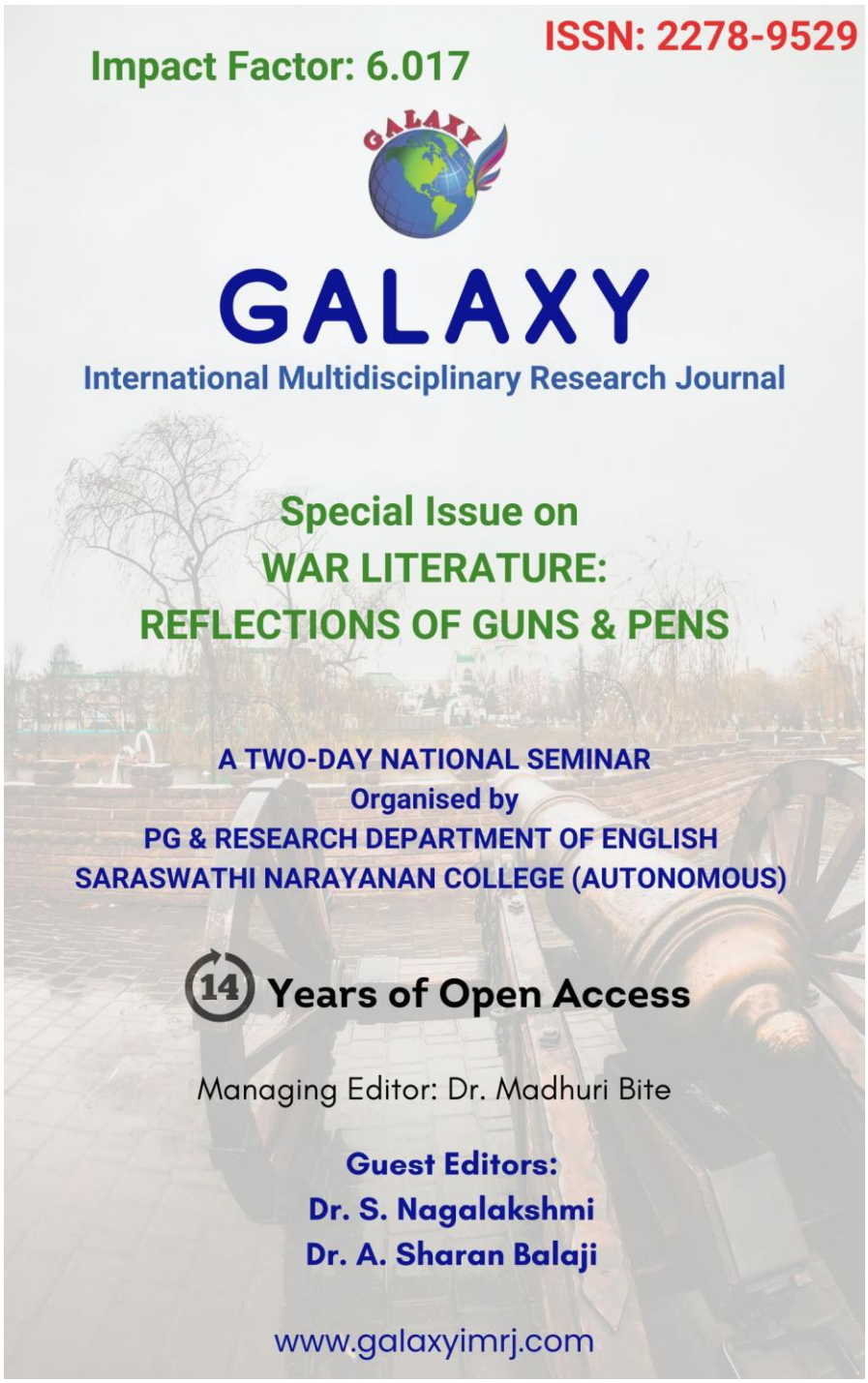


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Healing the Scars of War: A Study of the Psychological Toll of War in Jodi Picoult's *The Storyteller*

Sabitha. S
Part Time, Ph.D. Research Scholar,
PG & Research Department of English,
Saraswathi Narayanan College,
Madurai.
&
Dr. Nagalakshmi. S
Research Supervisor & Assistant Professor,
PG & Research Department of English,
Saraswathi Narayanan College,
Madurai.

