

صدمة الجاني، تمثيلها وشفائها في مسرحية سائق القطار للكاتب أثول فوغارد

المحاضرة: رواء جواد كاظم

قسم اللغة الإنجليزية/جامعة بابل/كلية التربية الأساسية

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## Exploring Perpetrator Trauma and Healing in Athol Fugard's *The Train Driver*

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### الخلاصة

تم تطوير العديد من الأطر النظرية لفهم صدمة الجاني. ومع ذلك، فإن هذا البحث يركز على لاستكشاف هذا النوع من الصدمات كوسيلة لكشف وفهم أعمق لمواجهتهم للصراع. وتقرض الدراسة أن وجود الصدمة لدى الجناة يتحدى الفكرة السائدة عن كونهم مخلوقات وحشية وتسلط الضوء بدلاً من ذلك على إنسانيتهم الفطرية. لا يهدف البحث إلى إثارة التعاطف، بل الاعتراف بأن الجناة هم أفراد قد يكونون قد وضعوا في ظروف قاسية دفعهم إلى اتخاذ مواقف متطرفة. وتكشف الدراسة عن الصعوبات والحواجز التي يواجهها الجناة كنتيجة مباشرة لأفعالهم. تعتبر مسرحية أثول فوجارد محاولة جديرة بالملاحظة للتعبير عن التجربة المؤلمة، فضلاً عن الصدمة الأعمق نطاقاً لبطل الرواية الرجل الأفريقي الأبيض الذي عانى كثيراً بسبب حادث القطار وتداعياته. لتحقيق الهدف المذكور أعلاه، يسعى البحث الحالي إلى استكشاف مفهوم الصدمة ضمن الإطار النظري للدراسات المتعلقة بها. يبدأ هذا المسعى بفحص المفاهيم الأساسية لمكجلوثين ثم يتقدم نحو تحليل المساهمات المحورية للصدمة والتي قدمتها كاثي كاروث وجوديث هيرمان في ما يخص مرحلة الشفاء من الصدمة.

## **Abstract**

Several theoretical frameworks have been developed to comprehend perpetrator's trauma. However, this investigation prioritizes exploring this kind of trauma as a means of unraveling a more comprehensive understanding of their encounter with conflict. The study argues that the presence of trauma in perpetrators challenges the commonly held notion of them being monstrous creatures and instead highlights their innate humanity. The objective is not to elicit sympathy, but to acknowledge that perpetrators are individuals who might have been pushed into extreme situations. The study reveals the hardships and barriers that perpetrators face as a direct result of their actions. Athol Fugard's play is a noteworthy attempt to articulate the traumatic experience, as well as the wider trauma of a white African male protagonist who has suffered extensively due to the train accident and its aftermath. In order to achieve the aforementioned objective, the present research endeavors to examine the concept of play in the context of trauma studies' theoretical framework. This endeavor commences by examining McGlothlin's fundamental concepts and subsequently progresses towards analyzing the pivotal contributions made by Cathy Carruth, while Judith Herman's perspective is considered in relation to the healing process within this field.

## **1-Introduction :**

The field of perpetrator studies is based on theoretical and conceptual principles that emerged as a response to the atrocities of World War II and the Holocaust in 1945. In the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, many literary works have been written, which address the motivations and reasons behind the perpetrators' actions.

The depiction of the perpetrator in literary works is often a subject of controversy, particularly but not exclusively in Holocaust literature which focuses on Nazi perpetrators, for various reasons. Certain scholars claim that it is morally wrong to portray the perspective of the perpetrator in literature. A key argument is that perpetrators ought not to be given a voice, or any form of representation or acknowledgement, as they have previously silenced their victims (McGlothlin, 2010, 213-214).

It has been argued that allowing perpetrators to present their perspective would "compromise their solidarity with the victims" (ibid.,213).

