



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***ROLES OF ANIMALS AND ECO-PSYCHOLOGY IN THE HEALING OF
TRAUMA IN CONTEMPORARY FICTION***

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By

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**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra
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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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February 2021

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The field of Eco-Psychology is an emerging avenue to help understand better the effectiveness of human-nature bond in the recovery and healing of psychological trauma. The capacity to live in balance with nature has been identified as the key element to improve the spiritual and emotional well-being of humans by creating a reciprocal relationship between humans and the natural world surrounding them. In order to achieve this unification, the awakening of ecological unconscious in human minds is fundamental as this would be the key element to be tapped into for humans to realize the true powers nature possesses. One of the most notable connections man has with nature is through animals and this association has been characterised to facilitate therapy for humans through the diverse inherent qualities that animals possess. These qualities are worth to be explored in ascertaining better how trauma can be negotiated with the intervention of animals. Herein, this thesis firstly aims to analyse the varied manifestations of trauma in the selected literary texts using the trauma model by Cathy Caruth as well as other Trauma theorists. The next objective that is aimed to be accomplished is to examine the awakening of ecological unconscious among the selected literary characters using the theory of Eco-psychology by Theodore Roszak and Andy Fisher. Once this has been achieved, the relationship between human and animals is investigated further to ascertain how this union is fundamental in aiding to heal psychological trauma in the literary characters of the novels selected for this thesis. The three literary texts that have been selected as the primary sources for this include *Suspect* (2013) by Robert Crais, *Archipelago* (2012) by Monique Roffey, and *Life of Pi* (2001) by Yann Martel. These novels are deliberately chosen as they contain elements pertaining to psychological trauma that have stemmed from natural disasters, murder and personal tragedy. All these catastrophes ultimately led the characters in the fiction to experience different exhibits of trauma such as hallucinations, extreme anxiety, flashbacks and nightmares. Mode of recovery started to transpire when these

characters begun to establish a deep affiliation with the natural world surrounding them. The non-human natural world played an integral role in the integration of psyches between the literary characters and the environment surrounding them as well as helped in the process of recovery of psychological trauma through their observations and assimilation with the animal characters.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk Ijazah Doktor Falsafah

PERANAN HAIWAN DAN EKO-PSIKOLOGI DALAM PEMULIHAN TRAUMA DALAM FIKSI KONTEMPORARI

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Bidang Eko-Psikologi adalah cabang baru untuk membantu memahami dengan lebih baik keberkesanan perhubungan manusia-alam dalam pemulihan dan penyembuhan trauma psikologi. Keupayaan untuk hidup seimbang dengan alam telah dikenal pasti sebagai elemen utama untuk meningkatkan kesejahteraan rohani dan emosi manusia dengan mewujudkan hubungan timbal balik antara manusia dan dunia semula jadi di sekitar mereka. Untuk mencapai penyatuan ini, kebangkitan alam bawah sadar dalam minda manusia adalah asas kerana ini akan menjadi elemen utama yang dapat digunakan oleh manusia untuk menyedari kekuatan sebenar yang dimiliki alam semula jadi. Salah satu hubungan yang paling ketara yang dimiliki manusia dengan alam adalah melalui haiwan dan hubungan ini dicirikan untuk memudahkan terapi bagi manusia melalui pelbagai sifat semula jadi yang dimiliki oleh haiwan. Sifat-sifat ini perlu dijelajahi untuk memastikan bagaimana trauma dapat dipulih dengan penglibatan haiwan. Di sini, tesis ini pertama sekali ingin menganalisis pelbagai manifestasi trauma dalam teks sastera yang dipilih menggunakan model trauma oleh Cathy Caruth serta ahli teori Trauma yang lain. Objektif seterusnya yang ingin dicapai adalah untuk mengkaji kebangkitan ekologi bawah sadar antara watak sastera terpilih menggunakan teori Eco-psikologi oleh Theodore Roszak dan Andy Fisher. Setelah ini dapat dicapai, hubungan antara manusia dan haiwan diselidiki lebih lanjut untuk memastikan bagaimana penyatuan ini sangat mendasar dalam membantu menyembuhkan trauma psikologi dalam watak sastera novel yang dipilih untuk tesis ini. Tiga teks sastera yang telah dipilih sebagai sumber utama untuk ini termasuk *Suspect* (2013) oleh Robert Crais, *Archipelago* (2012) oleh Monique Roffey, dan *Life of Pi* (2001) oleh Yann Martel. Novel-novel ini sengaja dipilih kerana mengandungi unsur-unsur yang berkaitan dengan trauma psikologi yang berpunca dari bencana alam, pembunuhan dan tragedi peribadi. Semua malapetaka ini akhirnya menyebabkan watak-watak dalam fiksyen mengalami pelbagai trauma seperti halusinasi, kegelisahan melampau, kilas balik dan

