

Congolese Women's War Trauma in Lynn Nottage's *Ruined*

Sally Mahfouz Ahmad El Serafi (MA)

Sli_mhfz@hotmail.com

Dr. Mona Anwar Ahmed Wahsh
English Department, Faculty of Women
for Arts, Science and Education
Ain Shams University, Egypt

Dr. Nermin Haikal
English Department, Faculty of Women
for Arts, Science and Education
Ain Shams University, Egypt

DOI: 10.21608/misj.1999.298771

Received:10-12-2023

Accepted:13-03-2023

Published:18-3-2023

Abstract

This paper explores the effect of women's war trauma on four female characters in *Ruined* (2008) within the framework of trauma theory from Judith Herman's perspective in her book *Trauma and Recovery* (1992). Her work "delineates the spectrum of human adaptation to traumatic events and gives a new diagnostic name to the psychological disorder found in survivors of prolonged, repeated abuse" (Herman, 1992, p.2). She mentions three stages of trauma namely, "[h]yper-arousal", "intrusion" and "constriction" (p.25). In addition, she introduces three stages of recovery which "are establishing safety, reconstructing the trauma story, and restoring the connection between survivors and their community" (p.2). Moreover, Congolese women's war trauma during the Civil War (1996-2003) is specifically put under the spotlight. Furthermore, the researcher introduces the author and illustrates how far women's war trauma is pictured in Lynn Nottage's play *Ruined* (2008), elaborating the different reactions of the four females represented in the play: Mama Nadi, Josephine, Salima and Sophie. The paper focuses more on Salima and Sophie as the major female victims of war trauma. This is to be done in the light of Herman's views. By the end, the researcher sums up the main ideas answering the paper's raised questions.

Key words: trauma, damaged women, war abuse, Herman, Nottage, *Ruined*.

Introduction

The current paper aims at highlighting the different forms of abuse suffered by Congolese women in Lynn Nottage's *Ruined*. The paper also explores the heroines' different reactions to trauma and their ability to heal within the trauma framework based on Judith Herman's views. Congolese women are subjected to brutal war rape and inhumane trafficking. Moreover, they are stigmatized by their communities for being defiled and are expelled from their villages to face the cruelty of war all alone. The UN Secretary-General's Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Margot Wallström describes Congo as "rape capital of the world" (UN News: Tackling sexual violence, 2020). Judith Herman in her book *Trauma and Recovery* explains how rape profoundly affects the victims' emotional well-being. She illustrates that, "[t]he purpose of the rapist is to terrorize, dominate, and humiliate his victim to render her utterly helpless. Thus, rape, by its nature, is intentionally designed to produce psychological trauma" (1992, p.41). The current paper answers the following questions: Does the concept of empowerment and social acceptance play a pivotal role in the recovery process? Is it possible for a damaged woman to redefine her being and start a new life?

Literature Review

Ludmila Martanovschi has presented a paper entitled, "Political Engagement in four Plays by Lynn Nottage" (2018) it - as the researcher states - "focuses on four plays by Lynn Nottage, *Crumbs from the Table of Joy* (1995), *Mud, River, Stone* (1998), *Intimate Apparel* (2003) and *Ruined* (2009), all of which reflect on essential aspects of political engagement" (p.62). Martanovschi proves that Nottage has given silenced women their voice through her plays raising the social-awareness of their predicaments. Another study entitled "Gendered Corporality and Place in Lynn Nottage's *Ruined*: A Postcolonial Approach" (2017) by Hassan Mohammed Saleh tackles the relationship between place and women's identity. The study as the title suggests uses post-colonialism as a frame of reference "to explore how corporality and the place are of great relevance to delineate the sense of identity" (Saleh, p. 2).

A Brief Survey of War Trauma

In her online published article "Trauma, Freud and His Followers Post-World War II Developments", Rosalind C. Morris (2018) mentions the origin of trauma theories. She says, "[i]t was, in fact, the proliferation of cases of war

neuroses (or “shell shock”) that led to the burgeoning study of trauma in the early twentieth century. The centrality of war in the development of trauma theory has continued unabated since then”. Caroline Garland in her book *Understanding Trauma: A Psychoanalytical Approach* states that Freud “used the word [trauma] metaphorically to emphasize how the mind too can be pierced and wounded by events” (2018, p.9). Once World War II broke out, trauma research became more advanced and focused. In his well-regarded book, *The Traumatic Neuroses of War*, Abram Kardiner (1941) proposes that these symptoms are rather psychological than physical. It is a “psychological process” (p.3); as “the quality of the symptom was preeminently that of traumatic neurosis” (p.10). Furthermore, he asserts that these symptoms in no way indicate a cowardly or immoral nature.

The U.S. involvement in Vietnam War (1965–1968) is a watershed in the study of trauma and the encoding of PTSD. A widespread cultural feminist anti-war movement played a significant role in raising public awareness of the suffering of returning soldiers and their delayed symptoms. Judith Herman confirms, “Only after 1980, when the efforts of combat veterans had legitimated the concept of post-traumatic stress disorder, did it become clear that the psychological syndrome seen in survivors of rape, domestic battery, and incest was essentially the same as the syndrome seen in survivors of war” (1992, p.22). After that, it was stated explicitly in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* Third Edition Manual under item 309.81 Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, Chronic or Delayed that “The trauma may be experienced alone (rape or assault) or in the company of groups of people (military combat)” (1980, p.236).

Herman’s Study of Trauma

In her book *Unclaimed Experiences: Trauma, Narrative and History* Cathy Caruth asserts, “the term *trauma* is understood as a wound inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind” (2016, p.3). Michelle Balaev in her book *Contemporary Approaches in Literary Trauma Theory* defines trauma as “an individual’s emotional response to an experience that disrupts previously held perception of one’s self and others” (2014, p.150). This is further explained in Caruth’s words, “trauma is described as the response to an unexpected or overwhelming violent event or events that are not fully grasped as they occur, but return later in repeated flashbacks, nightmares, and other repetitive phenomena” (2016, p.94).

In her iconic psychological work *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence--From Domestic Abuse to Terror*, Judith Herman states that traumatic events are:

Extraordinary, not because they occur rarely, but rather because they overwhelm the ordinary human adaptations to life. Unlike commonplace misfortunes, traumatic events generally involve threats to life or bodily integrity, or a close personal encounter with violence and death. They confront human beings with the extremities of helplessness and terror, and evoke the responses of catastrophe (1992, p.24).

Judith Herman's work is regarded as the most suitable frame of reference for the present paper as she proposes for the first time a cutting-edge definition and conceptualization of prolonged traumas like repeated rape and captivity. She states, "The syndrome that follows upon prolonged, repeated trauma needs its own name. I propose to call it "complex post-traumatic stress disorder." (Herman, 1992, p.87). She differentiates between PTSD and C-PTSD victims: "While patients with simple posttraumatic stress disorder fear they may be losing their minds, patients with the complex disorder often feel they have lost themselves" (p.112). She mentions that:

A conceptual framework that relates the patient's problems with identity and relationships to the trauma history provides a useful basis for formation of a therapeutic alliance. This framework both recognizes the harmful nature of the abuse and provides a reasonable explanation for the patient's persistent difficulties (p.112).

