalist representation of the Irish literary identity. Encompassed within the so-called Irish literary Revival/ Renaissance movement, their fiction and poetry epitomized a romanticized catholic Ireland, essentially moral and traditional with the intention to restore the national cultural memory. Grounded in politics and religion, the nationalist discourse, which was strongly manipulated by the Irish state and the Roman Catholic Church, proclaimed Catholic Irishness and abandoned anything British or Protestant. This engendered a conscious exclusion and marginalization of the minorities including Protestants and Catholic unionists ,loyal to the British Crown , who preserved their citizenship in the independent Republic of Ireland. It was a common belief that they were misfit to De Valera's (the first Catholic president of the Republic of Ireland)envisioned post-independent de-Anglicized Ireland .The twentieth-century official history of Ireland has therefore stridently wiped out its disgraceful ,inglorious life stories that haunted the memory of its victims (Curtis 2).

Considering that the first half-twenty-century Irish literature was more or less fueled by this agenda, it fortified the heroic revival of Irish myths, folklore and legends. To set an example, W.B. Yeats' *Easter, 1916* poem mythically commemorates the martyrs of the Easter Rising, an Irish rebellion against the British rule that eventually led to the Irish War of Independence. The poem is layered with allusions of classical mythology such as the winged horse and Pegasus. However, the controversial subjects of women's trauma and institutionalization in particular were unquestionably censored in the Irish literary criticism during the time when institutional abuse and the hegemonic role of the Catholic Church were prevailing in Ireland in the middle of

twentieth century. Notwithstanding, from 1960s onwards, the Irish intellectual community grew more dissatisfied with the Catholic Church's maltreatment and abuse which brought back scenes of traumas in Ireland. This upheaval eventually culminated into a historiographical critique and gave birth to a revisionist movement that became known as historical revisionism (Raw and Tutan 153-154).

Historical revisionism in Ireland is much concerned with the ostracism of nationalist myth making, put in other words: cleansing the recorded history of its Celtic mythological taint. The violence and trauma brought about by the Anglo-Irish war of independence in 1919 has left behind traumatized individuals. In this regard, nationalist narratives exclusively focused on venerating the compatriots who died in that war and in the Easter Rising with portraying their heroic battles and saga surrounded in a mythical aura. However, the nationalist grand narrative would not feature those who died in the independence war for non-patriotic cause. As a reaction, the revisionism, as its namesake implies, appeared to revise the official history of Ireland and create an alternative reinterpretations of history. Oona Frawley notes that these alternative adaptations of Ireland history seek not only to embrace repressed, traumatized individuals who are overshadowed by history and whose cause is deemed less valuable, but also to provide "a sense of release from traumatic and difficult past" (Piatek 158, Sullivan 2).

With the advent of Trauma theory in literature, the era from 1990s onwards witnesses an advanced evolution of Irish trauma fiction that aimed to disclose the traumatic experiences of the twentieth century which were rather neglected from the orthodox official narratives. One of its fundamental objectives is catalyzing a broad reassessment of Ireland's history from multiple perspectives. It revisits episodes of traumatic past and discusses issues of personal trauma and memory, casting light on the question of gender and the role of memory as a force, free from the

burden of nationalism and Irishness question. Emerging as a literary extension of the historical revisionist movement, this expanding body of literature not only revisits “the mythologized versions of historical events against the backdrop of the unknown [personal] past” (Tomczak 23), but it also offers a potential psychotherapy on the level of testimonial narrative of the traumatized characters . Albeit the trauma fiction of much of the late twenty and the twenty-first century bear a blurring distinction, Kathleen Sullivan in *Trauma and Recovery* attempts to draw a clear line between them. Whilst the former is characterized by the mere recognition of individual traumatic experiences and the role of society in inducing them, the latter is more inclined to the narrative representation of healing and liberation from trauma to some measure through infusing innovative literary techniques of retrospection mainly “metanarratives” (Sullivan 3) as well as cowitnessing.

As a postmodern literary device, metanarrative is a self-aware comprehensive story behind a narrative . To put it into the trauma context, self-consciousness of the process of narrating the traumatic experience empowers the traumatized character to break the long stifling silence over his suffering and move toward recovery (Sullivan 5). Incorporating metanarrative in trauma novels would also allow the firsthand engagement with the traumatized persona per se through his first person narration , a process that also facilitates cowitnessing .

One of the hallmarks of Irish trauma fiction is the intersection of the personal and collective memory in a way that the boundary between them is inevitably porous (164). The personal memory of trauma is set against the backdrops of the official national memory that bears an authoritative weight over the veracity of the former , particularly of the Irish traumatized women who have been prejudiced by their own gender . Garratt observes, “the advantage the novelist may have is that in the trauma novel the story is as much about ‘the act of

memory' as it is about the event remembered.”(qtd.in Sullivan 9). Another characteristic is the literary emulation of PTSD symptoms pertaining to the traumatic memory. In the words of Robert F. Garratt in *Trauma and History in the Irish Novel: The Return of the Dead*, “A trauma novel[...]employs a narrative strategy in which a reconstruction of events through [fragmented] memories, flashbacks, dreams, and hauntings is as important as the events themselves” (qtd.in Sullivan 159).

The Irish literary arc from Emma Donoghue’s *Hood* (1995), Roddy Doyle’s *The Woman Who Walked into Doors* (1996), Edna O’Brien’s *Down by the River* (1996), Colum McCann’s *Zoli* (2006), to Sebastian Barry’s *The Secret Scripture* (2008) delineates a comprehensive compendium of contemporary Irish trauma fiction from the mid-1990s into the first decade of the twenty-first century. The aforementioned authors have especially in common a feminist incentive behind validating lost voices of underrepresented traumatized female protagonists in their narratives who suffered insidious trauma from long-lived traumas of loss and grief, sexual abuse, and institutionalization. Each author foregrounds and addresses the issue of traumas vis-à-vis history and memory. However, Sebastian Barry stands out in his adoption of revisionist approach and post-traumatic testimony in dealing with insidious trauma against the background of the Irish history of the twentieth century. The author even takes a brave step to impart the cathartic properties of his main character’s trauma narrative: Roseanne’s “Testimony of Herself”.

2.2.1 Sebastian Barry’s Literary Ethos: The Historical Revisionist, the Trauma Writing Therapist.

Sebastian Barry is a prominent Irish poet, dramatist and novelist. He is well renowned as a postmodern hallmark of Irish trauma fiction and one of Ireland’s finest laureate writers. He

was born into a family whose ancestors belonged to a minority of Catholics that were loyal to the British crown, therefore it is self-explanatory why he adverts his political sympathies with those marginalized in the official history of Ireland in his fiction. Moreover, his oeuvre in the last decade has retained a remarkable preoccupation with Irish twentieth-century history. Roy Foster notes that certain historical themes predominate his fiction: “people left over in the margins and interstices, through religious exclusion, or a change of regime, or a redefinition of loyalty. The connection between allegiance and identity is a recurring theme, as well as the necessity of reconciliation” (qtd.in Mahajan 57). Barry’s most successful and notable works include *The Whereabouts of Eneas McNulty* (1998), *Annie Dunne* (2002), *A Long Long Way* (2005), *On Canaan’s Side* (2011), and *The Secret Scripture* (2008), the latter of which Barry won the 2008 Costa Book of the Year and the James Tait Black Memorial Prize. All of these works are firmly interconnected by intertextuality and recurring themes of memory, trauma and the entangled conflict between official versus personal history.

The critical debate over the acclaimed author’s focus on reviving marginalized lost voices in his works has indubitably posited his historical revisionism subtleties. Scholars like Nicholas Grene and Roy Foster propound the idea that Barry’s plays and novels challenge nationalist narratives of Irish history by giving voice to underrepresented minorities and marginalized figures (Doyle 165). In an interview with John Kenny in 2005, Barry has subtly vented out his espousal of historical revisionism and justified that:

There were people in the past who are not spoken about because the truth about them cannot be admitted to . . . A silence grew up around them. So we have a censored past, censored individuals, and a country whose history is erased. What I have to do to tell a story is accept in my mind that these people survive in me

somewhere, in a corner of the brain, in the heart, wherever, and somehow or other release their stories (Kenny par 2-3).

His own vision of historical revisionism has less to do with politics and more engaged with the recovery of lost voices which has been glossed over by Ireland's grand history (Good 143) .Accordingly, he arguably uses fiction as an instrument of historical revisionism where he scrutinises the less travelled byways of history and "to give a voice to their buffeted, battered but nonetheless enduring victims."(Clark para 6). He furthermore interrogates the credibility of collective and cultural memory, being at face value and in odds with idiosyncratic memory, and challenges the dominant societal narrative of Irish history with personal testimonies of trauma and problematizes whose history would survive.