mimpi buruk. Cara pemulihan mula berlaku ketika watak-watak ini mula menjalin hubungan yang mendalam dengan dunia semula jadi di sekitarnya. Dunia semula jadi memainkan peranan penting dalam penyatuan jiwa antara watak-watak sastera dan persekitaran di sekitarnya serta membantu dalam proses pemulihan trauma psikologi melalui pemerhatian dan asimilasi mereka dengan watak-watak haiwan.



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The number of cases related to mental illness and psychological trauma has taken a great leap in recent years with the ever challenging demands of life as well as experiences of extremely devastating events that impede an individual's ability to lead a normal life. The American Psychological Association (APA) has defined psychological trauma as an "emotional response to a terrible event like an accident, rape or natural disaster" (13) and often these victims are characterised to be in a state of shock and denial as an immediate response to these tragedies. In many cases, the effects can appear after a longer period of time after the initial traumatic event that can be manifested via multiple ways such as unpredictable emotions, flashbacks and extreme nightmares. The overwhelmingly trauma-inducing events can cause lasting impacts on the victims' emotional and mental stability. Many of these victims are often shaken up, disoriented and withdrawn which eventually make it very difficult to be a functional member of the society.

There are numerous factors that contribute to inherent traumatic experiences in a victim ranging from "large-scale events such as plagues, war, mass-murder, terrorist attacks, and long-term oppression, to individual experiences of rape, abuse, sudden accidents, and the death of loved ones" (Blake 2). The unexpected, threatening and overwhelming nature of these events can most certainly be distressing and bring about calamitous effects on the psychological well-being of affected individuals. The psychological trauma experienced encompasses the way people react to physical and psychological happenings that include "actual life-threatening situations resulting in an intense fear of helplessness" (Flannery 264). These sudden catastrophic incidents leave very little time for the victims to retort resulting many being exposed to extreme conditions as they are unable to escape from the affliction. The after effects of the catastrophe on the mental health of the victims vary from one person to another and also depend on the gravity of the initial trauma. In addition, the degree of trauma experienced also varies from an individual to another as it is based on their personal resiliency and the support garnered from surrounding people which may increase their capacity to respond more positively.

In recent years, many studies have been conducted in various fields and aspects of life to ascertain how traumatic events bring about adverse effects to affected victims. Natural disasters, for instance, have played a huge part in the ever growing traumatic ordeals experienced by many as it often "leaves the spiritual domain in disarray" (Wilson and Thomas 168). Its unpredictable and

untimely occurrence brings about massive destruction to affected areas leading to high levels of destabilization and distress among victims. Taking the recent Australian bushfires in 2020, the damage was immeasurable as the fire swept across millions of hectares destroying the flora and fauna, thousands of buildings and killing many people. In a study by West et al., they asserted that this incident left many traumatised especially for the people who were directly involved as well as the journalists and fire-fighters as “in a service that is designed to respond to natural disasters which, by definition, are potential traumatic, rural fire-fighters and journalists are at risk of psychological trauma” (2). They share the mutual grief with fellow residents to an extent of becoming embedded in the communities they are working with. Despite being very early to ascertain signs of Post Traumatic Syndrome Disorder (PTSD), the report suggests signs of distress and shock most certainly were reflected on the affected victims as an immediate response in the aftermath.

Another instance of a massive natural disaster that resulted to symptoms of poor general health, PTSD and depression were rather prevalent in the undersea mega-thrust earthquake and tsunami that struck the north-eastern of Japan in the year 2011. This massive attack was reported to be the strongest ever to hit Japan and resulted in severe structural damage on infrastructure, roads and killed thousands of people. In a 2020 study conducted by Kukiwara et al. involving 241 earthquake evacuees from Fukushima, it was shown that almost “53.5 % exhibited clinically concerning symptoms of PTSD while the remaining indicated clinical PTSD symptoms” (524). Regardless to some reports indicating that some of the evacuees were able to endure the traumatic event relatively well, obvious traumatic disorder and depression were the predominant effects of the catastrophe as it left substantial detrimental effects on the physical and mental health of the victims. Most victims were in a vulnerable position as the quake did not only destroy their homes but also swept away their entire family in a flash. They were dragged into a state of shock and uncertainty as there wasn't an immediate resolution to the conflict at hand and the future seemed to be rather bleak.