Herman's Three Stages of Trauma

Herman categorizes the psychological, cognitive and physical symptoms of trauma in three distinctive stages: Hyper-arousal, intrusion and constriction (p.25).

Hyper- Arousal

It is the state of constant powerlessness and imminent risks. Herman mentions that, "traumatic events appear to recondition the human nervous system" (p.26). She further clarifies, "the traumatized person startles easily, reacts irritably to small provocation, and sleeps poorly" (p.25).

Intrusion

In this stage, the victim endures recurrent nightmares, flashbacks, severe depressive periods, and traumatic memories. Herman unravels the nature of such fragments, “these memories... often return with all the vividness and emotional force of the original event” (p.26).

Constriction

The last stage is emotional constriction or numbness. It is a state where ‘terror, rage and pain dissolve’ (p.31). The sufferer exhibits signs of depression, numbness, and dissociation. She is ‘[t]ransfixed’, ‘paralyzed like a rag doll’ with a greatly diminished ability to experience emotions. She goes “into a state of surrender. The system of self-defense shuts down entirely” (p.31).

Three Stages of Recovery

Herman suggests three stages of recovery. She provides specifics, “RECOVERY UNFOLDS in three stages. The central task of the first stage is the establishment of safety. The central task of the second stage is remembrance and mourning. The central task of the third stage is reconnection with ordinary life” (capitalization in original text Herman, 1992, p.110).

Safety

Herman points out that survivors, “feel unsafe in their bodies. Their emotions and their thinking feel out of control. They also feel unsafe in relation to other people” (1992, p.113). The therapist must raise the victim’s sense of self-worth and interpersonal confidence. At this stage, a reliable and secure environment is a crucial element. Trauma victims must avoid any stimuli that might provoke their trauma. They also need “to control their pervasive fear” (p.33) and build “basic trust” (p.37).

Mourning

Herman here builds on Freud’s notion of mourning versus melancholy. According to Freud in his paper “Mourning and Melancholia”, mourning is healthy and essential during the healing process whereas melancholia is a disorder in which a trauma victim loses herself to agony, guilt and helplessness. He explains, “In grief the world becomes poor and empty, in melancholia it is the ego itself” (1957, p. 245). Herman states that:

The reconstruction of the trauma requires immersion in a past experience of frozen time; the descent into mourning feels like a surrender to tears that are endless... but it will not go on

forever... the moment comes when the telling of the trauma story no longer arouses quite such intense feeling. It has become a part of the survivor's experience, but only one part of it (Herman, 1992, p.140).

Herman confirms that during this critical stage the survivor needs someone to help her, "pay homage to her losses in the past and to repopulate her life in the present" (p.164).

Reconnection

At reconnection phase, trauma victim needs to "develop new relationships" (Herman, 1992, p.141). She has to work on "The re-creation of an ideal self" (p.145).

A Brief Historic Background of Women's War Trauma and Victimization in the Congo Civil War (1996-2003)

Congo is endowed with the most abundant natural resources, but the nation is split apart because internal ethnic factions are working with Western forces to take and plunder the land. Countless cases of war-related victimization, trauma, stigma, and expelling of women occur. Gang-raping the women of the defeated side, in addition to plundering all of the defeated party's property is another filthy manner of celebrating the victory of a battle.

According to a report by United Nations Population Fund published in 2009, "[r]ape has been used as a weapon of war by all sides involved in the conflict, and an estimated 200,000 women and girls have been assaulted over the past 12 years," ("Secretary-General Calls Attention to Scourge of Sexual Violence in DRC"). Women are savagely raped in the most vicious and barbaric ways. Professor of surgery Ahuka Ona Longombe along with Kasereka Masumbuko Claude and Joseph Ruminjo in their medical report "Fistula and Traumatic Genital Injury from Sexual Violence in a Conflict Setting in Eastern Congo: Case Studies" state that:

Gang-rape is often exacerbated by other forms of extraordinary sexual savagery... women are tortured, their genitalia mutilated with knives or bayonets or burned with naked flame. Or they are shot through a gun barrel thrust into the vagina (2008, p.133).

These women's stories are referred to by Nottage in her article "Out of East Africa" in The American Theater as, "heart-wrenching, horrifying and poignant

yet told with dignity and conviction...one of the most emotionally taxing experiences of my life” (Nottage, 2005, p.68). Through *Ruined* (2008), a worldwide political message is conveyed regarding the impact of rape during wartime. It concentrates on the notion that rape during conflicts is traumatic and utterly destructive that must be strictly prohibited.

Lynn Nottage (1964-)

She is an African American playwright and screenwriter who has won the Pulitzer Prize twice. According to Michael Kilian’s web article entitled “Playwright Tells Intimate Tales” (2004), Nottage graduated from “Manhattan’s Music and Art High School” and she got her Bachelor degree from “Brown University” (1986). She got her Master of Fine Arts from “The Yale School of Drama” (1989) and her Doctoral Degree in Fine Arts from Brown University in 2011”. As Michelle Zhong (2018) states in an online published article entitled, “Lynn Nottage (1964-)”, “Nottage has also been the recipient of many other awards, including the MacArthur “Genius Grant” Fellowship, Steinberg Distinguished Playwright Award, Laura Pels Master Playwright Award, Helen Hayes Award, Lee Reynolds Award, and the Merit and Literature Award from The Academy of Arts and Letters” she also “won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 2009 for *Ruined* and again in 2017 for *Sweat*”.

In her interview with Sandra Shannon, Nottage reveals her dedication to marginalized women’s dilemmas, “[w]omen are my focal point. ... I deal with the black woman because I feel we have been marginalized for so long that it’s time for us to be center stage” (Shannon, 2007, p.199). Michelle Zohng (2018) elucidates, “Nottage’s works portray rarely-captured moments in American history, revolving around the lives of working-class African American women in the early 20th century”.

Nottage adds in her interview with Sandra Shannon, “I think we should somehow be engaging the culture we live in, commenting on it and helping people to understand. And just have a conversation with culture” (2007, p.201). To fulfill such a moral call, Nottage and her team visited Uganda to interview Congolese women who have been subjected to brutal sexual abuse and trafficking during the Great Congo Wars (1996-2003). The outgrowth of such a visit is her magnum opus *Ruined* (2008). Martanovschi mentions that Nottage has skillfully “depicted characters whose individual struggles question the status quo and inspire self-interrogation for audiences...[Nottage] attacks extreme violence enacted on women as part of the ravages of war” (2018, p.62). In fact, Nottage weaves a

heart-aching tale of loss and survival, throwing light on the plight of war-traumatized Congolese women.