Barry's novels tend to wash away the purely mythopoeic nationalistic narrative that solely recognizes nationalist heroes , and it rather provides vessels for ephemeral figures of trauma and characters that are merely history leftovers. Chronicled in sequels, his novels are caught up in the twentieth-century Ireland in the most critical traumatic memories of First World War, the Easter Rising, the War of Independence and the Civil War. In hindsight, that century was indeed a century of trauma as Felman propounded, and the twentieth-first century could earn a titular of post-trauma century for Ireland considering the contribution of such Irish authors like Sebastian Barry whose fiction manifests the literary resurrection of traumatized individuals from the ashes of the past.

Another hallmark of his novels is what Kristi Good denominates as "Ancestors Cycle" (153) i.e. the characters are fictionalized representations of his real pedigree whose history has been pushed to the margins, especially from the lineage of his maternal

grandfather , Jack O'Hara whose fictional model is Jack McNulty who appears in the novel *The Whereabouts of Eneas McNulty*. Barry expresses his concern that the turbulent relationships in many Irish families could be the result of repressed stories .“...these silences leave a gap in yourself which then leaves a gap in your children and can ultimately lead to a hole in the country's sense of itself.” (qtd.in Good 153). His ancestors encountered harrowing traumatic events that had been forgotten but also to some extent erased from family memory thereof. To remember them as a micro portion of history was also to recall the macro history of the nation and the lost tissues of that narrative that have tended to be forgotten or occluded (Good 14). Respectively, it resonates enough with the significance of recalling personal trauma as equal to recalling the historical traumas in Barry's novels in incessant attempts to fill in the historical vacuum surrounding Ireland's official records and to bring the subject matter back to public consciousness .

Barry, contrary to what he used in his previous novels, found it most convenient to write *The Secret Scripture* in the first person engaging his traumatized protagonist in the process of writing a testimony as a narrative approach that entails furthermore the potential of psychological healing from trauma . This impulse is theoretically undergirded by two trauma theorists. Judith Lewis Herman's seminal work —entitled *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*—calls attention to one of the contributing factors in recovery from posttraumatic stress disorder which lies in the act of victim's remembrance of the traumatic events and testifying his or her “story”. This idea is parallel to the Freudian's concept of *working through* in the abreactive model of trauma psychotherapy. The traumatized can find a degree of relief from his haunting memories of trauma through engaging in the process of writing his cathartic testimony in

depth and in detail although the trauma survivor's memory and experience are beyond his grasp, as Caruth argues. In this connection, Herman explains that, "Sharing the traumatic experience with others is a precondition for the restitution of a sense of meaningful world [...] the restoration of the breach between the traumatized person and the community depends first, upon public acknowledgment of the traumatic event and, second, upon some form of community action" (Herman 70). This unfolds that unless trauma is brought into cognition and proclaimed through an honest narrative, it will remain an "absence", as Dori Laub describes (Good 115). Along the same line, Judith Butler's account of *traumatic self-narration* underscores the significance of self-narration of traumatic experience by the traumatized and she insists on the coherence of the self narrative as a gateway to the psychotherapeutic potential it carries with (Borg 202).

The process of remembrance starts with the character's describing his life before the occurrence of the traumatic event in order to set the tone for the context within which the specific meaning of trauma could be grasped by readers. It is then followed by the victim's in-depth reconstruction and description of the traumatic occurrence. Not only does the character retell the succession of the events, but s/he also recalls his or her physiological and emotional reactions to the event as it was happening. The psychotherapeutic outcome is what Herman infers "the psychoneurosis induced by terror can apparently be reversed through the use of words" (qtd.in Good 132). The finished produce is a comprehensive narrative wherein the reader follows how the character is changing throughout the novel and reaching recovery.

2.2.2 *The Secret Scripture*: Secret Memoirs of a Woman's Insidious Trauma in Twentieth-Century Ireland

Unlike Barry's precedent novels, *The Secret Scripture* was even more successful and the most awardee of all. It earned The James Tait Black Memorial Prize, the Independent Booksellers Prize, as well as the Bord Gáis Energy Irish Book Awards Novel of the Year. Most impressively, the book won the prestigious Costa Book of the Year award (2009) in the form of a prize of £25,000 cheque (Good162). The panel of judges were amused by the character of Roseanne. Matthew Parris, the Chair of Judges for the award, commented on Barry's win:

Everybody thought that Roseanne, the 100-year-old, Irish inmate of a mental institution in Roscommon, was such a transcendent voice that it burst through; it was one of the great narrative voices that any of us can remember, and that was what won it, I think, for *The Secret Scripture* (Watersones 0:57-1:17)

From the other hand, Parris has vented his dissatisfaction with and objection to the novel's ending stating that "almost no one liked the ending, which was almost fatal to its success" (Higgins). Harney-Mahajan notes too that the plot twist was melodramatic and implausible (55). In his critical appraisal on the novel, Joseph O'Connor, an imminent Irish novelist expressed his good impression by the aesthetic lyricism that garnishes the narrative. He illustrated his viewpoint with a poetic line from the novel which describes the persona of Fr Gaunt; quoting "blacker than old tea" (Barry 34) and "cleaner than the daylight moon" (ibid 37, O'Connor).

In most of Barry's canon war appears to be the most obvious traumatic event, in *The Secret Scripture*; nonetheless, trauma arises out of other factors, more or less came up as byproduct of theocratic patriarchy, that worked on engraving profound psychological trauma on its main protagonist, Roseanne Clear. The character is a shadowy figure drawn from one of Barry's family members whom he only had snippets of information about her. She is loosely

inspired by Barry's nameless, great uncle's first wife who had been unjustly indicted of infidelity and the murder of her baby and was eventually incarcerated in Sligo lunatic asylum against her will. What is only recalled from his family memory about her is that she had been considered "no good" and her perceived sin had been her "beauty" (qtd.in Mahajan 58).

The title adds a further thematic and intertextual significance as it suggests the secret writings of marginalized figures like Roseanne McNulty. The novel's title is eponymously lifted from the final line of a first World War sonnet by Thomas Michael Kettle, an Irish journalist, fledgling politician and soldier. Entitled "To My Daughter Betty, The Gift of God", the sonnet was penned days before he died fighting for England in the First World War in 1916:

Know that we fools, now with the foolish dead,

Died not for flag, nor crown, nor emperor,—

But for a dream, born in a herdsman's shed,

And for the Secret Scripture of the poor (Craig para 2).

According to the nationalist mainstream chronicle, men like him were characterized as traitorous for taking the side of their nemesis. He confuted this allegation by stating that he fought not for the crown but for his own cause "secret scripture", taking into account that the living conditions during war time were poverty-stricken in Ireland ;hence, participation in the war offered immediate financial relief and potential for social and economic advancement for the soldiers . Therefore, he sought to write to his child a counter version of what was established in the Irish nationalist grand narrative that denigrated such figures him . His unpopular story comparably echoes in the secret scripture of Roseanne who desired to vindicate herself from the shackles of unfounded accusations levied by her society that subsequently led to her confinement and trauma (Mccarthy17).

The novel is synchronously published with the heightened ongoing debate regarding the public obligation to lay bare the societal abuses that were going inside the mental asylums and Magdalene laundries where “fallen women” were undesirable elements, unworthy of hearth life within Irish society. In many respects, the book resonates with a streak of feminist commentary on the powerful patriarchal exploitation of psychiatry as a rationale to constrain the power of feminine sexuality. In addition, the novel implicitly addresses the Irish society to negotiate and redress the traumatic legacy of such institutions upon its victims and to seek strategies to move ahead prolifically. Therefore it is not surprising that Barry believes his authorial duty is to speak for those who cannot speak for themselves and to offer a literary reckoning of the asylum victims within Ireland. Albeit *The Secret Scripture* is a work of fiction, it carries a socio-historical verisimilitude and a reminder to the realities of women like Roseanne who did not survive “Ireland’s architecture of containment, or did not live to see the day when survivors began to speak out about their experiences” (qtd.in Mahajan 60).

The Secret Scripture is set in the Irish county of Sligo, a real place in the independent Ireland, within the time span between 1920s up until the present-day of the novel (around 2007), roughly corresponding to that of Barry’s debut novel *The Whereabouts of Eneas McNulty* (1998), wherein Roseanne made a brief but memorable appearance. The novel is divided into three title-less parts. The narrative voice of the novel is polyvocal; Roseanne’s and Dr. Green’s self-enclosed narratives work in tandem in alternating chapters, yet they sometimes flatly contradict each other. The aged Roseanne, the traumatized female protagonist, is a centenarian inmate at the Roscommon Regional Mental Hospital where she is wrongly institutionalized for social rather than medical reasons and to which has been consigned for upwards of fifty years – since 1957. Now approaching the end of her hundred-year-long life, she decides to voice her own

testimony about the suppression and trauma that was inflicted upon her in order to catalyze a move toward recovery and liberation from the stifling silences of the past to certain degree. She chooses to self-consciously unravel her traumatic memories and compile them in a secret journal composed of stolen unwanted papers under the title “Roseanne’s Testimony of Herself” that she tucks it away under a loosened floor-board of her room.