Similarly, various psychological problems were also experienced in a study conducted by Norris et al. which involved 160 distinct samples comprising of children, adolescents, college students as well as older and middle-aged adults from 29 countries and five continents. These samples experienced almost every imaginable type of disasters ranging from earthquakes, hurricanes and floods to wildfires, typhoons and volcanic eruptions. Specific psychological problems; mainly “anxiety, depression and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), were found most often, followed by nonspecific psychological distress and varying health problems and concerns” (Norris et al. 241). The study shows how different psychological disturbances affected the different age groups. For example, the young exhibited behavioural problems and hyperactivity while the elders were more vulnerable to depression, on-going stress and somatic complaints. The study was concluded by claiming that the effects of natural disasters are diverse as it affects the psychological well-being

of any age group across the globe. The representation of traumatic experiences may have deferred from an individual to another; nonetheless all these survivors surely did possess certain traits of PTSD after their horrific experiences.

As aforementioned, psychological trauma results from various directions and numerous reasons contribute to this unfortunate occurrence. Losing someone in line of duty or through an accident can also cause great distress to affected victims. The unexpected death of someone who is close to us most likely will elevate symptoms of multiple forms of psychopathology and is “associated with heightened vulnerability for onset of virtually all commonly occurring psychiatric disorders” (Keyes et al. 867). These victims who are experiencing bereavement start developing a sense of being abandoned, detached and all alone. Losing a loved one would also result to disruption of sense of self as the risk of depression and PTSD is elevated drastically. Keyes et al elaborated that the unexpected death of a loved one has the potential to increase the “substantial risk factor for the onset of a manic episode, especially among older adults, and even among those with no prior history of mood, anxiety, or alcohol disorders” (888). Their sense of reasoning and practicality begin to fade which ultimately pushes them to resort to self-harm actions.

In the field of Literary Criticism, it was not until the late twentieth-century when trauma studies started to make an impact. According to Anne Whitehead, the concept of trauma in the literary world “marked the shift from its usage predominantly in the medical and scientific discourse to fiction” (4). She claimed that in trauma fiction, the depiction is not limited to individuals facing the trauma but extends to a broader societal context which in return allows readers to explore a wider and collective perspective. As the narratives of trauma present varied issues such as race, disasters, war and gender-politics, it functions to investigate the causes and the consequences of the traumatic events experienced in the fiction. Despite being contrary to the actual definition of trauma as it resists language, novelists claim that the impact of trauma can be only be represented by emulating its “forms and symptoms, so that temporality and chronology collapse, and narratives are characterized by repetition and indirection” (Whitehead 3). The wounds and sufferings of trauma victims are granted a second chance as they are given a voice through language.

Numerous literary studies about trauma and recovery have been conducted since the 1900s and all of them have provided valuable insights into the traumatic experiences of the Holocaust victims, colonialism, rape, slavery and war. In a study by Tembo for instance, the portrayal of the civil war in East African fictional and autobiographical works were explored. This study examined how the East African writers used literature and art to transcend the physical and psychological trauma into works of fiction as a result of the intra-state conflicts that engulfed Ethiopia, Eritrea, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan,

Sudan and Uganda. The main aim of the study was to demonstrate that trauma studies provide “useful methodological tools for the analysis of the representation of trauma in fictional and autobiographical work” (Tembo 4). The narrative techniques that were used in the fictional works produced in the region helped to represent both individual and collective trauma.

Schonfelder in “Wounds and Words: Childhood and Family Trauma in Romantic and Postmodern Fiction” looked back to early Romantic periods in an attempt to understand trauma better. A selection of Romantic novels was read alongside with Romantic and contemporary psychiatry. She then examined further how empirical approaches can deepen the theorization of trauma using an interdisciplinary framework to reveal fresh insights into the poetics, politics, and ethics of trauma fiction. Additionally, this book also revealed how “the clinical concept of trauma has been reduced to a cultural trope for postmodern attitudes to language and history” (11) which has resulted in the idea of trauma in literature to be meaningless. Nonetheless, Schonfelder chooses to contest this notion by suggesting that the continual flourishing of the field of trauma shows the on-going importance of this genre and its inclusion in literature should not be halted but rather seek for continuities and find new beginnings (11).