The Psychological Trauma of the Congolese War Victims in *Ruined*

The trauma and struggle of the characters in *Ruined* match with Judith Herman's ideas on psychological trauma and recovery. Nottage portrays the women in her play as unique and personified individuals rather than as conventional victims. Mama Nadi, Josephine, Salima and Sophie are determined to reconstruct their lives and re-define their identities despite the physical and psychological abuse while being expelled from their communities for being defiled. The present paper gives a brief account of the trauma of Mama Nadi and Josephine, focusing more on Salima and Sophie as two major characters.

Mama Nadi

Mama Nadi is pictured as "[a] madam, a businesswoman, attractive, early forties" (Nottage, 2010, p.5). Mama is a shrewd business woman whose safety always comes first as she runs a "business, not a mission" (p.11). She is the most problematic character in the play as she exploits the girls on the one hand, and persistently protects and supports them on the other hand. She states, "I don't force anyone's hand. My girls, ask them, Emilene, Mazima, Josephine, ask them, they'd rather be here, any day, than back out there in their villages where they are taken without regard. They're safer with me, than in their own homes" (p.57). It is later disclosed that Mama Nadi's questionable moral integrity is a result of the traumas she has been brutally exposed to.

Mama has always suffered from war. Such misery started at an early age. She often reminisces about the time the government cruelly took her family's property and home when she was a little girl. She bitterly tells Mr. Harari, "When I was eleven, this white man turned up with a piece of paper. It say he have rights to my family land. (With acid.) Just like that. Taken!" (p.19). After that, Mama and her sibling had no one but their mother. Mama bitterly confesses, "[s]he'd take me and my brothers to Kisangani. And she'd buy us each an enormous bag of caramels wrapped in that impossible plastic. You know why? So we wouldn't tell my grandfather about all of the uncles she visited in the big town" (p.13). Mama's aching memories of deprivation and shame suggest the major reason she is so desperate to hang onto what is hers. She declares, "You can follow behind everyone and walk in the dust, or you can walk ahead through the unbroken thorny brush. You may get blood on your ankles, but you arrive first and not covered in the residue of others" (p.36). She

is self-made who in “an attempt to create some sense of safety and to control [her] pervasive fear, restrict[s] her life” (Herman, 1992, p.33).

Mama shows a clear disdain towards love and emotions. Josephine asks her if she believes in love, she sarcastically answers, “No, the problem is I already know how it’s going to end. There’ll be kissing, fucking, a betrayal, and then the woman will foolishly surrender her heart to an undeserving man” (Nottage, 2010, p.34-35). Mama adopts a defense-mechanism to avoid a potential “unbearable emotional pain” (Herman, 1992, p.79). Christian desperately tries to get her attention. She tells him, “love is too fragile a sentiment for out here. Think about what happens to the things we “love.” It isn’t worth it. Love. It is a poisonous word. It will cost us more than it returns” (Nottage, 2010, p.67). Nottage denotes her helplessness as she utters these words, “(With contempt.)”. Her pain as later on revealed is due to her shameful secret that she is “ruined” (p.67). Herman further illustrates this dilemma: “The past, like the future, becomes too painful to bear, for memory, like hope, brings back the yearning for all that has been lost...eventually reduced to living in an endless present” (1992, p.65). This hinders the full process of her recovery.

Mama is in her first stage of trauma recovery “safety”. Mama Nadi “attempts to establish a sense of safety” (Herman, 1992, p. 114) and “control of her life” (p.120). She bravely tells commander Osembenga, “[o]nce you step through my door, then you’re in my house. And I make the rules here” (Nottage, 2010, p.42). Mama seeks to “preserve (her) sense of independence” (Herman, 1992, p. 77). She declares, “[t]his is my place, Mama Nadi’s” (Nottage, 2010, p.86). Her business becomes her refuge as Herman states that after the traumatic abuse the victim, “will have to come to a new and independent view of her situation, in active contradiction to the belief system of her abuser” (1992, p.60).

With the process of events, Mama comes to realize that recovery can never take place with “fear, distrust, and isolation” (Herman, 1992, p.45). She needs others and the love of Christian, in particular, to face “the tasks of rebuilding her life in the present and pursuing her aspirations for the future” (p.140).

Josephine

She is one of the girls working at Mama’s brothel. Nottage describes her as “a sexy woman in a short Western-style miniskirt and high heels” (Nottage, 2010, p.9). She has been savagely raped and humiliated by the barbaric fighters and cruelly expelled out of her village by her own people. Josephine has been able to survive her war trauma. She is in her last stage of recovery namely; reconnection. She believes Mr. Harari’s promises of a brighter future are her ticket out of the brothel,

“MR. HARARI. I just might have to take you home with me. / JOSEPHINE. (Excited.) Promise. /MR. HARARI. Of course” (p.20). For Herman, “[t]he quest for fair compensation is often an important part of recovery”, Josephine perceives that, “Her healing depends on the discovery of restorative love in her own life” as she “feels entitled to some form of compensation”. (Herman, 1992, p.136).

Josephine brags among the girls, especially Salima and Sophie about Mr.Harari’s affection, “Mr. Harari is going to take me. Watch out, Chérie, he’s promised to set me up in a high-rise apartment. Don’t hate, all of this fineness belongs in the city” (Nottage, 2010, p.24-25). In fact, Josephine is resentful towards Salima and Sophie and seizes every opportunity to tease Salima about her family and Sophie calling her, “something worse than a whore” that is because she thinks both girls are haughty and look down upon her, “[w]ho put you on the top shelf? You flutter about here as if God touched only you. What you seem to forget is that this is a whorehouse” (p.25). Such bitterness comes out of a tormented soul.

No woman is secure in Congo; Nottage makes it obvious through the aching story of Josephine. She was the tribe chief’s daughter. However, neither her financial status nor her father’s position of power rescued her from being raped and traumatized. She heartbreakingly recalls the memory of her inhumane rape and the failing attitude of her people:

My father was chief! The most important man in the villages, and when the soldiers raided us, who was kind to me? Huh? Not his second wife. “There she is the chief’s daughter!” Or the cowards who pretended not to know me, and did any of them bring a blanket to cover me, did anyone move to help me? NO! (Nottage, 2010, p.26).

Josephine has been betrayed by her own family and neighbours. They are supposed to be her basic “source of protection, emotional support, or practical help” but turn out to be “a potential source of danger” (Herman, 1992, p.115) as they expel her out calling her defiled. Although she works as a mere prostitute at the brothel, it is never easy for her to forget about her pride and social status.

Salima and Sophie get to realize her agony accidentally. Nottage reveals, “(*Josephine takes off her shirt revealing an enormous disfiguring black scar circumventing her stomach. She tries to hide it. Sophie’s eyes are drawn to the scar. To Salima.*)” (2010, p.23). They grasp the truth that Josephine is as much traumatized as they are, and that is why these arguments never break their bond.