In so doing, she struggles to leave an account of “some kind of brittle and honest-minded history” of herself (Barry 5). From a revisionist standpoint, this may well reflect the challenging task of penning a feminine-oriented version of Irish history before and during the twentieth century, a time when the dominant thought pattern perceived the female voice a taboo to all intents and purposes. Therefore, Roseanne’s own history is not only a memoir, but also an illustration of anti-heroic and distorted social ethos in the country. All the while, Roseanne’s struggle to sew the details of her personal narrative is encumbered by her ageing memory being in the grips of PTSD . In many instances, she displays disassociation and amnesia whereof leading her to conflate between real events and fantasy, and this would propel the reader to question her reliability as a narrator . While carrying out her task, her overseer psychiatrist Dr. William Grene attempts to write a formal assessment titled “Dr.Grene’s Commonplace Book”. He attempts to reconstruct the story of Roseanne out of official depositions and old medical documents. His mission includes interrogating Roseanne, who shows reticence and reluctance in answering his questions, and ferreting out into the grounds of her original admittance to the Roscommon Regional Mental Hospital where she has been a resident for several decades and to the Sligo Mental Hospital years before that.

The prime reason for Grene’s sessional interrogations is to perform a medical assessment of Roseanne’s mental state upon which he decides whether Roseanne is qualified enough to

leave the old Roscommon Regional Mental Hospital ,that is on the verge of collapse, and face the community or she is to be transferred to the newly built Bedlam. Grene nevertheless goes off on the tangent to share his personal story which was engulfed by grief over the death of his wife, Bet. In the midst of his quest to find his patient's "true history" (127), the psychiatrist retrieves an official deposition from Sligo Mental Hospital written by the local Catholic parish priest, Fr. Gaunt. The document contains an adversarial account of Roseanne's personal history in which he recognizes her case to be "pernicious and chronic nymphomania" and is declared mentally incompetent (Barry 224). In the novel's denouement, Dr .Grene's lengthy and earnest search into Roseanne's past leads him to uncover that he is in fact the long lost son of Roseanne who was given up to adoption by Fr. Gaunt to a Catholic family.

To outline the events leading up to her lengthy incarceration, she recounts her traumatic youth in the late 1920s and early 1930s when she was miserably orphaned as a teenager by her father's brutal murder and her mother's mental collapse that subsequently had her institutionalized in a lunatic asylum in Sligo county. The 16-year-old Roseanne is then left to the dubious mercy of the potent Catholic priest, Father Gaunt, who inveigles her to convert from Presbyterianism to Catholicism and to marry a much older Catholic man, but she stubbornly turned down all of his offers. As soon as she turns toward an independent life through working as a barista; she falls in love with and marries Catholic Tom McNulty, Eneas' younger brother, but remains unconverted. Not been long married when a gaggle of holy men including Father Gaunt see her walking out with an Irish Republican named John Lavelle, who years prior saved her from an attempted rape, following her father's dubious death, and then disappeared from Sligo. Father Gaunt earnestly condemns her indiscretion for her supposed sexual misdemeanors and he officially classifies her as nymphomaniac .He arranges for her to be

confined in a corrugated-iron hut by the beach in Strandhill, where she is sequestered from society for approximately a decade, and for her marriage to be officially revoked posthaste as it never happened according to the Catholic decree (Barry 231).

Years later, Roseanne encounters her erstwhile brother-in-law, Eneas McNulty during one of his brief returns to Ireland in the early 1940s after his short martial involvement in the Battle of Dunkirk in France. The two outlanders find consolation in each other and spend one night together before Eneas must leave Ireland once more. The consequence of this one night of intimacy becomes evident nine months later when Roseanne, under the labor pangs, makes her way to her former mother-in-law's home to seek succor. Mr. and Mrs. McNulty turn her plea away, and a bereft Roseanne must deliver the baby herself on the beach in the middle of a rainstorm. When she awakens, the baby is missing, and she is being lifted up to the hospital by an ambulance. Father Gaunt presumes that Roseanne killed her child and, with the corroboration of Tom's parents, arranges for her to be lifelong institutionalized in the Sligo Mental Hospital on the grounds of a doctored testimony of nymphomania and madness (Barry 257).

In the swirl of gendered trauma and memory, politics takes an intermediate theme in the novel coloring Barry's portrayal of Irish history. It is taken as a truism that the political contention involves Protestant Unionists versus Catholic nationalists from a biased standpoint by the author that produced a critical controversy. This binary opposition mirrors the clash between the minority's idiosyncratic versions of history (as reflected in Protestant Roseanne's narrative) and the official national history (as represented by Dr. Grene's medical documents and the committing report of Fr Gaunt). Roseanne's father, Joseph Clear, happened to be a secret police sergeant in the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) (which was under the authority of the British administration in Ireland), an important fact that Roseanne never divulges in her own account. At

a later point in the novel, he is tragically murdered by some members of the national Irish Republican Army (IRA) for his disloyalty to De Valera's nationalist agenda. In dealing with the political sidepiece, Barry opts for a revisionist approach through which he reverses the binary of good and bad. Contrary to what was depicted in the nationalist mainstream, in *The Secret Scripture* the Protestant loyalists are portrayed as good and innocents, and they fall victims of the bad oppressive Catholic Church and De Valera's privileges of Catholicism. Some critics including Elizabeth Cullingford have accused Barry of his political bias in distorting historical facts and "sanitizing the image of unionists" (Qtd.in Piatek 90).

Conclusion

Sebastian Barry's choice of historical revisionist approach tends to converge astutely with the nature of the thematic circle of *The Secret Scripture* which fell outside the purview of documented history and was typically overlooked in the literary criticism back in the twentieth century. His overarching mission includes not only a feminist reconsideration of the literary articulation of women's experiences of traumatic persecution and marginalization under the grips of theocratic patriarchy, but it entails also the very act of telling their traumatic experiences as a step toward recovery at the personal level and to be registered on the national scale.

It is further inferred that Barry's literary mission parallels with that of some of *Irish memory studies* prominent scholars' like James. M, Smith, Mary McAuliffe and Liz Gillis on the premise that they took a commendable part in the intellectual sphere to bring traumatized women ,who involved in the in the 1916 Easter Rising , back to their rightful place in Ireland's official history. Correspondingly Barry contributes also in examining the patriarchal abuse of psychiatry to confine the morally fallen women like Roseanne .*The Secret Scripture* as a whole echoes the tone of strong delineations of historiographical fiction in the sense that it tackles the underlying

history of women's insidious trauma vis-à-vis the somewhat psychologically evasive Irish history of the twentieth century. Hence, this research academically supplements their efforts by bringing into focus the personal experiences of marginalized women via their own testimonies of trauma, and it is the foregrounded female voice of Roseanne in *The Secret Scripture* that this research's analytical treatment will hone in the subsequent chapter.

Chapter Three: A Feminist-Psychoanalysis of the Narrative Representation of Insidious Trauma and Recovery in Sebastian Barry’s *The Secret Scripture*

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3.1 Introduction

Whilst it is true that *The Secret Scripture* belongs to trauma fiction, it is also regarded by some researchers like Freiburg Rudolf a semi-autobiographical novel with attributes to real characters and stories taken from Barry's family. The novelist; however, breaks the conventional traits of an autobiography or a memoir as a linear form of writing especially when dealing with a psychological phenomenon of a fragmentary nature like trauma. The main protagonist, Roseanne hoped to forget the traumatic past and adhere to silence. This hope has proven to be farfetched, requiring an immediate confrontation with the trauma of the past; hence taking an action to pen her secret memoir in the form of a testimony was more than a necessity. This research identifies Roseanne's testimony as post-traumatic for her traumatic past continues to exert a devastating impact on her present, and the optimal way to wake up from the haunting past is to narrate one's own adaptation of it. This analytical study goes beyond merely investigating mimetic narrative representation of the insidious trauma of Roseanne, to reflecting on gendered trauma against the broad background of Irish history and memory, and to finally detecting the potential healing properties imbedded in her post-traumatic narrative, these of which demarcate the scope of this research.

Using a feminist-psychoanalysis approach and theoretical underpinnings of trauma, the main objective of this chapter is to uncover the reality of insidious trauma as a consequence of gendered oppression against women in the twentieth-century Ireland and its long-lasting effects on their psyche in particular and social life and identity in general. Therefore, the study adapts to Brown's concept "the insidious trauma" and gendered trauma interchangeably. Although this analytical part focuses essentially on Roseanne's post-traumatic testimony as a unit of analysis ,

Greene's "Commonplace Book" narrative provides a broader spectrum for analysis in that it gives a balancing contrast and comparison and adds more illustration and reflections on the question of the reliability of Roseanne's traumatic memory and its opponent, official memory as approved in the form of official documents of the antagonist, Fr Gaunt.