Furthermore, there is unwillingness due to the potential for the portrayal of the perpetrators to depict them as victims or provoke empathy from readers. In contrast, other scholars argue for the importance of including the perpetrator perspective while also maintaining an appropriate level of distance between the reader and the subject. Striking a delicate balance



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between empathy and responsibility is a crucial task in exploring the mind of perpetrators. This requires investigating their motivations and the complexities of their psychology. For authors, it is essential to understand their perspective while simultaneously holding them responsible for their actions. The confusing boundaries between imagination and reality are a topic of great significance, particularly when it comes to fictional representations of perpetrators.

McGlothlin supports the inclusion of perpetrator perspective in examining their actions and posits that without doing so, they are often portrayed as abstract and mythical figures that lack any explanation for their behavior, especially “when their thoughts and actions are beyond our comprehension”. (Ibid.,214) In contrast, the study assertion is that labeling them as monstrous and mythical figures only serves to neglect the underlying trauma that has shaped their lives. In order to depict perpetrators’ trauma effectively, it is important to avoid stereotypes, instead present them as complex individuals with multiple facets, while also acknowledging the negative impact they have caused.

It is widely accepted that victims of crimes experience trauma, whereas the question of whether perpetrators undergo a similar level of trauma is often ignored. In fact, when trauma is considered in relation to the perpetration of a crime, it is typically only investigated to determine if a previous traumatic event in the perpetrator's life may have contributed to their criminal behavior. Refusing to recognize that the act of committing a crime itself may cause psychological harm and leave emotional scars on perpetrators.

It has been asserted that individuals who are engaged in criminal activities may experience trauma, which is commonly referred to as “perpetrator trauma”. This form of trauma is known to result in psychological wounds and a range of negative physical, social, and emotional consequences. (Mohamed ,2015,1162)

This study aims to bridge a gap in our understanding of crime and trauma by examining protagonist trauma, also known as perpetrator trauma. The key focus of this study is to establish that perpetrator trauma is not only present, but also deserves attention. In order to achieve this objective, it charts a cultural shift in the portrayal of trauma from a psychological classification to a moral one. As a response, it presents an alternative narrative of trauma that recognizes it as a neutral human characteristic, distinct from morality, and not in conflict with choice and agency.

Trauma theory in the field of literary studies has found it necessary to examine the representations of perpetrator trauma in a truly interdisciplinary manner. However, the level of critical interpretation of



individual texts remains insufficient. This is likely due to the unresolved competing claims of psychoanalysis and deconstruction in this nascent field of study. The study tackles the insufficiency in our comprehension of the trauma experienced by perpetrators. This necessitates accepting trauma as an integral element of human nature, regardless of ethical beliefs, and not inconsistent with the presence of choice and power. It is important to note that trauma and victimhood should not be used interchangeably, as trauma can occur without victimization and perpetrators may not experience trauma from their actions. Moreover, it should not be assumed that those identified as 'perpetrators' are not also 'victims'. (Anderson, 2018, 99)

Judith Herman's *Trauma and Recovery* explores the subject of trauma after violence. Herman cites former soldiers as an instance of a traumatized community. Although Herman does not specifically refer to it as perpetrator trauma, her choice implies that committing violence does not preclude an individual from experiencing trauma. In the aftermath of large-scale conflict, when significant numbers of perpetrators reintegrate without addressing their trauma, it can impede the process of societal reconciliation, resulting in stagnation. (Herman, 1992, 1165)

Herman suggests that traumatic events have the capacity to sever the connections between individuals and their community. (ibid., 3) Furthermore, it follows that if perpetrators are consistently not accepted from the wider society, their ability to disassociate themselves from past actions and ideologies is diminished. As such, it is mutually beneficial for both perpetrator and society to acknowledge the potential reality of perpetrator trauma and to respond accordingly. Additionally, recognizing the inherent humanity of perpetrators serves to dismantle any reductive depictions of them as monstrous. This notion also implies that any individual is capable of committing such acts, a crucial observation as this study delves into the development of empathic unsettlement.