Josephine's anger resolves into sympathy and sharing. She spends good time with them as, "*Sophie reads from the pages of a romance novel. Josephine and Salima sit listening, rapt*" (Nottage, 2010, p.34). Moreover, she shows compassion when Sophie is sexually assaulted by Osembenga, "*(Josephine stops Sophie, who is scrubbing her hands raw.) JOSEPHINE. Stop it. Stop it. (Josephine hugs Sophie tightly.) Shh. Shhh*" (p.58). She is also delighted for Mama Nadi's promising twist of fate when she accepts Christian's invitation to dance, "*JOSEPHINE. (Smiling, whispers.) Go, Mama*" (p.68).

Josephine like the rest of her fellow traumatized women is grateful for:

The good fortune to bond with others" (and experiences) the generosity, courage, and devotion that people can muster in extremity. The capacity to form strong attachments is not destroyed even under the most diabolical conditions...friendships flourished... a loyal buddy relationship of mutual sharing and protection leading to the conclusion that the pair, rather than the individual, was the basic unit of survival (Herman, 1992, p.66-67).

Salima and Sophie as the Main Characters exposed to War Trauma

Salima

Salima is a simple Hema wife and mother who has been brutally kidnapped, raped and enslaved. She is tortured by her traumatic memories and haunting flashbacks as she lingers between intrusion and constriction stages. Herman illustrates that, "intrusive symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder also persist in survivors of prolonged, repeated trauma...for many years after liberation from prolonged captivity" (1992, p.63). Salima bitterly tells Sophie about the incident of kidnapping her:

SALIMA. One of the soldiers held me down with his foot. He was so heavy, thick like an ox and his boot was cracked and weathered like it had been left out in the rain for weeks. His boot was pressing my chest and the cracks in the leather had the look of drying sorghum. His foot was so heavy and it was all I could see, as the others... "took" me. (Nottage, 2010, p.46)

The event's abruptness exceeds Salima's comprehension. For "[i]n trauma one moves forward to a situation that one has little capacity to imagine and that's why it shatters whatever one had" (Caruth, 1995, p.137). Salima as Judith Herman

describes, “is continually buffeted by terror and rage. These emotions are ...outside the range of ordinary emotional experience, and they overwhelm the ordinary capacity to bear feelings” (1992, p.30).

Salima’s misery does not stop at this point as the gravest moment of her entire life follows, “[m]y baby was crying. She was a good baby. Beatrice never cried, but she was crying, screaming. “Shhh,” I said. “Shhh.” And right then (*Salima closes her eyes.*) A soldier stomped on her head with his boot. And she was quiet” (Nottage, 2010, p.46). Salima is agonized by an “Ongoing dilemma of survivor guilt” (Caruth, 2016, p.144).

Salima has repeatedly been subjected to ruthless abuse and violent rape. Herman asserts, “the repetition of trauma amplifies all the hyper-arousal symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. Chronically traumatized people are continually hyper-vigilant, anxious, and agitated” (1992, p.62). Salima recounts how she was enslaved and abused by soldiers to feed their sexual hunger:

SALIMA. “She is for everyone, soup to be had before dinner,” that is what someone said. They tied me to a tree by my foot, and the men came whenever they wanted soup. I make fires, I cook food, I listen to their stupid songs, I carry bullets, I clean wounds, I wash blood from their clothing, and, and, and ... I lay there as they tore me to pieces, until I was raw ...five months. Five months. Chained like a goat (Nottage, 2010, p.46)

Salima’s hurt is beyond remedy. She is torn apart by an aching “sense of shame, stigma, and defilement” (Herman, 1992, p.49). With the total absence of familial support and social witness, Herman laments that intrusive symptoms increase as rape victims cling to the memory and are:

Reluctant to give up symptoms such as nightmares or flashbacks, because they have acquired important meaning. The symptoms may be a symbolic means of keeping faith with a lost person, a substitute for mourning, or an expression of unresolved guilt. In the absence of a socially meaningful form of testimony, many traumatized people choose to keep their symptoms (1992, p.131).

Sophie

She is eighteen years old with exceptional beauty and delicate melancholic voice. Nottage describes her as “a luminous beauty with an air of defiance” (2010, p.8) who “struggles to find a defiant smile” (p.9). She is in her last stage of

recovery: reconnection. Esther Terry in her essay “Land Rights and Womb Rights” states, “[To] know ruined female bodies is to chart infertile or monstrous futures. No character embodies this more than Sophie” (2016, p.163). Nottage presents her as a ruined girl who “has seen some very bad times” being subjected to repeated beastly rape “militia did ungodly things to the child, took her with ... a bayonet and then left her for dead” stamping her “ruined” body out (Nottage, 2010, p.10). Nottage visualizes her pain, “(*Sophie shifts with discomfort. Her body aches, tears escape her eyes*)” (p.12). She is deteriorated into a shattered, totally inadequate female carrying with her traumatized soul the psychological burden of “unbearable emotional pain” (Herman, 1992, p.79). However, she is never overcome by her “unbearable condition of terror, helplessness, and shame” (p.97).

Repercussions of War Rape on Salima and Sophie

Salima’s hard life is further complicated by her pregnancy with a war child. This coincides with her husband’s return pleading for her forgiveness. Salima’s life is turned upside down by such turbulence. For the time being, it jeopardizes her work at the brothel and her stay too. Furthermore, this child will forever remind her of the heinous rape and the vicious perpetrators who went unpunished. Her pregnancy exacerbates an already dilemmatic situation. She confides her choking secret to Sophie:

SALIMA. It isn’t his baby. It’s the child of a monster, and there’s no telling what it will be. Now, he’s willing to forgive me, and is it that simple, Sophie? But what happens when the baby is born, will he be able to forgive the child, will I? And, and ... and even if I do, I don’t think I’ll be able to forgive him. (Nottage, 2010, p.46).

Such grave “feelings of isolation, shame, and stigma” (Herman, 1992, p.154) weigh her down. As Herman further illuminates, at this point of ultimate isolation and despair, Salima is “condemned to a diminished life, tormented by memory and bounded by helplessness and fear” (p.36).

Sophie’s Possibility of Healing

Sophie’s condition on the other hand is curable. Sophie’s ruined reproductive organ can be fixed through a surgery. She badly aspires to undergo a reconstructive surgery and to repair her genitalia. She tells Mama, “[a] woman that comes in here said she can help me. She said there is an operation for girls... they can repair the damage.” (Nottage, 2010, p.37). Such possibility, however difficult it is, grants Sophie, “optimism and hope” although her real life “is immersed in horror and grief” (Herman, 1992, p.159). For “The capacity to preserve social connection and active coping strategies, even in the face of

extremity, seems to protect people to some degree against the later development of post-traumatic syndromes” (Herman, 1992, p.42).

The Reaction to Salima’s Condition

Despite the fact that rape is a frequent occurrence in Congo, rape victims are regarded as carriers of stigma. Nottage often emphasizes the failing social and familial attitudes regarding traumatized rape victims throughout the play. The familial reaction of Salima and Sophie plays a crucial role in their characters’ development. Herman asserts that:

While a few resourceful individuals may be particularly resistant to the malignant psychological effects of trauma, individuals at the other end of the spectrum may be particularly vulnerable. Predictably, those who are already disempowered or disconnected from others are most at risk (1992, p.43).