3.2 Insidious Trauma, Memory and Recovery in Roseanne's Post-Traumatic Testimony

As pointed out in chapter one, trauma crops up from shards of shocks that knock out the mind mechanisms and tear down the tissues of memory. As an aftermath of trauma, the traumatized suffers from major PTSD disruptions in time and memory: latency and a fractured traumatic memory. *The Secret Scripture* conveys a detailed insight into the psychology of Roseanne of the trauma she suffered, shedding light on the two mentioned hallmarks of trauma as characteristics to her case. The novel offers a new direction of gendered trauma through historical revisionist undertones that lurk behind the critical discourse of history and reliability of personal and official narrative. In the light of the themes of patriarchal persecution against non-Catholic women in Ireland, insidious trauma and recovery, this study analyses the traumatic memory workings of Roseanne Clear reflected in her post-traumatic testimony as well as the ways it can be psychologically curative.

3.2.1 The Identification of Roseanne's Trauma and its Root Cause

Apart from the trauma of Roseanne father's death and her mother's insanity, she falls a victim of other piled up traumas. Not only did she endured persecution by the Catholic priest Fr Gaunt who succeeded in alienating her from her society and from her illegitimate baby and confining her to a mental asylum for life, she has also endured physical abuse and maltreatment there that exacerbated her psychological condition. Drawing on Brown's feminist psychiatrist

concept of “Insidious trauma” which describes the hitherto unacknowledged traumatic effects of oppression experienced by ranges of minorities such as sexually objectified women that do harm to their soul and spirit, this study hence associates the insidious trauma of Roseanne vicariously with her wounded psyche (spirit). The decades-old complex traumas of Catholic persecution, loss, institutionalization and grief with their roots in the Catholic bigotry and social ostracism toward the feminine sexuality and Presbyterianism, certainly engraved a deep wound in her psyche, which by and large impaired her memory.

The supposedly benevolent aims behind the Irish mental institutions is for the “healthful asylum and superior correction of wounded seats of thought” (Barry 14) as Dr. Grene professes, while this thrust is evidently discordant with the apparent impact of institutionalization on inmates like Roseanne. Not to mention the deplorable, dehumanizing conditions in the timeworn psychiatric hospital that Grene himself is ashamed to admit: “The rooms have gone beyond the beyonds, with the ceilings endangered, horrible swathes of dampness up the walls. Anything iron, such as bedsteads, rusts away” (44); with a degree of disillusionment, he lays bare one of the most dreadful regressions of the Irish asylums in the first part of the last century. The ongoing process of the rectification of fallen, supposedly nymphomaniac women includes undergoing clitoridectomies, immersions, and injections whose thrust is curtailing the potent threat of feminine sexuality and the female reproductive genitalia. He evinces his serious concern that “she suffered in some way at the hands of her ‘nurses’” (117). Roseanne acknowledges, from the other hand, the impact of many years of oppression in lunatic asylums, “the heart and the soul are both filthied up by residence here [Roscommon mental hospital], interrogating how she can shy away from such harrowing experiences that target first and

foremost her allegedly irrational sexuality and her religious affiliation as well.

Roseanne is only remanded in the mental hospital based on Fr Gaunt's allegation of transgressing the sexual morals imposed on women during the time frame the novel set in (the first half of the twentieth century), after her outdoor meeting with John Lavelle which Fr Gaunt interpreted as a perceived act of adultery. However, the accusation is deemed reasonable given Roseanne's outright adultery affair with her former brother in law, which resulted in an illegitimate child. But the priest's inflammatory indictments against Roseanne do not end here. The deposition falsely states that, having a child out of marriage institution, Roseanne "kills it" (Barry 231). This claim is bluntly confuted in the course of *The Secret Scripture*. It discloses that Roseanne's child was actually stolen from her and given up for adoption, owing to the complicity of Fr Gaunt and her heartless former mother in law Mrs. McNulty, and doctor Grene turns out to be her missing child.

In keeping up with feminist standpoint regarding gendered trauma, Roseanne is a victim of the local priest's gendered bigotry toward her basic femininity; the priest whom the psychiatrist perceives as a "man who 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." (136). His hatred of women and the sexuality of women is legible, and it resonates with what Linda Hogan has pinpointed within the new Catholic Ireland as a "theology of sexuality" (654). Father Gaunt, who consigns her to the asylum following her delivery, gestures toward the Pastoral tutelage over the fate of a non-Catholic woman:

If you had followed my advice, Roseanne, some years ago, and put

your faith in the true religion, if you had behaved with the beautiful decorum of a Catholic wife, you would not be facing these difficulties. But I do appreciate that you are not entirely responsible. Nymphomania is of course by definition a madness. An affliction possibly, but primarily a madness, with its roots possibly in a physical cause. (p. 223)

Dr. Grene, too, signals the truth that patients were in some cases “sectioned for social rather than medical reasons . . . Because I am not so great a fool as to think that all the ‘lunatics’ in here are mad” (16). He realizes that Fr Gaunt’s anatomization of Roseanne’s sexuality and diagnosing her as a nymphomaniac is morally questionable to read today partly because of the outmoded repressive moral conduct of the Catholic church that considered the asylums as an agency of social control back in the twentieth century, as a part enmeshed in De Valera’s identity formation project in the independent Ireland . There is no evidence, by all means, in Roseanne’s own traumatic memory of nymphomania signs nor in her overall attitudes . Not only has he loathed her for the perceived menace she presents to men, as her beauty and physical attractiveness induces a “mournful temptation”(Barry 94) for men of Sligo , he has also held a grudge for refusing his offer to convert to Catholicism as he regards her Protestantism as a “primal evil in itself” (230), she is thus twice socially disempowered.

After all these decades of gendered oppression, trauma has been so internalized in Roseanne’s subconscious that it became a quintessence in her character, rendering her, as a ‘thing left over’, a ‘remnant woman’ (4), completely denied of presence . As she struggles in her mental cage, the intrinsic dialectic of her insidious trauma is “the conflict between the will to deny horrible events and the will to proclaim them aloud” (Herman 1) ,to borrow Judith

Herman's phrasing. From one hand, she initially resorted to the 'virtue' of silence since she is forever solitary and forgotten among the shadows (Barry 30), and even no one knows she has a story (4). From the other side, her ineffable memories push a way out from which ensue inexplicable and compulsive behaviors, taking the form of a compulsive action to voice them out. The task of telling her testimony is thus her sanctuary to be heard and have a being and everlasting presence, marking a resurgence of a forgotten vulnerable woman whose secrets are her "fortune and [her] sanity" (23). According to the authors of *Madness in Post-1945 British and American Fiction*, *The Secret Scripture* highlights the common compulsive attitude of the traumatized subject for self-narration, that is, Roseanne feels the exigency to construct her own adaptation of history so as to undercut any future injustices especially by those in power and to assume her sense of being (Baker 71-72). The analysis presented in this research adds that it is this very compulsive need for self-narration, which Roseanne metanarratively embarks on, is potentially cathartic and curative.

3.2.2 Discerning the Narrative Representation of the Fragmented Nature of Roseanne's Traumatic Memory

In terms of her psychological identity, cognition, and memory, Roseanne's traumatic experiences have had a profound psychological impact on them. Her experiences cannot be recorded in straightforward, logical and linear narrative because they were too shattering to be thus thoroughly articulated and due to the flashbacks and iterations, some of hallmarks of PTSD that spring out amidst her remembrance process. The structure of the narrative hence foregrounds the enormity of the trauma pertaining to its PTSD psychological symptoms including loss of memory, flashbacks of persistent memories of the event, fear, confusion and a

profound sense of shame. According to LaCapra , traumatic memory “may involve distortion, disguise and other permutations relating to . . . narrative shaping”, and these premises rightly reflect the nature of Roseanne Clear McNulty’s traumatic memory, which in turn affected her post-traumatic testimony and created a recurring sense of absence . Throughout *The Secret Scripture*, Roseanne’s narrative memory is riddled with omissions, contradictions, uncertainties, amnesia and denial, hence making “trauma *of* the text” mimicking “trauma *in* the text” , to borrow Piatek’s terms (Piatek 126) .

A few illustrations will serve. During an early section of Roseanne’s narrative when John Kane, a Roscommon Mental Hospital’s janitor, suddenly asks her name though they have known each other for decades, she answered in a sheer panic “I don’t know. . . I know it. I forget it” (Barry 33). Such oxymoronic statement offers a clear reflection of a fragmented traumatic memory, and it also suggests that what she knows assumes a symmetric proportion of what she forgets . No longer certain who she is, Roseanne represents a peculiar case of the powerful implication of trauma on one’s identity. The psychological interpretation of her amnesia suggests that perhaps when the traumas had riven Roseanne’s memory into what the trauma theorists, Freud and Janet propounds as split-off consciousness where the details of the traumatic events that she endured are tucked in the alternative cognizance and are triggered by an act of latency. Thereby, some occurrences that she witnesses and struggles to remember were completely elided from her traumatic memory. Apropos with the point of dissociation is considering that the author designates the title of Roseanne’s testimony not in the first person narration (though her narrative is written in the first -person voice) , rather referred in the third person as “Roseanne’s Testimony of *Herself*”. This reveals the Freudian nuance of inherent trauma “dissociation” or

“double consciousness”, that is, her alteration in consciousness that establishes a separate traumatic identity from the get-go .