Trauma for both victim and perpetrator is an intolerable affliction of the psyche that is endured by individuals who have undergone severe events in their lives, giving rise to sentiments of shame, humiliation, or guilt. Owing to these emotions, individuals who have suffered trauma typically engage in a proclivity towards dissociation and repression of these sentiments. Over a prolonged period, this dissociation and repression culminate in unresolved internal conflicts. It has been determined that the protagonist depicted in the novel has experienced a perpetrator trauma, resulting in psychological self-destructive tendencies that subsequently impacted upon his personality.





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Mohamed asserts that when the violence is ended, perpetrators of crimes who return continue to be haunted by their actions. The experience of trauma, which was once personal, now becomes an interruption to the larger community's efforts towards reconciliation and restoration. (Mohamed, 2015, 1165)

The well-known dramatist, Athol, has been classified as a white liberal who writes about the degradation of blacks and mixed-race communities while getting the benefits granted by white South Africans, his complexion and Eurocentric education has not hindered him from getting to know the black majority of South Africa and their concerns in a meaningful sense. (Wertheim, 2000, 2) Critics associated with Ngugi, Achebe, and specific "protest" authors from South Africa view writers as being responsible not only for exposing social discriminations but also for engaging in the situation to improve life.

Fugard's literary works have consistently conveyed an ideological message. His theatrical productions provide criticism of the organized attacks on legal provisions that upheld the apartheid regime (Gray, 1982, 26). Like any author he upholds the notion that genuine writing serves as an imitation of life, he draws upon his personal experiences to substantiate his concepts and to depict his characters in diverse scenarios amid challenging circumstances. (Kadhim, 2018, 235)

Fugard advocates the notion that literature provides a suitable environment for examining the complexities of trauma. Moreover, he contends that it is an indispensable tool for the field of trauma studies, owing to its pervasiveness as a means of articulating and unburdening oneself of the distressing afflictions and events that individuals endure. Essentially, literature constitutes an invaluable medium for both expressing and confessing the sufferings of individuals who have endured traumatic experiences. (Neeves, 2008, 112) Authors have proven that through their extensive studies the attainment of a comprehensive portrayal of the consequences of trauma can only be achieved by simulating its diverse manifestations and indications.

Numerous literary works have depicted the viewpoint of the perpetrator, such as *The Reader* by Bernhard Schlink, *Indian Killer* by Sherman Alexie, *Time's Arrow* by Martin Amis, *Beloved* by Toni Morrison, *The Kindly Ones* by Jonathan Littell, *The Painted Bird* by Jerzy Kosinski and many others.

It is likely to say that the experience of trauma is now widely recognized as having a broad scope. Initially, it was thought to be a condition that afflicted individuals with a specific vulnerability, rendering them more susceptible to trauma. However, as doctors encountered symptoms that

did not align with any pre-existing condition, the definition of trauma expanded. It was discovered that trauma did not discriminate against those who were already psychologically challenged. As a result, it became evident that trauma could potentially impact anyone, regardless of age, from the most vulnerable to the strongest. Therefore, trauma has become a universal human condition.

## **2-The Perpetrator Representation in *The Train Driver*:**

According to Mohamed perpetrators are individuals responsible for committing heinous acts cannot be considered as mere monsters, for they are actual human beings (2015,1165). Nick Fraser claims that the perpetrator, may be regarded as a completely thinking and emotional human being. This perspective enables the observer to visualize a more comprehensive range of experiences that the perpetrator may have undergone, experiences that could be hidden within the confines among others (Fraser,2013,67).

LaCapra claims that trauma of perpetrator does exist (2001,41) further investigation is warranted concerning the existence of trauma among individuals who commit crimes. However, some readers may perceive the study of the psychological distress experienced by perpetrators, as a controversial subject. It may seem appropriate to emphasize the traumatic experiences of victims, but with perpetrators the issue is denied. Moreover, if the perpetrator trauma is acknowledged, it may be dismissed as a deserved consequence or a punishment for the perpetrator's crimes. Furthermore, their nightmares, flashbacks, and isolation, are only a small fraction of what they deserve. Rarely have scholars suggested that those who commit these heinous crimes may themselves experience trauma as a result.