Abstract:

War has an even greater impact on countries after its end. It completely breaks human humanity. It has upset the buildings of states and reduced economic growth and population growth with war. The other side of war affects human psychology. Women and men may undergo different processes, but their psychological needs are the same by the end of the day. Few can share their emotional toll with others, whereas few can't. It is the subject of inner bust and needs to be treated in the healing process. Conversations with others and forgiveness of others can provide a path of healing to achieve the emotional world. Jodi Picoult's novel *The Storyteller* examines the deep emotional loss of war for soldiers and civilians. Characters like Minka, Sage, and Joseph Weber showed guilt over injuries and extreme roles in the Holocaust. The novel is thrust deep into the characters and how the trauma of war remains with soldiers and civilians long after the end of the conflict. Their struggle plagued the memories of the terrifying events they witnessed and participated in.

The novel further explores the complex process of forgiveness between characters as a way of healing. By focusing on characters like Minka, Sage and Josef and their coping with their guilt and trauma. *The Storyteller* emphasises that true healing comes from confronting the past and understanding the emotional scars left by war. Individuals affected by trauma can work through therapeutic approaches like the "talking cure", and forgiveness offers a path of healing to the emotional peace of the soul. However, healing is an ongoing process that teaches Soldiers, survivors, and others dealing with deep emotional pain how to find ways to heal, even if they can never fully forget the past.

Keywords: psychological toll, emotional bond, trauma, forgiveness, healing, talking.

War is associated with the dehumanization of humans and the psychological toll. Jodi Picout's novel *The Storyteller* pours the psychological toll of human struggle and dehumanization that occurs during and after war. Both major and minor characters of the novel inhibit dehumanization and often feel the experiences of trauma caused by the war. The "talking cure" is a therapeutic method pioneered by Sigmund Freud that involves talking through one's experiences, feelings, and trauma as a way to bring unconscious thoughts and emotions into the conscious mind. Characters like Minka and Ania are victims of the war, having been subjected to extreme violence both physically and psychologically. Both face the psychological toll of their past that affects their survival of mankind in the form of survival guilt. Minka, a young Jewish woman of World War II, underwent unbearable horrors by the soldiers. Being a Holocaust survivor, her experiences in the concentration camps shaped her traumatised identity towards her family. Later, she openly expressed her personal history of survival stories to her granddaughter, which helped her survival. Throughout the novel, Minka tries to console herself by sharing. Ania plays a minor role in this novel as a fellow holocaust survivor and a friend of Minka. Even Ania faces the same emotional turmoil that was faced by

every other woman survivor of the holocaust. Dehumanization and the psychological toll are posted in forms like loss of self-identity, oppression, bond and meaningless relations.

The way Minka chose storytelling as a healing process for her healing soul is the form of “talking cure”. The process of storytelling gives her a sense of relief from her traumatic experiences. She wants to transform her psychological sufferings to pour out in the form of linguistic action and interaction. “Talking cure” is a psychotherapy a change mechanism of an individual. Christopher Marx and others said, “Narration is one of the techniques that inhibits an individual’s framework component”. As mentioned, the usage of the narrative technique in the form of storytelling helps Minka with healing. Internalised attempts that faced by Minka wants to externalise all her psychological toll into something that one can process and understand her state of mind over the time. Initially, it was not easy for her to communicate after her realisation that storytelling is necessary that need to know by her family members to avoid the practice turmoil. The act of speaking helps her to manage the toll of inner and when it is shared and understood. “Talking cure” in the form of narration helps Minka in a better way offers her to manage and communicate with others.

This novel is not limited to the pain of the victims; it also exhibits the sufferings and dehumanization of the soldiers. On looking into the experience of Joseph Weber a Nazi solider forced to confront his past actions. Compared to the victims, wounds and scars are settled more deeply in the minds of direct participants of the war and its atrocities. Josef carries a heavy guilt for his direct involvement in the horrors of war. His trauma might seem more physical, but he is haunted by the memories of atrocities he committed, which are like a mountain. Which in words is not just physical but deeply psychological. The actual relief of the “talking cure” is more necessary for Josef as a redemption not to confront his past guilt and remorse in the safest environment. The actual events of his experience are not understood by others like him. He

built a wall of his own that he be not be compensate ever for what he hath done. After the public free association is built for victims and participants, it creates a bond of shelter among others. In those camps, Josef finds out about Minka's granddaughter Sage in the camp, he was so worried and nervous to confess for her family. His attempts to seek forgiveness from Sage end in vain. Whenever he tries to reconcile, he remembers words are not the true friends to heal his deep wounds caused by his actual involvement in the war. The "talking cure" allows him to process his mind to force him to express his emotions to get his forgiveness. When Josef talks to Sage, he pours out all his pains, which have been locked in him for so many years. The process is not so simple; rather, it is more transactional with sage. Josef needs the other form of his healing with the reply of Sage's forgiveness for his past.