Moreover, if we are to numerate the incidents when Roseanne pronounces the inability to recollect certain details in her past; there is an estimation of seventeen plain answers with “I don’t Know” and seven retrospective replies with “I can’t remember”. Even more so, the psychiatrist Dr Grene’s first assessment of Roseanne identified her memory as traumatic after she explained, “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”(101), for all this implies how evident her memory workings are especially to professional medical eyes.

For the reminder, she strives for accuracy and honesty with the reader “for dearly I would love now to leave a kind of brittle and honest-minded history of myself”(4), she writes. For sincerity and accuracy are conditional to her testimony to acquire legitimacy, she urges herself to be clear and insists , in an injunction tone “[to] be sure I know what I am saying to you. There must be accuracy and rightness now !”. (31) In a paradoxical move, she once resorted to lying to Dr Grene as a self-protective mechanism. Out of the seventeenth answers, she concedes with great equanimity that one response is an utter lie ;“No”(26) she replies when Dr.Grene asks if she remembers the circumstances leading to her incarceration . This disclaimer echoes with trauma theorist , Dominick LaCapra’s claim that such missteps cannot entirely invalidate the testimony, it nonetheless captures the spirit of a traumatic deranged memory. He asked the same question again the next time and Roseanne was under duress to recollect particulars of her admittance in Sligo mental hospital ,and what she could hardly uncover was the

original name of the mental hospital , “The Leitrim Hotel” they called it (100), but she chose to work the memories of her incarceration out in details in her written testimony.

After sixty-five years of institutional confinement in various asylums, Roseanne starts to remember, write, and share her tragic story, the point at which the Freudian stage of post-traumatic latency is activated . As Freud argued, this temporal delay is through which the traumatic past is available in the memory only by a belated act of understanding ,which explains why it took Roseanne a long period to consciously recollect her painful shattered past. Interestingly enough, she becomes self-conscious about the problematic pschyo-affective condition of her own memory:

I must admit there are ‘memories’ in my head that are curious even to me. . .It makes me a little dizzy to contemplate the possibility that everything I remember may not be – may not be *real*, I suppose. There was so much turmoil at that time that – that what? I took refuge in other impossible histories, in dreams, in fantasies? I don’t know (201).

At such revelations, Roseanne is fully aware of the inconsistency of her memories. She realizes that “people, as authors of their own stories, can hold up a wall made of imaginary bricks and mortar against the horrors and cruel, dark tricks of time” (3-4) . All these observations indicate that when Roseanne finds it too painful or repressive to remember atrocious occurrences, she would rather indulge in euphemistic fantasy pursuits as a coping mechanism. This also explains the significant incompleteness in her narrative that rather were supplied by Dr Grene’s synopsis of Father Gaunt’s account. Researcher Rudolf Freiburg devotes a section in his research paper that touches on the theme of historical trauma in the novel , stating that when the imagination of a traumatized mind permeates the memory and transfigure its records, the art of

trauma is likely to arise (Freiburg 72).

Probably the most illustrative and haunting specimen of the conflation between reality and imagination at play is the experiment with hammers and feathers that Roseanne witnessed with her father. In the early fragment of her account, Roseanne recalls a scientific experiment, which involved her father dropping some feathers and hammers from a window in a cemetery tower whereof her father used to work as a superintendent. As she remembers it, the experiment was of an ambiguous nature; it is not quite clear what it supposed to set up. When her father stood by the tower's windows and threw the hammers and feathers he called her out to tell him what she sees from below, she ambiguously shared a rather hypothetical, sort of poetic style of expression that mounts up to figment:

Standing on the ground I was a child on a precipice, that was the feeling, like that scene in the old play *King Lear* where the king's friend imagines he is falling down a beetling cliff, where there is no cliff, so that when you read it, you also think there is a cliff, and fall with the king's friend. . . Maybe I heard a curious music. I peered up faithfully, faithfully, lovingly, lovingly[. . .]I am standing there, eternally, straining to see, a crick in the back of my neck, peering and straining, if for no other reason than for love of him. The feathers are drifting away, drifting, swirling away [. . .]

My heart is beating back to him. The hammers are falling . . . (Barry 20-22).

She remembers this traumatic incident as reminiscent, at some point, of the fictional *King Lear* when she insinuates the falling of hammers on her. Fiction in this case, has an ability to house the stories of those that history blanks out. In spite of choosing as an unreliable example as a literary imagery to fill and mitigate the fissures in her memory, she applies to

belief “faithfully, faithfully” to compound truth to her account. More importantly, this self-reflexive description foretells what the novel eventually uncovers, the secret that not even her secret testimony mentions (given its traumatic nature, it possibly maintained secret from even Roseanne herself, and is what Derrida labels an “unexperienced experience”) (Qtd.in McCarthy 34). It was Father Gaunt who revealed the allegedly ‘official’ yet considerably different version of this memory in the official record that he compiled for the mental hospital. It points out one of the traumatic episodes in which Roseanne’s father was roughed up with hammers in front of her by members of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in a flagrant attempt to execute him.

The backstory, as reported by Fr Gaunt’s deposition and some authentic documents is that Fr Gaunt himself had Roseanne’s father abducted and murdered by the IRA members and branding him a traitor for taking the side of the wrong kind of people (that is, RIC). It was the first failed attempt to finish him inside the cemetery tower where they stuffed his mouth with feathers and beat him up with hammers . Young Roseanne witnessed the incident from the limits of her perspective i.e., the angle of parallax is beneath the tower, and was knocked out by a falling hammer , which her memory captured but rather softens it into a scene like “. . . a crick in the back of my neck, peering and straining, if for no other reason than for love of him . . .” (Barry 22). The head blow as well as the shock cordoned off Roseanne’s memory from storing the complete image of the event, yet she returns to the memory of feathers and hammers repeatedly through various flashbacks , signaled by incontrovertible gaps and disparity. She consciously recalls these disputable memories specifically when evoked by some equally-violent stimuli.

The first instance is induced by her thinking of IRA soldiers’ experiences with

aggression and bloodshed, when she offers a disclosure aside: “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*” (53). In a second instance, as she tries to explain the obliterated, bitter past of her paternal ancestors, she mentions that her grandfather “thought of the Protestant religion as an instrument *as soft as a feather transformed into hammer* by the old dispensation, and used to *batter the heads* of those that labored to live in Ireland” (62). In the third instance, near the end of her testimony, she contemplates over the human attitude toward grief, sharing a philosophical conjuncture that “If our suffering is great on account of that, yet at close of day the gift of life is something immense. Something larger than old Sligo mountains, something difficult but oddly bright, that makes equal in their *fall the hammers and the feathers*”(268).

It is worth noting that the trope of feathers and hammers is accompanied with metaphors and simile, which bespeaks the involvement of the imagination element in her narrative. This trauma trope indicates a typical expression of the compulsive need to call forth some cracks of a certain traumatic event and try to narrativize them. In *Trauma and Recovery*, Researcher Sullivan avers that such instances determine the dynamics of the subconscious mind in unveiling repressed traumatic memories that Roseanne has striven to bypass. This repression is aligned with trauma theorist Cathy Caruth’s perception of a fragmented traumatic memory as “a history that [the traumatized] cannot entirely process.”(Qtd in Sullivan 80). Roseanne could not cope with the harrowing tragedy of her father’s murder, so her memory transformed the act of killing into suicide. The euphemistic nature of this paradoxical metamorphosis showcases the abreactive method of the traumatic memory’s self-healing aspect, a point to which we return later.

Trauma continues to influence the progress of Roseanne's condition through her engrained sense of inhibition carried with shame that ultimately renders the notion of freedom problematic to her, which is a common post-traumatic reaction. In talking with Dr. Grene, Roseanne is overwhelmed with an accumulation of shame of what she had experienced in the past, despite she has evidently been a victim. She expresses her low self-worth, lamenting: "Violently ashamed. . . Painful, painful shame"(Barry 80) . "A part of me yearned to help him. . . But .The rats of shame bursting through the wall I have constructed with infinite care over the years and milling about in my lap, was what it felt like. That was my job to hide it then, hide those wretched rats" (ibid).Since the mental hospital in Roscommon is to be soon demolished and the patients are due to be either transferred to the new hospital , or to be sent out to the society, the thought that a traumatized centenarian with no home or family to look after her , and who has spent most of her life in a "buried exile"(300) may be deserving her freedom and release is indeed quite appalling (Piatek 107).