In the selected play *The Train Driver*, the protagonist Roelf, whose mental state is haunted by his past, asserts that he personally took the life of a woman during his employment. Since that instance, we are informed that he has endured the detrimental repercussions of his actions; he experiences distressing dreams, flashbacks of the event, he appears to be a disengaged external observer of his own thoughts, emotions, and conduct. Roelf is a clear example of an individual who has undergone a traumatic experience and its pernicious aftermath. He is considered potentially traumatized as he can be viewed as victim, because he has committed the crime under compulsion; in fact, he can be considered as a victim of circumstances. This allows the audience to think of that individual who commits murder unintentionally may also be distressed by



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his actions and that the world must whether or not it is willing - confront the implications of that trauma.

The relationship between trauma and its victims is often linked to the factor of choice, or lack thereof, in situations that may result in PTSD. It has been proposed that individuals who experience PTSD are those who feel a sense of helplessness and are confronted with an event that is beyond their control. In *The Act of Killing*, it is apparent that the perpetrator of the heinous act is impacted by the trauma of their actions. Nevertheless, it is obviously clear that this individual cannot be classified as a victim (Mohamed,1178). Despite this, the psychologist Ria Kotze has put forth an opposing viewpoint to the concept mentioned above, asserting that trauma is not only restricted to victims but can be felt by anyone (qtd in Mohamed ,1188).

Kotze takes a police officer during the apartheid regime in South Africa as an example, he is called Jeffrey Benzien, he acknowledges that he had committed heinous acts. He remembers each of them vividly and, in a solemn oath to God, attests to having suffered as well. Despite his experiences, he refuses to consider himself a victim of apartheid, as he has also been afflicted with PTSD<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, if we take Kotze's perspective into consideration, Roelf can be regarded as a victim of his work circumstances or a victim of his work responsibilities. His action has been undertaken against his will, which makes Roelf account of trauma more palatable to the audience.

For Kathryn Abrams, the perpetrator trauma experienced by the stereotypical offender is a result of a premeditated crime. In contrast to an individual whose choices have been restricted, the former can be seen partly as a victim in this traumatic event. (1995 ,337)

### 3-The Burden of Guilt: The Perpetrator's Trauma in *The Train Driver*:

One day when Apartheid's horrors were at their pinnacle during 1988, Fugard has been reading a story about Pumla Lolwana, a woman who commits suicide with her children in the Mail and Guardian, the author decides to write it down in his notebook, he has felt compelled to own it (2010 ,Xiii).

*The Train Driver*, a play by Athol Fugard, tackles on a pair of essential characters: a train driver who belongs to the middle class and is white,

<sup>1</sup> See Benzien Hearing, Part 1, supra note 118.



and a grave digger who is black, both of whom live in post-apartheid South Africa. Fugard's primary focus revolves around the portrayal of psychologically challenged individuals with the ultimate goal of guiding them towards a mental realm conducive to achieving sublimation through the release of their psychic energies. Fugard conducts thorough analyses and assessments of the intensity of their suppressed desires, with the intention of liberating them from their mental prisons. He experiments with various therapeutic techniques and proposes potential remedies for the troubled minds of his general audience. By centering his attention on the quandary of a single individual, Fugard accepts the challenge of providing solutions for the mental enslavement experienced by all those who have undergone trauma.

Roelf Visagie, the protagonist is described as a train driver in his late thirties. Through the theatrical performance, the audience can notice the train driver Roelf, who initially exhibits characteristics of an uninformed and prejudiced member of the white Afrikaner community. This is evidenced by his initial outburst of animosity towards the deceased woman, which subsequently turns to compassion. Within the context of the play, the train driver's mind condition is connected with his feeling of guilt and his need for confession, an essence which itself serves as representation of his inner turmoil. His lack of confidence in his own abilities and his incapacity to effectively manage his life have resulted in a state of restlessness. He says **"I can't live with myself. Every night, I see their faces... I can't forget them... I don't know how to get rid of the images."** (Fugard, 2010, 35). Roelf stands at the grave, looking around, angry, exhausted and upset. He wears messy shirt and trousers while wiping his sweat. He meets Simon the grave digger at the graveyard of Shukuma, a squatter camp on the outskirts of Port Elizabeth.