Although both are expelled at the time of the horrific abuse, Salima never gets support whereas Sophie gets the kind of sympathy and support by her uncle and mother.

To begin with Salima, Nottage alludes to her tremendous loneliness at the very beginning of the play when Christian tells Mama that she has, “[n]o place” as “her village won’t have her back” (Nottage, 2010, p.9). Salima returns home in the hope that her husband would welcome her with wide arms after being enslaved and damaged by the fighters. Contrary to her longed-for dream, her tribe throws her away shouldering her the responsibility of disgracing them. She bitterly tells Sophie:

SALIMA. I walked into the family compound expecting wide open arms. An embrace. Five months, suffering. I suffered every single second of it. And my family gave me the back of their heads. And he, the man I loved since I was fourteen, chased me away with a green switch. He beat my ankles raw. And I dishonored him? (p.47)

Nottage gives the exact picture of the attitude of the Congolese people towards damaged women. Through Salima’s heart-wrenching words, Nottage perfectly captures the mindset of the Congolese people towards the victims. This is echoed in Judith Herman’s words, “[c]onventional social attitudes not only fail to recognize most rapes as violations but also construe them as consensual sexual relations for which the victim is responsible...they are blamed for betraying their own moral standards and devising their own defeat” (1992, p.49).

Such social disempowering deteriorates Salima's traumatized psyche whereas her diminishing survival ability goes downhill. Herman asserts the grave consequences of desertion on the traumatic experience by saying:

In situations of terror, people spontaneously seek their first source of comfort and protection... raped women cry for their mothers, or for God. When this cry is not answered, the sense of basic trust is shattered. Traumatized people feel utterly abandoned, utterly alone... Thereafter, a sense of alienation, of disconnection, pervades every relationship (Herman, 1992, p.37).

This is the exact case of Salima whose familial reaction paves the way to her tragic end.

The Reaction to Sophie's Condition

It is believed that rape victims are expelled from their tribe because their presence would serve as a constant reminder to the male family members of their failure to safeguard their women and honor. Consequently, the males' delusion of power and false notion of chastity oblige the traumatized women to leave their household permanently. Christian acidly tells Mama about Sophie "the village isn't a place for a girl who has been...ruined. It brings shame, dishonor to the family" (Nottage, 1992, p.11). Nottage refers to the patriarchal system's hypocrisy through Mama's reply, "MAMA. (*Ironically.*) But it's okay for her to be here, huh?" (p.11)." In this instance, Nottage reveals the actual nature of the patriarchal culture, which sends its females away knowing the destiny they would be chained to for the rest of their lives yet deems them disgraceful and filthy for being brutally raped by force.

Contrary to Salima, Sophie is by some means considered lucky in spite of being banished out of her village. She is not deprived of the support and emotional sympathy of all her family members. Her uncle Christian and her mother never cease to ease her heavy heart and decrease "the estrangement from her family" (Herman, 1992, p.178). From the very beginning of the play, Christian's keen need to secure his niece is crystal clear. He tries his best to convince Mama with keeping ruined Sophie, "CHRISTIAN. (*Pleads.*) The girl cooks, cleans, and she sings like an angel. And you ... you haven't had nice music... pretty. She'll keep the miner's eyes happy. I promise" (Nottage, 2010, p.10). He desperately adds,

“Look. Have anything you want off of my truck. Anything!” (p.11). Christian, for the time being cannot afford Sophie any support more than a shelter and the feeling that she is “held in someone else’s mind and heart” (Herman, 1992, p.79). After guaranteeing that Mama will accept her, Christian reluctantly leaves with a profound sense of guilt and pain, “CHRISTIAN. Sophie. I’m ... you ... you be a good girl. Don’t make Mama angry. / SOPHIE. I won’t, Uncle. (*Christian exits with apology in his posture*)” (Nottage, 2010, p.13).

Christian lends his niece frequent visits in which he does his best to uplift the burden of her lonely heart. He brings her gifts, what she likes most namely books and magazines, “SOPHIE. Uncle! (*They exchange a long hug.*) /CHRISTIAN. Sophie, *mon amour*. I have something for you.../ SOPHIE. *Merci.* (*She rips open the brown paper. She pulls out a handful of magazines and a book*)” (Nottage, 2010, p.65).

With the process of events, Christian shows a growing sincere love for his niece. In a critical encounter with commander Osembenga, Sophie insults him for harassing her. When Christian senses that Sophie is in grave danger he, “rushes in to protect her, as Osembenga lunges for her” (p.56). Christian is ready to sacrifice his life to defend her. He does not care about what others think of him for protecting his defiled niece. Herman elucidates that trauma victims in such situation need nothing but a wholehearted person to “bear witness and lend support” (p.176).

Sophie’s mother is not mentioned in detail except for sending her letters, “CHRISTIAN. And this. A letter from your mother” which makes Sophie “overwhelmed” (p.65). By sending her letters, Sophie’s mother affirms that “the rule of silence has been irrevocably broken” as she rejects that Sophie carries “the burden of shame, guilt, and responsibility, and place(s) this burden on the perpetrator, where it properly belongs” however simple the interaction is, it is “highly empowering” (Herman, 1992, p.144) and promising.

Contrasting Salima to Sophie

Herman elucidates, “[t]he impact of traumatic events also depends to some degree on the resilience of the affected person” (1992, p.42). Salima is emotionally reliant and burdened by guilt, but Sophie is a fighter by nature. This fundamental distinction between the two characters is manifested throughout the play but is explicitly embodied in two major situations namely; their reactions to humiliation from the other girls, especially Josephine, and their reactions to the

filthy fighters who come by. These reactions mirror their condition as trauma victims and foretell their ultimate development.

Salima's Surrender to Guilt and Shame

Salima is agonized by a deep sense of shame that tears her heart apart. This leaves her weak. This is clear in her argument with Josephine who touches on the abandonment of her husband:

SALIMA. The only reason I don't read is 'cuz my younger sister get school, and I get good husband.

JOSEPHINE. So where is he?!

...

SALIMA. How do you know? Huh? I was planning to go sometime next year. My husband —

JOSEPHINE. (Sarcastically.) What, he was going to sell his yams in the market? (Nottage, 2010, p.24-25)

Salima is not strong enough to face Josephine and admit the cruel truth about her husband. Instead, she fakes his soon return and escapes from Josephine. Salima's trauma and shame are, "too terrible to utter aloud" however, her "desire to deny atrocities" "does not work" for atrocities "refuse to be buried" (Herman, 1992, p.1). This widens the gap between her and recovery.

What adds fuel to the fire is Salima's feeling of guilt. She suffers from visceral flashbacks that torment her. She blames herself for the vicious murder of her baby. She regrettably recalls, "It was such a clear and open sky. So, so beautiful. How could I not hear them coming? ... Oh God please give me back that morning." (Nottage, 2010, p.46). Herman points out that, "[f]eelings of guilt are especially severe when the survivor has been a witness to the suffering or death of other people. To be spared oneself, in the knowledge that others have met a worse fate, creates a severe burden of conscience" (1992, p.39); in Salima's case it is her own baby girl. Herman further explains, "witnessing the death of a family member is one of the events most likely to leave the survivor with an intractable, long-lasting traumatic syndrome." (p.70).