Dr Grene agrees about this prospect too, considering "creatures so long kenneled [*sic*] and confined find freedom and release very problematic attainments, like those eastern European countries after communism" (Barry 16). Similarly, he feels a weird reluctance and anxiety to have his patients released, wondering how they can stand on their feet all by themselves .The authors of *Madness in Post-1945 British and American Fiction* suggest a similar reading noting that , as Roseanne records her life story; she has remained silent for good that when she decided to talk about her potential release from the asylum , she is overcome by profound shame and sort of guilt. (Baker 72). The American psychiatrist Judith Lewis Herman explains this kind of post-trauma reaction is bound up with fear from the public judgments on the traumatized ,

stating “the survivor’s shame and guilt may be exacerbated by the harsh judgment of others” (Herman 50).

3.2.3 The Conflict of Unreliability: Post-Traumatic Testimony of Roseanne Versus Fr Gaunt’s Deposition and Dr Grene’s “Commonplace Book”

The novel alludes to the question of whose account bears veracity and given more credence, which fundamentally calls the notions of *history* and *truth* into question. Roseanne has experienced the unreliability of history as her own post-traumatic testimony of the events that led up to her father’s torture and later his death whose background differ drastically from the version recorded in various so-called official documents, such of the priest. From one hand, Roseanne recognizes that the authoritative version of her history surmounts hers, for she knows “[her] own story . . . is always told against [her], even what [she] herself is writing here, because she has no heroic history to offer” (Barry 55). Her statement exemplifies the holier-than-thou approach of the grand national narrative in overshadowing any individual adaptation of Irish history. Her initial willingness to accept the predominance of official history over hers and having learned that silence is “the greatest virtue” (30) mirror her insidious trauma and vulnerability as well. In this respect, Barry’s *The Secret Scripture* employs Roseanne’s post-traumatic testimony to feature all those women silenced and marginalized by Irish history; the overriding of her narrative by Father Gaunt’s authoritative version reflects the experience of many victims alike in Irish history.

Beata Piątek in “History, Memory, Trauma in Contemporary British and Irish Fiction” wrote an analysis on Roseanne’s engagement in a basic postmodern historiographical debate emphasizing her historical revisionist interrogation of the problematic nature of history regarding

its credibility (Piątek 108). History, Roseanne defines, “is not the arrangement of what happens, in sequence and in truth, but a fabulous arrangement of surmises and guesses held up as a banner against the assault of withering truth”(Barry 55). Here, Roseanne refers to the subjectivity of history spawning from undetermined surmises, often societally influenced rather than the rigorous recording of factual truths .Equally significant, it is an almost Pyrrhian thought that she recognizes even truth may not hold up to scrutiny ,for “no one has monopoly on truth” (134), therefore truth , from her point of view , is idiosyncratic. Apart from the example of the contested memory of her father’s attempted murder in the tower, she recalls one night, that she was an eyewitness to, when her father had to secretly bury one of the RIC rebels in the presence of Fr Gaunt. There were different versions of the incident which all fall into the *grand récits* (i.e., grand narrative) of Irish history that did not fit her memory (54). Further on, Fr Gaunt’s deposition contains intentional lies about Roseanne’s ‘troubled’ sexuality and the levied accusations of nymphomania and madness . This presents another evidence of the deliberate manipulation of the official Irish historiography to justify the institutional confinement of those at margins like Roseanne at the expense of their freedom and dignity .It is enough of a reason to subject the Irish official history— a history filled with myths and prejudices, to unrelenting examination and historiographical critique.

“I am trying to be faithful to what is in my head”(201).Contrary to the astute priest, Roseanne does not purposefully distort her memories neither does she deliberately manipulate them. Insidious trauma is the underlying manipulator of her whole psyche, including her memory mechanism which she hopes “it is trying also to be as faithful to me” (ibid) .Along with the same interpretation, Trista Dawn Doyle, in her doctoral thesis titled *Insidious Vulnerability: Women's*

Grief and Trauma in Modern and Contemporary Irish Fiction, affirms that it is not that Roseanne tries to deceive readers; rather, the psychological implications of PTSD deceive her (Doyle 167). Roseanne's account, at its face value, is warped by the old age and the perceivable inconsistencies of her traumatic memories, as previously demonstrated. The psychic trauma implications upon her psyche and memory are beyond her control, yet she surprises the reader with a steadfast resilience to be the author of herself and to exhibit her conviction in the truthfulness of her own story. More importantly, it turns out she tells a heroic story despite being fraught with the challenging priest's deposition of her, in addition to her "imaginings", which she suggests is a "nice sort of word for catastrophe and delusion" (Barry 219) that ensue from the trauma within. Her act of voicing her own testimony serves as a kind of an affront counter discourse to the authorized version of her history due to the honest intention behind penning her account.

Based on the earlier findings regarding the dilemma with the apocryphal nature of Irish history and Roseanne's fractured memory, the reliability of the two conflicting histories should better pertain to the criterion of a painstakingly "honest-minded" account. Truly, while Fr Gaunt hastily dismisses this quality (rather his report implies an inimical pretense against Roseanne), Roseanne candidly endeavors to attain it in its tenor, without necessarily offering a complete factual account of herself due to the normal limitations of her traumatic memory. This revelation is enough to acquiesce to Roseanne's central claim: "I think all we can offer heaven is human honesty" (91) and some kind of an "honest-minded history" (5).

Dr Grene's commonplace book represents an intermediary role in Roseanne's tale as he attempts to patch together "her true story" from institutional documents and the priest's

archived deposition and from his own deductions in reference to his long experience in psychiatry. His relationship with Roseanne is as friendlier as that of a mother and son, which ironically turned out to be so. He is considerate about her vulnerability and trauma and understands “her suffering in the realm of real life [. . .] was no doubt even greater”(117), yet her mental and emotional lapse could not stop him to confidently “ask her anything, pursued any topic, and probably got the truth, or what she believes is the truth”(199). However once he grappled parish priest’s deposition, it becomes daunting not to question Roseanne’s answers during her assessment. At the closing of the novel, he stumbles across the memoirs of Roseanne that eventually allows him into reflecting on the two versions of her story, upon which he decides on the true history of Roseanne. He seeks “in some way to find the heart and the thread of her story, as one might put it. Her *true history* or as much of it as can be salvaged” (121).

As a subjective analytical eye, Grene hopes to obtain the truth in Roseanne’s narrative even though the official records are thought to be insurmountably self-sufficient and unquestioned. Dr. Grene describes Roseanne’s ragged manuscript (before even knowing who penned it) a “little apocryphal gospel as may be” (120), signaling a contradictory skepticism that the account carries an absolutely truthful authoritative content with doubtful authenticity. Meanwhile after a cursory skim of the parish priest’s sworn testimony against Roseanne’s story, Dr Grene is struck with Fr Gaunt’s sophisticated, erudite style and rhetoric. He observed, “Fr Gaunt spared no ink in that direction. It really is a remarkable piece of work, clerical, thorough, and convincing. It is like a forest fire, burning away all traces of her, traversing her narrative and turning everything to ashes and cinders.” (230). The psychiatrist admits his own susceptibility to believe in the priest’s well-rounded prose veracity, saying, “the more I look at Fr Gaunt’s

deposition, the more I seem to believe it. It is because he writes well in a sort of classical way (150).

Given the entitled position of the priest, he apparently coaxed his version of Roseanne's story for the sake to sound persuasive and trustworthy to the extent that even asylum psychiatrists did not sense a shadow of a doubt to diagnose the alleged nymphomania of which Roseanne was accused. Grene was initially sustaining a deference toward the priest justifying that his account maybe also "subject to mere error of memory"(279). Then of course, Grene thinks that Fr Gaunt "maybe sincere in his great desire to have her committed" (289). He remarks the manipulation in Fr Gaunt's account even with his authoritative tone, and calls reading such an "impromptu history" is "a wrongful desire for accuracy" (ibid) . Upon this realization, he decided not to use Fr Gaunt's account to question her with (281). At the same time he concurs with the idea that Roseanne's account is sincere, whether tattered or untrue, because what her memory dictates to her is what really happened as she believed ;"what is wrong about her account if she sincerely believes it? —as Dr. Grene puts it— Is not most history written in a sort of wayward sincerity? I suspect so" (278).

He concludes that to a large degree "both Roseanne and Fr Gaunt were being as truthful as they could be, given the vagaries and tricks of the human mind"(280). He further comes to question the possibility of "factual truth"(292) , for he could not obtain a well-founded factual account of Roseanne, proposing that "Roseanne's 'sins' as a self-historian are 'sins of omission'" (280). Even the doctor has experienced his own manipulation of history writing, thus his own unreliability as a narrator, when he supplemented some missing details that do not exist in either Roseanne's testimony or Fr Gaunt's deposition. In the final point, his aporetic reflections

on the nature of history and its reliability with reference to memory seem to echo with the views that Roseanne shared at the beginning of her narrative :

[...] I am beginning to wonder strongly what is the nature of history. Is it only memory in decent sentences, and if so, how reliable is it? I would suggest, not very. And that therefore most truth and fact offered by these syntactical means is treacherous and unreliable. And yet I recognize that we live our lives, and even keep our sanity, by the lights of this treachery and this unreliability, just as we build our love of country on these paper worlds of misapprehension and untruth (293).