Simon reveals a sense of disturbance in response to Roelf's presence and behavior. He proceeds to request that Roelf vacate the premises due to the potential danger that may arise from the Amagintsa (gang boys) and their propensity for wielding knives. In response, Roelf displays a lack of trepidation and challenges Simon by stating **"what you waiting for? Go call them"** (Fugard, 2014, 15). Additionally, Roelf requests the grave digger to tell him burial location of the women with her children because redemption seems unattainable through psychophysical agony.

Roelf addresses the deceased woman in a manner which lacks appropriate politesse. The degree of fear and suddenness resulting from the encounter was so overwhelming that Roelf was rendered incapable of preventing the experience of trauma. This event subsequently returns belatedly, and with each return, the distressing manifestation of the uncontrolled event is



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relived, inducing profound trauma which proves to be intractable to repression and resolution. Simon is surprised from Roelf's behavior to curse a dead person:

The resulting fear and suddenness of the encounter overwhelm him to such a degree that he is incapable of preventing himself from experiencing trauma. This event subsequently returns belatedly, and with each return, the distressing manifestation of the uncontrolled event is relived, inducing profound trauma which proves to be intractable to repression and resolution. Simon is surprised from Roelf's behavior to curse a dead person:

**"I will swear at her until I am blue in the fucking face!"** (Fugard, 2014, 14)

It is likely to say that seeking meaning and comfort in the face of the traumatic experience, is a common behavior for the traumatized characters in most of the literary works, whereby the present is persistently disturbed by the unceasing interruption of the remembrance of a catastrophic occurrence that transpired in the past. The instance of the past is complicatedly intertwined and serves to expose the reason behind the manifestation of symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder that are still exhibited by protagonists of the play.

Roelf is unable to manage his anger and emotions even in a peaceful environment, he expresses his anguish by screaming and invoking Jesus more than once. The death of the women with her three children traumatizes him. Developing in him a sense of guilt from which he could not be freed:

**"I am sitting here with my arse in the dirt because thanks to her I am losing every- thing ... my home, my family, my job ... my bloody mind!"** (Fugard, 2014, 14-15)

The conversation highlights the challenge of clarifying an overwhelming experience that resists understanding. Caruth claims that, the incident is not fully understood or experienced in the moment, but rather, it is re-experienced later, that is because it continues to haunt the person through memory or image of the event. (Caruth, 1995, 4-5). Trauma can be compared to a crack, if it is not treated by the affected person, it will inevitably expand until it completely consumes and destroys him. The manifestation of Roelf in the cemetery signifies his intense desire to release himself from the burden of guilt. According to Caruth, the manifestation of trauma cannot be traced to a particular instance of violent or original events in a person's past. Rather, it is attributed to the manner in which its unassimilated nature, precisely unknown at the initial moment, resurfaces to plague the individual at a later time. (Ibid., 5)

The gravedigger attentively and calmly listens to the driver's traumatic experience and attempts to console him, despite his apprehension for assisting a white man in the destitute black community. A noticeable disassociation between the races is apparent, highlighted by the white man's remorseful consciousness for his transgressions and the persistent adversity faced by the black population.

Roelf claims that her ghost will hear what he is saying. The event's severity and unexpectedness turn his life into an endless series of traumas the point where he becomes devastated, saying that he has lost everything family, home, job and the most crucial is his mind. The event keeps reappearing again, and with each reappearance, the terrible sensation of the pathological event re-enacts itself, an experience that generates a profound trauma that he cannot repress and overcome. The manifestation of an inability to comprehend both oneself and the surrounding world can be identified as indicative of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

The experience first seems not striking because the victim was never fully conscious during the event itself. However, the aftermath of the accident becomes more destructive. In fact, Freud states that the person appeared unharmed. Therefore, the experience of trauma and latency appears to stem from an inherent latency within the experience itself, rather than the forgetting of a reality that can never be entirely known (Caruth, 2016,17). Obviously, the power of trauma lies not only in its ability to be relived despite having been forgotten, but also in the fact that it is just through its intrinsic forgetfulness that one is able to experience it for the first time. (ibid., 17-18)