Salima is also confident that she is to blame for her brutal rape. Herman explicates, "women who were immobilized by terror and submitted without a struggle were more likely not only to be raped but also to be highly self-critical and depressed in the aftermath" (Herman, 1992, p.43). Salima embodies such case. She laments, "How did I get in the middle of their fight? What did I do, Sophie? I must have done something." (Nottage, 2010, p.46). Bessel Van der Kolk

explains in his book *The Body Keeps the Score* that, “[o]ne of the hardest things for traumatized people is to confront their shame about the way they behaved during a traumatic episode” (2014, p.13). Salima is anguished by her flashbacks and intrusive traumatic memories. Caruth asserts, “[s]urvivors still suffer from a sense of shame over the idea that they didn’t fight back enough” (1995, p.86). Herman analyses what Salima goes through by saying, “it is the victims, not the perpetrators, who feel guilty. Guilt may be understood as an attempt to draw some useful lesson from disaster and to regain some sense of power and control. To imagine that one could have done better may be more tolerable than to face the reality of utter helplessness” (Herman, 1992, p.49).

Salima’s and Sophie’s reactions to the sexual and violent harassment at the brothel are different. Salima cannot resist her nostalgia for the old days back home and the merciless fighters exacerbate her condition, she tells Sophie with a collapsing psyche:

SALIMA. “Smile, Salima. Talk pretty.” Them soldiers don’t respect

nothing. Them miners, they easy, they want drink, company, and it’s over. But the soldiers, they want more of you, and —

...

I ... I ... miss my family. My husband. My baby —

SOPHIE. What? Be thrown back out there? Where will you go?

Huh? Your husband? Your village? How much goodness did they show you? (Nottage, 2010, p.22)

Sophie is mature enough to grasp the fact that those days are forever gone. Salima has to face the truth and establish a new life according to the present circumstances. Salima on the other hand is “a prisoner of the past” who refuses to comprehend that “the world is full of terrible suffering” which she has to cope with (Herman, 1992, p. 170). Unfortunately, she confines her recovery to the image of her husband, Herman further clarifies that survivors sometimes link “their survival to the image of a connection that they managed to preserve, even in extremity, though they are well aware that this connection was fragile and could easily have been destroyed (p.43).

When her husband’s image is destroyed and their reunion becomes impossible with her pregnancy of war child, Salima surrenders to constriction symptoms. She avoids facing the aftermath atrocities and resists change, “[c]onstrictive symptoms also interfere with anticipation and planning for the future” Salima has

“diminished confidence in (her) own ability to make plans and take initiative” (Herman, 1992, p.34). Herman warns:

In avoiding any situations reminiscent of the past trauma, or any initiative that might involve future planning and risk, traumatized people deprive themselves of those new opportunities for successful coping that might mitigate the effect of the traumatic experience. Thus, constrictive symptoms, though they may represent an attempt to defend against overwhelming emotional states, exact a high price for whatever protection they afford. They narrow and deplete the quality of life and ultimately perpetuate the effects of the traumatic event (p.34).

Sophie's Positivity and Resilience

In contrast to Salima, Sophie clings to self-affirmation. Herman declares, “stress-resistant individuals appear to be those with high sociability, a thoughtful and active coping style, and a strong perception of their ability to control their destiny” (1992, p.42). Josephine seizes every opportunity to devalue Sophie. To exemplify, “SOPHIE. Yeah, but, I’m not a whore. / JOSEPHINE. A mere trick of fate. I’m sorry, but let me say what we all know, you are something worse than a whore. So many men have had you that you’re worthless.” (Nottage, 2010, p.26). These words haunt Sophie however when it comes to her ego she fights back facing Josephine’s insults, “JOSEPHINE. Am I wrong? / SOPHIE. ... Yes. / JOSEPHINE. Am I wrong? / SOPHIE. Yes.” (p.27). Furthermore, unlike Salima, Josephine’s bullying never stops Sophie from doing what is best for her: reading and planning for escape.

Herman further explains the nature of resilient victims, “[d]uring stressful events, highly resilient people are able to make use of any opportunity for purposeful action in concert with others” (1992, p.42). Moreover, they genuinely show “a high degree of responsibility for the protection of others as well as themselves” (p.43). This is precisely what Sophie does. She comforts Salima:

SOPHIE. Shh. Be quiet. I want to show you something. Look, look. (*Sophie pulls money from between the pages of the book.*)

...

SALIMA. Where’d you get ... the money?

SOPHIE. Don’t worry. Mama may be many things, but she don’t count so good. And when there’s enough we’ll get a bus

to Bunia. I promise. But you can't say anything. (Nottage, 2010, p.23).

It is true that Sophie is a delicate dreamer but when it comes to self-redefinition, she gets sly enough to manage troubles. This is the main reason that makes Mama sympathize with her as she sees her younger self in Sophie who is courageous enough to challenge the fierce Mama Nadi, "MAMA. Hm. Congratulations! You're the first girl bold enough to steal from me" (Nottage, 2010, p.37). To further explain in Herman's words, Sophie's plan to reconstruct her life is "a gradual shift from unpredictable danger to reliable safety, from dissociated trauma to acknowledged memory, and from stigmatized isolation to restored social connection" (1992, p.110). She has mourned her priceless loss and is keen to manage her last stage of recovery namely; Reconnection. Sophie is different. When Commander Osembenga insistly harasses Sophie, she insults him, "OSEMBENGA. Bring this girl around back, my men will teach her a lesson. She needs proper schooling. *(Laurent shoves Christian out of the way and grabs Sophie. This is the first time we've seen Mama scared. Sophie spits on Osembenga's feet.)*" (Nottage, 2010, p.55).

In spite of the terror and reliving the trauma, Sophie adopts "an act of resistance rather than submission to the perpetrator's intent" (Herman, 1992, p.135). She does not shun away as expected feeling "frightened and ashamed" (p.116). On the contrary, the brutality of Osembenga by no means deters Sophie from "confront(ing) violence" (p.80). This critical scenario puts Sophie's life at stake, yet her inner strength makes her "look and act like a "strong survivor" (p.94).

Salima's Suicide

When all of Fortune's pursuits to regain Salima are in vain, he tells commander Osembenga that Mama Nadi is hiding the rebel leader in an attempt to reach his wife. The barbaric men break into the brothel where the women experience first hand gun shooting and rape attempts. Herman states:

Threat evokes intense feelings of fear and anger... mobilize the threatened person for strenuous action, either in battle or in flight. Traumatic reactions occur when action is of no avail. When neither resistance nor escape is possible, the human system of self-defense becomes overwhelmed and disorganized" (1992, p.24).