In sum, Grene's ambivalent posture adds another dimension to the complex nature of Roseanne's post-traumatic testimony that resists any competing source of authority and credibility while attaining its own credence from the propriety of honesty of mind or intention. The unreliability of a professional narrator such as the psychiatrist and a holy man like Fr Gaunt breaks down the very idea of the superiority of authentic official documents over individual's account. Lastly, as scholar Dora Apel writes in *Memory Effects: The Holocaust and the Art of Secondary Witnessing*, there are many who would discredit the trauma testimonials due to the pitfalls of memory .But she believes that the great efforts the trauma survivor (that is, Roseanne) exerts in recording her post-traumatic testimonies reveal her strong desire to preserve the remaining memories in her fragmented history , and to codify “durable evidence against the forgetfulness of history and the resistance to accountability” (Apel 12).

3.2.4 Roseanne's Working Through Trauma: Toward Recovery

Any journey to recovery starts with therapy, and dwelling on Roseanne's therapeutic

case, her unwavering efforts to come to terms with her haunting traumatic memories suggest the possibility for recovery. Although Roseanne was primarily apprehensive about speaking up, she did sense the merit in penning her story, if only for her to reach recovery and reconciliation with her traumatic past. Central to the experience of trauma, recovery is the psychological restoration of the trauma survivor's sense of control over the thoughts and feelings of the traumatic past and restitution of sense of connection with the present and the community. The objective of trauma healing "is to acknowledge the [traumatic] experience and integrate it into a sort of personal or collective rebirth" (Gutlove and Thompson 1). In *The Secret Scripture*, Roseanne's healing process capitalizes on self-narration of her post-traumatic testimony in the guise of metanarrative awareness and cowitnessing .

"Perhaps if I put my faith in certain memories, perhaps they will serve as stepping stones, and I will cross the torrent of 'times past', without being plunged entirely into it. I will tell this story. . .and then with joy enough I will go to my own rest under the Roscommon sod"(Barry 4, 201). Roseanne offers a self-conscious reflection on her remembrance remediation potential to recover from the trauma of the past. As Judith Herman previously demonstrates the significance of remembrance as the second step to recovery after establishing safety which Roseanne finds in her solitary room , the novel depicts this Freudian abreaction process as Roseanne starts recording her emotional and physiologic reactions to the series of traumatic events that befell on her as they were occurring . This key step is deemed vital to have a cathartic outlet and to release the unconscious pain . Herman notes the universality of testimony as a "ritual of healing" (129), and sharing it with others is a precondition for the restoration of connection. Roseanne makes an explicit request for reconnection with her unspecified future reader in order to bear witness to her

secret story, a collaborative task that functions as cowitnessing. The novel places the reader in the locus of a cowitness, which in this case is linked to that of a sympathetic listener therapist. In various passages, Roseanne addresses her reader directly, whereas sometimes her insidious trauma is visible enough for attentive readers to bear witness to it .

Roseanne's post-traumatic testimony is vividly marked with textual strategies that both mimic traumatic symptoms and signal cowitnessing act ,such as second personal pronoun of address (you) , anachrony (flashbacks), and repetition. *The Secret Scripture* contains myriad instances of cowitnessing requests made by Roseanne through direct address of the reader .To cite one of the most explicit ones, Roseanne calls: "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" (23). Such reference to a "reader" evinces the character's metanarrative engagement with the act of storytelling itself. She invites the reader to not only witness to her past memories, but also to place due faith in her as she is striving for factual precision in her memories .

According to Kacandes, the use of "you" and "dear reader" in a testimony implies an active participant-narrator relationship (Kacandes 32). To elucidate this point, in another passage when she calls forth a flashback to the time of her marriage, she recollects her meeting with John Lavelle, one of the Free Staters who once saved her from an attempted rape. How hazardous it was for a married woman to meet a stranger man on the sly, that she implores her reader for security (now) even though the incident occurred half a century ago : "Dear reader, I ask for your protection, because I am afraid now. My old frame is actually trembling" (187). Empathetic connection is precisely the type of interaction the reader is engaged in where s/he is invited to participate not only in cowitnessing her feelings and thoughts in the process of *working through*

but in an action of empathy and protection as well. If it is empathy that eventually offers release from suffering and sense of innermost insecurity, then empathetic identification can best be attained through cowitnessing.

Moreover, she admits her liability to report to her reader the sensations at the moments of her flashbacks to ensure a strong connection with the reader. Her sensations are further enhanced by constantly calling out her reader “. . . I tell *you* this, you. Dear reader.”(91). In this respect, cowitnessing becomes a form of social acknowledgement and redress; a promising act of an optimistic future for victims of insidious trauma like Roseanne. It is interesting enough to note that from the very beginning of her narrative, she envisions that after decades, she will ultimately earn post-traumatic salvation and gain freedom from all the pains of the past. She comforts herself with imagining “There are moments when I am pierced through by an inexplicable joy . . . As if, in reaching this room, I have found the anteroom to paradise, and soon will find it opening, and walk forward like a woman rewarded for my pains”(23). When her strength begins to wane and her fears to take over, she tries to stay firm to her goal till the end of her own narrative in order to accomplish her mission in voicing her story of trauma, and by extension, in stepping toward freedom. She is self-empowered with words like “Roseanne, you must leap a few ditches now. You must find the strength in your old corpse to leap”(220).

In spite of the potentially invalid imaginary confabulations that are symptomatic to Roseanne’s trauma, in many respects, they serve as self-protective and survival techniques to sanitize her past and paves the route toward reconciliation with it. Henceforth, this response is critical to trauma victims’ movement from victim to survivor. The poetic imagination is at play when Roseanne’s traumatic mind transforms cruel facts such as the attempt of killing her father

into beautiful , impressionistic stories where she expresses her admiration for her father .This psychological metamorphosis presents the only gateway for Roseanne to survive the unbearably painful events .

Through this twist, Roseanne was able to gain mastery and sense of control over her past. The outpouring of her fantasies reaches its climax in the concluding part of her testimony where she recollects her hard times of delivery and admission into Sligo lunatic asylum. Following recounting these two detrimental events, her memory falters , shudders , and then stops .“I don’t even remember suffering, misery. It is not there.” (266), denoting a severe form of amnesia . At this irrevocable turning point, Roseanne’s trauma case has clearly undergone a commendable development, and her lengthy self- narration process finally paid off . The ideal aesthetic way to end her record now is indulging in woolgathering, that is, in daydreaming pursuits. She goes through an epiphanic, surrealist dream where she is reunited with her lover ,Eneas and their baby , all surrounded in a vibrant, bright atmosphere like two angles who freed themselves from the prison of asylum and resided back in the paradise .By association, the novel’s happy denouement forges a similar , but real scenario , which is restoration of a familial bond of Dr. Grene and his mother that was once broken down by trauma, and by extension, of course, the conclusion is a salient proof of the restoration of sense of connection .But this time, a sense of connection that was long time pursued after , of which Roseanne has eventually obtained.

Conclusion

As each of the aforementioned examples given earlier demonstrate, the nature of trauma cannot be extricated from reflections of memory and history . The analysis of a complex

psychological entity as insidious trauma along with its underlying conundrum i.e, the traumatic memory is more intricate when it is housed by the challenging nature of official history and credibility. This investigation infers that to a great extent, Sebastian Barry adequately conveyed the almost unrepresentable alienating and fragmentary nature of a traumatic memory. Roseanne has been an unreliable narrator ,but this fact is rendered inconsequential by the novel's foregrounding of the process of self-narration per se as the main outlet of her trauma and by experiencing the unreliability and manipulation in official reports such of the parish priest's deposition —which is regarded an integral component of Sligo's historical documents that is taken as truths , as well as psychiatrist Dr Grene's commonplace book .

By following the theoretical layouts of trauma anatomy, this study has ably traced Roseanne's post-traumatic testimony as an outward narrative representation of her inmost traumatic memory workings in that it recreates the symptomatic aftermaths of a traumatic past via Roseanne's omissions, inconsistencies, and uncertainties. *The Secret Scripture* not only echoes these workings in the light of its metanarrative consideration of what constitutes a post-traumatic testimony in addition to embark the reader in cowitnessing but also points up the cathartic and healing properties of narrative engagement , though such healing or reconciliation comes irrespective of claims of unreliability or illegitimate "truths". What is more remarkable in the dissection of the cues of recovery in Roseanne's post-traumatic testimony is that a major part of healing comes along with the traumatic memory mechanism of transformation. Her compulsive distortion of the most devastating events, which is an indication of her testimony's unreliability, is more of a defensive mechanism than a sheer posttraumatic stress symptom. This inquiry hence substantiates the aforementioned claims of van der Kolk, van der Hart and

LaCapra that underscore the significance of distortion of the grim traumatic event into benign confabulations.