He sought to heal from the effects of his traumatic experience by means of verbal articulation. His conversation with dead woman would allow him to transform the inexpressible nature of the suffering into language. The traumatic experience could not be fully absorbed into memory; rather, it created a dilemma: speaking is difficult, yet not speaking is equally difficult. The paradox is that though the experience cannot be explained clearly, the traumatized person seeks to explain it. Gilmore deliberates on the paradoxical nature of trauma, which is commonly perceived as "unrepresentable" or "unspeakable". This is owing to the fact that trauma signifies an experience that inflicts severe destruction upon the individual resulting in a challenge to articulate oneself (Gilmore ,2003,702).

Freud's written work concerning trauma, both in terms of its explicit content and the implicit narratives contained therein, suggests that trauma is a phenomenon that transcends mere pathology or the simplistic manifestation of a damaged psyche: rather, it is always the story of a



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wound that requests us to bear witness, that endeavors to convey to us a reality that would not remain inaccessible (qtd, *Unclaimed experience*, 5). This reality, with its protracted emergence and belated invocation, cannot be exclusively associated with that which is already recognized, but rather what is not recognized of our language and actions (ibid.).

Roelf experienced a sense of responsibility towards the victim due to her impoverished state and lack of familial support. Additionally, she was buried alongside unknown individuals without any form of identification or acknowledgement of her family. He stated **"If I could stand beside her grave, it would perhaps be even more beneficial than simply knowing her name..."** (Fugard, 2014, 14). In this moment he showed a sense of identity upon the nameless victim. He thought that by assuming responsibility for the body of the deceased woman, he could attain a level of reconciliation with the traumatic experience. It was a noticeable shift in his manners as he started on a search for her grave. Later, he declared that he did not want to curse her anymore. **"Saying, she is now mine ... you understand? ... I claimed her I don't know what it means when I say she is mine, but I know she is because I feel that way inside my heart and so I claimed her"**. (Fugard, 2014, 40)

Caruth claimed that trauma, rather than separating different peoples, it might serve as a crucial conduit for linking distinct societies together, because the emotional and psychological impacts that trauma leaves behind such as discomfort, grief, and the need for healing are universal (1996, 7). In the case of Roelf, he strained to establish a connection by sharing his suffering with a deceased woman. He wanted to absolve himself of guilt by asserting that the woman "is mine", despite his lack of comprehension regarding the implications of such a declaration. He wanted to bridge the gap that existed between himself and the deceased woman and to heal that crack which called trauma inside him. Throughout the play, the audience could observe the transition of Roelf, the train driver, from a prejudiced white Afrikaner as evidenced by his bad temper towards the deceased woman to an individual who comprehended and empathized with dead woman plight.

Roelf, showed no concern about the Tsotsis (a juvenile gang leader attempting to live in a shantytown in Johannesburg, South Africa). He felt alienated, with nowhere to go, not even a house. He thought he was like the nameless, and asked Simon to dig a new grave for him.





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Recognizing the suffering experienced by Roelf in the aftermath of his heinous actions could contribute to a greater understanding of the nature of those who commit crimes called as perpetrators.

Perpetrators, in fact, are defined as a real people who do dreadful things, although acknowledging their humanity may be disconcerting, it prompts us to consider the possibility that we too could engage in such atrocities. Nevertheless, recognizing the ordinary humanity of perpetrators could be beneficial, as it compels us to examine the decisions made and the paths taken that culminate in the commission of their crimes. (Mohamed ,1165)

Roelf's dilemma did not only involve his inner conflict which was expressed through his personal and difficult suffering, but also the harmful disablement to achieve reconciliation and recovery with his community. Before the unfortunate incident he was like any normal human. However, after the event he became burdened with the label of a murderer.