Minka's granddaughter, Sage, acts as a responsible healer both for her grandmother and ex-solider Josef Weber. Sage is the only tool for Minka and Josef as the record of the "talking cure" in the novel. She was not involved in the times of war, even though she suffered indirectly and equally. Being a granddaughter of a war survivor, she was burdened by her family's emotional suffering of their loved ones. Thus, the trauma of her family handed down the psychological scars that affect her emotional balance of her present stage. The process of forgiveness is an added and vital part of her emotional and psychological healing from her understanding of war. The struggle to forgive Josef's confession is not only faced by Sage but also the citizens. "Talking cure" in Minka and Josef is the opposite of sage. Her thing is not just an involvement of verbalising her pain but also understanding the complexities of her emotions in both hearing and forgiving. It is easy for Sage to control her emotions while listening to her grandmother; the same was different with Josef, a new companion. She is forced to confront her feelings of anger, pain and grief while listening to Josef.

Forgiveness is not just about solving Josef's guilt, the same as the generational trauma that affects her. Throughout the novel, she is portrayed as a descendant of a holocaust survivor. The process of forgiveness becomes increasingly complex for her. She prepares her inner self for the journey of forgiveness. She begins to realise that forgiveness is not merely an act of releasing the past but also an emotional process that demands deep self-reflection, empathy, and the capacity to transcend anger and hatred. She understands that forgiveness is not about erasing the memories but fostering a greater understanding of them. This process of healing permits her to find peace with the emotional scars that have been passed down to her. Both soldiers and civilians must stand up to their pain and trauma of the psychological impact of war through practicing "talking cure" and understanding each other. This process provides emotional peace to their inner being. As Christopher Marx, Benecke and Gumz say, the "talking cure" helps in changing mechanism:

> "The Change Mechanism specifies "how" linguistic activites curtively affect and transform the patient's sexperiential problem state. For this purpose it purpose is defines transformal process(es) effectuacted by linguistic activities (e.g., expulsion of "strangulated affect") as well as effect(s) of such processes, e.g., forgiving (cathartic purgation)"(4).

Jodi Picoult gracefully demonstrates that war and its impacts are not confined only to those directly involved. As mentioned earlier, talking cure acts as a medium for every individual to process the pain and trauma caused by war. The articulation of words helps as a change mechanism to forgive and understand others. This change mechanism helps civilians understand the generational trauma that war imposes on families and communities. Admitting the emotional toll of war and path offering understanding and reconciliation clearly explains healing and transformation. The author gives a powerful therapeutic tool, forgiveness, and

summons peace. *The Storyteller* demonstrates that true healing from the trauma of war requires not just physical recovery but an emotional and psychological journey. By embracing the talking cure and forgiveness, the characters in the novel find ways to confront their wounds and move forward, highlighting the possibility of emotional peace despite the scars left by war.

In conclusion, war is only associated with health and mental well-being. It also impacts economic growth and tends to disrupt and distort. It affects manpower and family relationships, and there is a decline in marriage, etc. It highly demolishes the system towards its economic conditions. War and its impact are still a foreshadowing phenomenon. To rebuild the healthy profit-making status of its effect, one must completely get cured inward and outward. Ultimately, this novel serves as a poignant reminder that healing is an ongoing process. It ensures that individuals actively confront their emotional scars, particularly those caused by trauma and conflict. This idea is emphasized throughout the novel through a variety of healing methods, chief among them the “talking cure” and forgiveness, both of which are essential to the individual’s attempts to mend their psychological scars. The novel’s exploration of various methods highlights that the dealing of healing is neither presented as comprehensive nor easy. Forgiveness and the talking cure are both crucial instruments in the healing process, but the book implies that they are neither simple nor quick fixes. Characters can start processing their emotional wounds by talking about trauma using the talking cure, but this does not imply that healing is finished. Forgiveness is not an easy task; it depends more on self-reflection, understanding and willingness to think about healing. The emotional journeys of characters emphasize the lasting effects of war and the difficult process of healing, particularly through the lens of therapeutic approaches such as the talking cure and the concept of forgiveness. Talking cure and forgiveness is not hundred percent enough for wounded souls, this paper helps characters to understand the situation. It also ensures that healing is a day-by-day process of

individuals. The process may take longer, but understanding will settle deep down in the conscious will never also the unconscious to get provoked.

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