This is exactly what happens to Salima. She has lost faith in her husband and in social justice, and “[w]hen trust is lost, traumatized people feel that they belong more to the dead than to the living” (Herman, 1992, p.37).

The iconic scene of Salima’s horrific suicide serves as the climax of the play. Nottage visualizes the catastrophic incident:

(Salima enters. A pool of blood forms in the middle of her dress.)

SALIMA. (Screams.) STOP! Stop it!

FORTUNE. Salima!

SALIMA. (Screams.) For the love of God, stop this! Haven’t you done enough to us? Enough! Enough! (The soldiers stop abruptly, shocked by Salima’s defiant voice.)

SALIMA. (To soldiers and Osembenga.) You will not fight your battles on my body anymore. (Salima collapses to the floor. Fortune cradles Salima in his arms. She dies) (Nottage, 2010, p.63).

Salima undergoes an abortion as a sign of rebellion against their violence. Her entire life has been ruled by a grave patriarchal system. Now, she decides to break free from this vicious cycle of trauma and victimization. According to Salima her suicide is an act of resilience rather than of surrender. Herman argues that, “suicide in these extreme circumstances is a sign of resistance and pride. The stance of suicide is active; it preserves an inner sense of control” (p.62-63). Salima only finds meaning in death as a result of her traumatized death-in-life existence and profound isolation.

Sophie’s Clinging to Hope

In a heart-felt gesture of unselfishness, Mama Nadi makes a deal with Mr. Harari the Lebanese businessman. She offers him a pricy diamond in exchange with taking Sophie away to the city for a reconstructive surgery. Unfortunately, when the tension intensifies and his safety is jeopardized, he flees with the diamond leaving Sophie behind. Nottage skillfully depicts this defining moment, “SOPHIE. He’s gone. (The stage is flooded with intense light. The sound of chaos, shouting, gunfire grows with intensity)” (Nottage, 2010, p.64); Sophie’s vanishing dream is accompanied by the fighters’ brutal raid symbolizing the everlasting plight of Congolese women.

In spite of smashing her dream, Sophie never gives in. She seeks relief in singing as she reveals, “[w]hile I’m singing, I’m praying the pain will be gone”

(p.23). Herman states, “[s]he has mourned the old self that the trauma destroyed; now she must develop a new self” (1992, p.141).

The play ends with Mama’s confession “I’m ruined” (Nottage, 2010, p.67) and Christian’s sympathy embracing her body and soul, “CHRISTIAN. God, I don’t know what those men did to you, but I’m sorry for it. I may be an idiot for saying so, but I think we, and I speak as a man, can do better.” (p.67). Hilton Als comments on the play’s positive finale. He mentions that the last dance “is a gesture not of pleasure alone but of continuity: life can be halted temporarily, but not stopped” (2009, p.72). The play promotes the notion that women can overcome physical and psychological abuse. Having Sophie on stage watching them indicates a chance of reaching a far-fetched dream which “fosters the hope for new relationships” (Herman, 1992, p. 164).

The Healing Power of Empowerment

María Dolores Narbona-Carrión indicates in her essay “The Role of Female Bonding on the Stage of Violence” that in Nottage’s play, “the relevance of bonding among women, (is) a powerful instrument in the fight against gender violence” (2012, p.61) as the “sisterly atmosphere” denotes that, “these women...help, support, and try to console each other as they spend time together” (p.67). Mama strives to create a safe matriarchal sphere that does not abide by patriarchal rules. Herman illuminates “[t]rauma robs the victim of a sense of power and control; the guiding principle of recovery is to restore power and control” (1992, p.159). When given the opportunity to flee this war zone, she firmly rejects and shoulders the responsibility of her girls, “I have ten girls here. What will I do with them? Is there enough room for all of us in the car. No. I can’t go” (Nottage, 2010, p.61). Salima’s heart is weighed down by guilt and shame. Sophie does her best to drag her friend out of this whirl of self-loathing, “SOPHIE. You didn’t do anything wrong. (*Sophie kisses Salima on the cheek.*)” (p.46). Herman affirms, “[b]earing witness... is an act of solidarity” (1992, p.178).

Sophie feels most empowered when she has the support of her mother and uncle. This consolidates her recovery process as Herman demonstrates that as, “others can listen without ascribing blame, the survivor can accept her own failure to live up to ideal standards at the moment of extremity. Ultimately, she can come to a realistic judgment of her conduct and a fair attribution of responsibility (1992, p.49). That is why Salima’s trauma drastically deteriorates her. Her family’s banishment and humiliation worsen her condition and accelerate her downfall,

Herman further explains, “the survivor seeks assistance not only from those closest to her but also from the wider community. The response of the community has a powerful influence on the ultimate resolution of the trauma” (1992, p.51).

These ravished women manage to survive thanks to their:

Characteristic triad of active, task-oriented coping strategies, strong sociability, and internal locus of control...(they)consciously focused on preserving their calm, their judgment, their connection with others, their moral values, and their sense of meaning, even in the most chaotic battlefield conditions (Herman, 1992, p.42).

In fact, the play reflects how women can move from being victims to survivors and how empowerment and persistence ultimately rescue their souls to create “a new self, both ideally and in actuality” (p.141).

Conclusion

To conclude, *Ruined* offers a realistic portrayal of the harsh lives of war-traumatized Congolese women. Nottage captures the predicament of the female characters who have been violently raped and abandoned by their community, forcing them to experience the severe symptoms of trauma as well as a deep-rooted sense of shame and isolation. The present paper has portrayed the different stages of trauma and recovery that the characters have gone through, applying Herman’s categories inserted in her book *Trauma and Recovery* mentioned at the beginning of the paper. Salima has lingered between intrusion and constriction. She has been agonized by a strong feeling of shame and isolation and has been torn apart by severe traumatic memories. Sophie and Josephine have been in Reconnection stage. They have aspired to new relationships based on affection and understanding. In spite of all the obstacles, Sophie and Josephine have always had faith in the possibility of fresh beginnings.

Whereas Mama Nadi has started the play in safety stage making her business and stability her sole priority to end up in the final stage of recovery namely; Reconnection believing in the good of others and the necessity of constructing her trauma story and trusting others. The play’s analysis has affirmed Herman’s views on the pivotal role of empowering on one hand and the survivor’s ability to weave a new story of self-acceptance and resilience on the other hand. By the virtue of their ability to redefine themselves and empower each other, the heroines have been able to start anew and choose their own path in life. The female

characters are connected in their quest to find one's real self and give life a purpose to pursue, facing the complexities of wars and patriarchal norms.