After a comprehensive analysis of the play, it has been conclusively ascertained that the level of trauma experienced by both the perpetrator and the victim is commensurate and of equal measure. Trauma is an inside wound that does not distinguish between the aforementioned. Both are human beings, created of flesh and blood, and capable of experiencing a range of emotions and thoughts. Additionally, both are plagued by memories and nightmares, emphasizing the need for a compassionate ear to listen to their pain. They display several shared symptoms such as guilt, shame, fear, and difficulty in expressing trauma. It is possible that the perpetrator may exhibit greater courage in voicing his distressing encounter, in contrast to the victim who may have been inhibited and silenced. However, there is a certain difference between the perpetrator and the victim in addition to his courage in expressing himself, the perpetrator's sense of responsibility toward the event that occurred, he exhibits violent self-expression along with remorse for the painful act, his remorse is genuine not fabricated. The representation of trauma in this play is not purely a manifestation of a psychological disorder that affected Roelf. Rather, it is an ethical classification that identifies Roelf as an individual deserving of compassion and requiring a platform to express himself.

Admitting the human nature of the protagonist who unfortunately commit a crime in the play may provoke a sense of apprehension, it compels the





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audience to think; if this character has the capacity to carry out such violence, then perhaps they (audience) are also capable of such actions.

The matter of perpetrator trauma carries significant weight, not only because it has the potential to shift our understanding of reconciliation, but also because recognizing perpetrator trauma directs attention towards the nature of trauma itself, and paves the way for a new cultural perception of trauma as a condition that can be experienced by anyone - be it victims or perpetrators, objects or subjects, those who are subjected to actions and those who carry out actions upon others.

According to Szymborska, one of the distinguishing features that sets humanity apart from our animal behavior is our inherent capacity for conscience, which includes both the ability to distinguish between ethical and unethical actions and the capacity to feel remorse for choosing the wrong. Szymborska not only acknowledges this difference, but also praises its virtues. (Sarat,1999:68) The legal system, likewise, conventionally views remorse as an especially precious asset for both the perpetrator and the victim. Within the realm of international criminal law, remorse is frequently acknowledged as a mitigating element that can reduce the punishment. (Holo,2012,3-4)

Roelf, exhibits varied emotional responses towards his accident subsequent to its occurrence. He may experience remorse or anger towards the woman involved. His actions may be seen as having had no choice or attribute responsibility to himself for making a dreadful decision. These reactions are so common between the perpetrators, this subject is worthy to be studied. Little scholarly attention has been directed towards this aspect, owing to the victim being the main object of concern.

Recognizing the trauma experienced by perpetrators is crucial and necessitates acknowledgment. This is not only a real phenomenon but also has a significant impact on the future of societies that have been ravaged by violence. Even if certain individuals are unwilling to accept the validity of recognizing perpetrators, it is still necessary to take into account the trauma they have endured, merely for the sake of the communities to which these individuals will inevitably return.



#### **4-Healing from Trauma**

To heal from trauma individuals must regain their voices, transforming their painful experiences into conscious, integrated memories that are freed from their stressful effects. Furthermore, they must acknowledge the cause of the trauma. There is a compelling need to confront the challenges and conflicts that individuals encounter in dealing with the consequences of their dreadful experiences. Failure to acknowledge the impact of trauma may present a significant threat to the efforts of achieving reconciliation, ultimately putting at risk the establishment of a lasting peace (Mohamed,1176) .

Judith Lewis Herman claims that recovery can be achieved through three stages. The first is the assurance of safety. The second includes the processes of recollection and lamentation. The third entails communicating with others that is because trauma damages the individual's ability to form trusting, healthy relationships with others (1998,145). It separates them from the world around them and from their own self. Confession is a powerful process to overcome the long condition of wordlessness. The traumatized person recognizes that language is the optimal tool for recovery (ibid.,146).