In many respects, Barry's account represents a major strand of feminist discourse in his historical revisionist reminder of these secret , forgotten women and gendered trauma as well as covering the religious use of Irish asylums in harnessing delicate feminine minds .Ireland has a long tradition of psychiatric institutions performing the repressive doctrine of strict morality without any room for tolerance. Roseanne's tragic story unfolds into a meditation on Catholic bigotry impersonated by the local priest, Father Gaunt and her mother-in-law. In adopting historical revisionist approach, Sebastian Barry reflects in a fictional form a realist vision on human tragedies that ensued from such gendered convictions. The novelist takes up the theme of institutionalization and focuses in *The Secret Scripture* on the fate of the illegitimate babies and traumatized fallen women as personae non-grata in the twentieth century Ireland during which the Catholic church was the social arm to run the society along the lines of idyllic Catholic dogma.

V. General Conclusion

The paradigm of trauma offers a considerable leeway to introduce new conceptualizations, assumptions and critical dissections of the phenomenon of trauma, thus connecting multiple disciplines. Freud's earliest insights into trauma have associated the event of trauma with its aftereffect repressed traumatic memories, which gave rise to the concept of "belatedness" and "dissociation", key symptoms of PTSD. With their emphasis, Cathy Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* and Kali Tal's *Worlds of Hurt: Reading the Literatures of Trauma* introduced trauma in literary studies highlighting the question of the literary representation of trauma. Contemporary Irish literature received a considerable attention from researchers in the domain of trauma in literature for its unique engagement with the traumas of Irish past. For instance, Beata Piatek in "History, Memory, Trauma in Contemporary British and Irish Fiction" concedes that the contemporary Irish fiction goes beyond the articulation of trauma, and places the reader in the role of a co-witness in order to facilitate Working through trauma. Other studies suggest that through metanarrative technique, the traumatized is enable to move toward healing, recovery and regeneration.

Feminist psychoanalytic interventions in trauma theory also addressed the problem of limited "traditional" ranges that identify trauma, for they consider psychic trauma is not simply a sudden shock. To include insidious trauma that arises of the accumulated daily aggressions or a targeted persecution against a certain group was momentous in Laura Brown's research paper titled "Not Outside the Range: One Feminist Perspective on Psychic Trauma". In this dissertation, when we speak of insidious trauma as gendered one, we refer to the cumulative trauma that Irish women have gone through in oppressive conditions. The twentieth century in

Europe witnessed successive seismic waves of war traumas that digested any remained sense of inner security in individuals .On top of that, many single mothers had to endure Catholic Church persecution and coercive confinement in Magdalene Laundries and mental asylums for the sake of securing an ideal Catholic image of Ireland. Their persistent repression could not be voiced because their insidious trauma was unfathomable and the mainstream history did not allow them to be heard. With the official termination of religious institutions in Ireland by mid-1990s , the survivor victims were willing to speak up although trauma was still carried around with them .Their testimonies became the touchstone for post-traumatic narrative. An emerging Irish distinguished body of literature has been concerned with the quest for re-memory and articulation of trauma that run through these stories ,and has evoked a profound historical revisionist undertones behind bringing into light what bled off the edges of the official memory. For a number of authors like John Banville, Anne Enright, Emma Donoghue and Sebastian Barry, portraying an authentic Ireland requires exposing the trauma of Irish history which in turn catalyzes a move from repression and rhetoric of silence toward a more self-reflective nation.

Sebastian Barry emerged as a distinct literary voice both as a historical revisionist and metaphorical therapist who let his traumatized characters (based in real life) interact retrospectively with an unknown reader with the hope of liberation from the excruciating past. This study has examined in particular the post-traumatic testimony of traumatized female narrator of Sebastian Barry's *The Secret Scripture* (2008), Roseanne McNulty to demonstrate the peculiarities in the narrative representation of her insidious trauma. She is a one hundred-year old patient in an Irish mental hospital whose tale of woes was inscribed by the persecution of Catholic clergy personified in the character of Fr Gaunt and the ultimate institutional conduct of women's bodies. Irish Protestant woman like Roseanne were denied a voice in official history as

they revealed a perceived vulnerability in the national integrity. The precarious nature of insidious trauma requires the novel to blow off the barriers between structure and content, renouncing any form of linearity thus rendering trauma an object as well as subject through which the text works . While the text metanarratively captures the alienated fragmented traumatic memory and some of Freudian trauma nuances through literary devices such as flashbacks, tropes of imagination and repetition, the process of narrative representation creates a healing space for the marginalized character. Cowitnessing presents a call for an affective and empathetic understanding of the past from the part of the reader. Traumatic memory may not be so much an intrinsic flaw as it plays also a key role in Roseanne's Working through trauma via the act of transforming the ugly face of traumatic events into sad but ethereal-like epiphanies that alleviate the pain of the past.

Furthermore, this study has engaged at large with the dialectic problem of unreliability roaming around both Roseanne's narrative and parallel official records mainly of the priest and of the other narrator, Dr Grene. By dissecting the cracks of incredibility that surface these official documents about Roseanne's history, an equilibrium comes forth and puts Roseanne's unreliable testimony in the status of an authoritative counter-narrative to the dominant one given the latter's experience of unreliability too . From a feminist viewpoint, the novel, and by extension this research, implicitly pronounces an acknowledgement of the insidious trauma that Roseanne, and women like her are wounded by. Her experience is an authentic, broadly shared one, and is worth a space in the national Grand narrative of official Irish history. In essence, this undertaking set out to advance a better understanding of women's insidious trauma, memory and healing effect in the fields of Irish Trauma Studies and Irish Memory Studies Network, along with their narrative representation in literature .Some crude aspects in *The Secret Scripture* are

conceivable that are not taken into account in this thesis, which can be opportunities for future research prospects. Most notably, a post-colonial future research venue may incorporate the theme of Roseanne's trauma as an allegory for Ireland's traumas itself caused by the British colonization. An analogy could be drawn between Roseanne's wounded body and psyche that were both suppressed by an outsider force and the social and political oppression by the colonizer.

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ملخص

اعتمدت أحد المؤشرات الجوهرية الدالة على استقلال إيرلندا على إعادة رسم صورة مثالية لهوية وطنية واضحة المعالم وعلى خطى ثابتة بدءاً من موقع الدولة السياسية إلى تحديد نمط اللبنة العائلية. حيث تطلب هذا المشروع إلى الإنكار التام المتمم لأي مقومات دخيلة عن الثقافة الأيرلندية المبنية على أسس أخلاقية كاثوليكية. لتحقيق ذلك، تم إنشاء مؤسسات تابعة للكنيسة الكاثوليكية امتدت عبر ربوع الوطن التي من شأنها أن تصبح مستودعاً لهؤلاء الأشخاص، وخاصة النساء اللواتي لطن صورة الهوية. من أهم هاته المنشآت كانت مرافق إصلاحيات مجلدتين النسائية ومستشفيات الأمراض العقلية بمثابة أداة لتعزيز الضوابط الاجتماعية عبر التحكم في أجساد النساء. اتبع السرد الوطني الكبير نفس المناورة من خلال التستر على تجاربهن الأليمة من الاضطهاد الاجتماعي والمأسسة القسرية مما توجب على الكتاب الأدبيون تناول موضوع الصدمات الجنسية الخفية التي تردد صداها طوال القرن العشرين. تكمن القوة الدافعة وراء إجراء هذه الدراسة في استكشاف والاعتراف بالمحن التي مرت بها النساء المصابات بصدمات نفسية. تسعى هذه الأطروحة لدراسة الموضوع الرئيسي لـ الصدمة الخفية في الرواية الأيرلندية المعاصرة الكتاب المقدس السري (2008) للكاتب الأيرلندي سيباستيان باري. باستخدام نهج انتقائي يدمج منهج التحليل النفسي النسوي ونظرية الصدمة، تركز الدراسة على فحص التمثيل السردى المميز الذي اتبعه المؤلف في إبراز السمات المميزة لصدمة روزان كلير الخفية من خلال شهادتها بعد الصدمة. إضافة إلى ذلك تهدف إلى تحديد التقنيات السردية المستخدمة في عملية الشفاء والتعافي. ومع تركيز خاص على مواضيع الاضطهاد الكاثوليكي المتفشي آنذاك ضد النساء البروتستانتيات واضعاف قوتهم وايضا المأسسة العقلية، تقدم هذه الورقة نظرة شاملة حول مدى تأثير التجربة الصادمة في طمس الخط الفاصل بين الحقيقة والتخيلات النفسية وبين السجلات التاريخية الرسمية والتحوير الفردي البديل للتاريخ فيما يتعلق بمسألة "المصادقية".

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأدب الأيرلندي المعاصر، التحليل النفسي النسوي، التعافي، الذاكرة المؤلمة، الصدمة الخفية، المأسسة العقلية، شهادة ما بعد الصدمة، نظرية الصدمة.