References

- Als, Hilton. (2009). "Life During Wartime". *New Yorker*, 72–3.
- Balaev, Michelle. (2014). *Contemporary approaches in literary trauma theory*. Palgrave Macmillan UK.
- Caruth, Cathy. (Ed.). (1995). *Trauma: Explorations in memory*. JHU Press, E-book ed., *Internet Archive*. [Trauma : explorations in memory : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive](#)
- Caruth, Cathy. (2016). *Unclaimed experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*. JHU Press, E-book ed., *Word press*, [caruth-unclaimed-experience.pdf \(wordpress.com\)](#).
- Diagnostic and statistical manual*. (1980). American Psychiatric Association (APA) Press, *Google Drive* at https://drive.google.com/file/d/16_tLsL38MIyHPHOv3gfdjaCFBSUQzQok/view.
- Freud, Sigmund. (1957). "Mourning and Melancholia". *The Standard Edition of the Complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud* (James Strachey, Trans.). Vol. xiv, Hogarth Press, 239–58, *The University of Pennsylvania School of Arts and Sciences*. [Freud_MourningAndMelancholia.pdf \(upenn.edu\)](#).pdf.
- Garland, Caroline. (2018). *Understanding Trauma: A Psychoanalytical Approach*. Routledge.
- Herman, Judith. (1992). *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence--From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*. Basic Books.
- Kardiner, Abram. (1941). *The Traumatic Neuroses of War*. P. B. Hoeber, *Google Books*. https://books.google.com.eg/books?redir_esc=y&id=Fc5LAQAAIAAJ&dq=editions%3AFoZUw5B7VY8C&focus=searchwithinvolume&q=psychological+symptoms.
- Kilian, Michael. (2004, June 17). "Playwright Tells Intimate Tales". *Chicago Tribune*. <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-2004-06-17-0406170054-story.html>.
- Longombe, Ahuka Ona, et al. (2008). "Fistula and Traumatic Genital Injury from Sexual Violence in a Conflict Setting in Eastern Congo: Case Studies". *Reproductive Health Matters*, Vol. 16, No. 31, 132–41. *JSTOR*. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25475373>.
- Martanovschi, Ludmila. (2018). "Political Engagement in Four Plays by Lynn Nottage". *Analele Universitatii Ovidius Constanta*, Vol. 29, No. 1, 62-75.

- Morris, Rosalind C. (2018). "Trauma Freud and His Followers Post–World War II Developments". International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, *Encyclopedia.com*. <https://www.encyclopedia.com>.
- Narbona-Carrión, María Dolores. (2012). "The Role of Female Bonding on the Stage of Violence". *Performing Gender Violence: Plays by Contemporary American Women Dramatists* (Barbara Ozieblo and Noelia Hernando-Real, Eds.). Springer, 61-78.
- Nottage, Lynn. (2005). "Out of East Africa". *The American Theatre*, Vol. 22, No.5, 26–68.
- Nottage, Lynn. (2010). *Ruined*. Dramatists Play Service INC, E-book. [Ruined.qxd \(dramatists.com\)](https://www.dramatists.com/Ruined.qxd)
- Saleh, Hassan. M. (2017). "Gendered Corporality and Place in Lynn Nottage's *Ruined*: A Postcolonial Approach". *Al-Adab Journal*, Vol.1, No.122. <https://aladabj.uobaghdad.edu.iq/index.php/aladabjournal/article/view/231>.
- "Secretary-General Calls Attention to Scourge of Sexual Violence in DRC". (2009, March 9). (UNFPA) United Nations Population Fund. *UNFPA*, <https://www.unfpa.org/news/secretary-general-calls-attention-scourge-sexual-violence-drc>
- Shannon, Sandra. (2007). "An Interview with Lynn Nottage". *Contemporary African American Women Playwrights: A Casebook* (Philip C. Kolin, Ed.) Routledge, 194-201.
- "Tackling sexual violence must include prevention, ending impunity – UN official". (2020, April 27). UN News, UN Org. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2010/04/336662>
- Terry, Esther J. (2016). "Land Rights and Womb Rights: Forging Difficult Diasporic Kinships in *Ruined*". *A Critical Companion to Lynn Nottage* (Jocelyn L. Buckner, Ed.). Routledge, 161–178, *Academia*, https://www.academia.edu/13055852/Land_Rights_and_Womb_Rights_Forging_Difficult_Diasporic_Kinships_in_Ruined.PDF download.
- Van der Kolk, Bessel. (2014). *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*. Penguin, *Reddit*. https://www.reddit.com/r/ptsd/comments/at6irr/the_body_keeps_the_score_book_pdf/.
- Zhong, Michelle. (2018, May 17). "Lynn Nottage (1964-)". Black Past. <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/nottage-lynn-1964/>

فجيرة الحرب لنساء الكونغو في مسرحية "حطام" للين نوتيدج

سالي محفوظ أحمد الصيرفي
قسم اللغة الإنجليزية
كلية البنات للآداب والعلوم والتربية
جامعة عين شمس

Sli_mhfz@hotmail.com

د/ منى أنور أحمد وحش
أستاذ الأدب الإنجليزي المساعد
بقسم اللغة الإنجليزية
كلية البنات للآداب والعلوم والتربية
جامعة عين شمس

د/نرمين هيكل
أستاذ الأدب الإنجليزي المساعد
بقسم اللغة الإنجليزية
كلية البنات للآداب والعلوم والتربية
جامعة عين شمس

مستخلص

يستعرض هذا البحث فجيرة النساء إبان الحروب متجسدة في أربع شخصيات نسائية بمسرحية "حطام" (2008) في إطار نظرية الصدمة من منظور جوديث هيرمان في كتابها الصدمة والتعافي (١٩٩٢). يهدف كتابها إلى "تحديد نطاق التكيف البشري مع الأحداث المفجعة وكذلك منح تشخيصاً جديداً للناجين من الإيذاء وسوء المعاملة لفترات طويلة" (٢). تقسم هيرمان الصدمة إلى ثلاث مراحل: "فرط الإثارة، غزو الذكريات والشعور بالإنقباض" (٢٥). كما تقترح ثلاث مراحل للتعافي "المراحل الأساسية للتعافي تنطوي على كسب الثقة وإرساء الأمان وإعادة سرد قصة الحدث وإعادة التواصل مع المجتمع" (٢). علاوة على ذلك، تسلط الباحثة الضوء على فجيرة الحرب التي تعرضت لها نساء الكونغو في أثناء الحرب الأهلية (١٩٩٦-٢٠٠٣). أخيراً وليس آخراً، تقدم الباحثة الكاتبة المسرحية لين نوتيدج كما تبرز إلى أي مدى تم تجسيد فجيرة نساء الكونغو من خلال مسرحية "حطام" على أربع شخصيات نسائية: ماما نادي و جوزفين و سليمة و صوفي ، موضحة تفاوت رد الفعل منهن لتعرضهن لفجيرة الحرب. و تحلل الباحثة رد فعل سليمة و صوفي تحليلاً مستقيضاً باعتبارهما الضحيتين الأساسيتين بالمسرحية. يطبق البحث مبادئ نظرية هيرمان على تلك الشخصيات النسائية بوجه عام و سليمة و صوفي بوجه خاص. و في الخاتمة تلخص الباحثة ما توصلت إليه في الورقة البحثية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الصدمة – الانتهاك بالحروب – هيرمان – لين نوتيدج – "حطام"