The inexpressible and persistent nature of the traumatic experience has a harmful impact on the individual, delaying their ability to articulate their suffering through language. Trauma is a phenomenon that is presented by its absence. (Mohamed,1176) When trauma occurs, the mechanisms of the human mind responsible for observation and recording are temporarily disabled. Consequently, the traumatic event existed as a record that had not yet been made. Scholars had described trauma in various ways, including as a blockage. (Diemert,2013, 216) an antinarrative, (Luckhurst,2008, p 79) or a violent event that could not be comprehended. Traumatic memory is distinct from conventional memory in that it is not accessible. Therefore, recovering from trauma remains unattainable until the individual is able to narrate his experience, using language as a means of healing (Laub,1995,64). Roelf strived to communicate his experience, sharing it with others in an effort to find release., he says:

**“I was thinking about her every bloody night... when you switch off the light and you lie there in the dark and your brain just won't stop**





thinking ...so I'm lying there in the bed in the dark waiting for the pills to put me to sleep “(Fugard, 2014, 17)

From the aforementioned dialogue, it is apparent that Roelf shows indications of emotional instability stemming from the unfortunate occurrence. He requires the presence of an individual to whom he can recount his tale, in turn transforming the traumatic encounter into what is referred to as "narrative memory". Nevertheless, narrating an experience of this nature proves to be a daunting task as it remains perpetually out of the realm of conscious will and memory.

Roelf the protagonist acknowledges that healing needs confronting the brutal reality, he says **“I have to face this... This is the truth... I can't escape anymore”**. (Fugard, 2010,47) Those words show the beginning of his healing process, he is forced to face the trauma directly. He admits that changing historical occurrences is outside of his reach, but he possesses the capacity to work towards achieving a state of harmony with those incidents, he says: **“If I could bring them back, I would, but I can't. What I can do is try to live with it, try to honor their memory somehow”**. (Fugard, 2010,58) This is an important moment in Roelf's journey of healing.

The procedure employed by the dramatist for healing starts with the utilization of dramatic projection. This particular process involves the transference of one's own emotions of anxiety and despair onto other individuals or objects. Fugard, on a broader scale, employs projection to depict the suffering of the South African train driver.

Initially, the perpetrator denies his crime, but this denial gradually transforms as he confronts and accepts it. He experiences moments of epiphany that open up new and challenging paths of self-discovery. Ultimately, they gain a profound understanding and a modified relationship with the traumatic memories that were initially denied, leading to a state of sublimation (Rashid,2019, 26).

## 5-Conclusion

Representing the perspective of the perpetrator in a literary work requires an a great deal of understanding, ethical awareness, and a careful balance between knowledge and responsibility. It is a demanding undertaking that calls for authors to skillfully navigate complicated morals and narrative considerations.

Recognizing the presence of trauma experienced by perpetrators not only demands a transformation in our conceptualization of trauma, but also has the potential to fundamentally alter our comprehension of crime, moreover the individuals who commit it. It is important to recognize that perpetrators are not inherently monstrous, but rather individuals who share commonalities with ourselves under similar circumstances, we may think to act in a similar manner.

In *The Train Driver*, Athol Fugard delves deeply into the psychological effect of perpetrator trauma, revealing how the emotional burden of being involved in a tragedy can haunt and harm someone long after the event. Through Roelf's character, Fugard demonstrates the strong struggle of living with regret and guilt, particularly when the consequences of one's actions seem both unintentional and inescapable. Roelf's trauma isn't just about the one terrible moment but is tied to a deeper, unending conflict with himself and his place in a society damaged by injustice and inequality. Roelf does not fall into the category of an inherently evil person, compelled by an uncontrollable malice to perpetrate the brutal act. Rather, he expected a role in which he had no agency. The notion that considers the difference between victims and perpetrators is based on their choice to act, Roelf's lack of choice in the matter makes him a "partial victim". Roelf's experience of trauma admits and acknowledges his statue as human rather than monster. His emotional journey is not only about seeking redemption, but it's also a painful reminder that some wounds, whether personal or societal, don't heal easily.

By investigating this idea, *The Train Driver* requests the reader to think about the deep, hidden scars left by their actions and how they form the reader's identity in the future, also the responsibility he\she has in challenging these truths. Finally, Fugard leaves an influential message about the long-term effects of violence not just on the victims, but on everyone involved, especially those who never intended to cause harm.

### Refereces

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