Trauma was also studied in “Worlds of Hurt: Reading the Literatures of Trauma” by Kali Tal. In her findings, Kali concentrated on three main areas of trauma representation; the mental conditions of the Holocaust survivors, Vietnam War Veterans as well as the trauma of the sexually abused women and cases of incest. She observed trauma as a life threatening event that affected the mental capacity of the victims to conceive ideas of the world accurately. The telling and re-telling of trauma stories were perceived to become tools for the construction of national and cultural myths. These trauma victims felt excluded from society as their experiences surpassed “everyone’s imagination; an experience which naturally distinguishes them from others” (De Mey 27). To make matters worse, they were also unable to rationalise their experiences as many casted suspicion over their narratives.

Evidently, the effects of any tragedy can most certainly weigh a person down into immense stress and psychological trauma. In *Unclaimed Experience*, Cathy Caruth describes trauma as “an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena” (11). A traumatised individual who at first might be at a numbed state after the initial incident may need to relive the entire experience in repeated nightmares and recurring images of trauma at a later uncertain time in future. These findings are similar to Peter Levine’s who describes trauma not by the “event that one goes through but by one’s reactions to it and symptoms” (23). Traumatized individuals clearly display a varied criteria associated with post-traumatic stress disorder and other subclinical symptoms

beyond common diagnostic conditions. Any tragedy that befalls an individual can be rather sudden and distressing. Most immediate reaction to a catastrophe is shock which at first manifests as numbness or denial. Ultimately, this shock gives away to an emotional state that often includes high levels of anxiety, guilt or depression.

In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud suggests that trauma is the “wound of the mind—the breach in the mind’s experience of time, self, and the world—is not, like the wound of the body, a simple and healable event” (3). Traumatic events can change victims’ way of life and also their psychological outlook. Regardless of the possibility that the immediate source of trauma is removed, time does not really eradicate the entire experience. A survivor may continuously “suffer and appear frozen in time” (Crosby 67). What was unknown precisely to the victim at the point of the incident may return to haunt the survivor later on. The language of trauma entangles the knowing and not knowing which makes its representation rather complicated resulting to victims being in a helpless state as their concerns may not be addressed accordingly.

Caruth and Freud both agree to the notion that traumatic events remain unavailable to wilful recalling. Traumatized victims experience disorientation as their minds are unable to recognize events that were never consciously experienced at the first place. Luckhurst asserts that time also breaks down for traumatized victims as “the traumatic memory persists in a half-life, rather like a ghost, a haunting absent presence of another time in our time” (81). As a result, a refusal to go back in time causes the victim to experience pain from time to time. This is parallel to the idea of trauma as a dialectical process, a concept proposed by Freud, as the original traumatic event was neither incorporated completely by the consciousness, nor by the memory that generated it much later in life.

Since trauma has, unfortunately, been a common occurrence for many people, a number of different studies and fields have developed to help trauma victims understand and heal from their devastating experiences. As a point of departure from the aforementioned trauma studies, I intend to examine the impact Eco-psychology plays in helping the characters in my selected novels to overcome the trauma that they have experienced due to various catastrophic experiences. Eco-psychology is seen as an emerging area of study that helps to better understand the effectiveness of human-nature bond in negotiating trauma. Eco-psychologists recognize that a capacity to live in balance with nature is essential to human emotional and spiritual well-being; “a view that is consistent with the healing traditions of indigenous peoples of past and present, but lacking in present-day Western psychological theory” (Roszak and Kanner 1). This deeply bonded and reciprocal relationship between humans and nature is crucial in helping to heal the trauma being experienced by an individual.

In opposition to mainstream thinking, we don't exist in a vacuum. As a species inhabiting this planet, we are ecologically embedded- and so are our inner workings of what we like to call our psyche. To understand better this innate emotional bond between human (the psyche) and nature, it is fundamental to comprehend the root meaning of the term Eco-psychology beforehand. According to Andy Fisher, psychology is “the logos-the study, order, meaning, or speech—of the psyche or soul” (4). He further explained that the term “eco” originates from the Greek term ‘oikos’ which translates to ‘home’. To put it plainly, Eco-psychology approaches the mind in connection to its natural home and investigates “the basic shifts in our patterns of identity and relationship that occur when we include our connection to the web of life around us as essential to human well-being” (Shapiro 225).

Herein lies the crux of Eco-psychology which is to challenge dualism, a situation in which the human mind is not connected to nature, by “turning human psyche inside out” (Fisher 9). Our dualism with nature can be healed when we locate our mind in the world itself in which it helps to return the soul to nature and vice versa. Nonetheless, dualism can only be challenged if humans are able to tap into their ecological unconscious. Theodore Roszak, in *The Voice of the Earth*, asserted that “the core of the mind is the ecological unconscious; open access to this is the path to our sanity” (329). He further exerted that it is in this deep part of the human psyche which shelters our compacted ecological intelligence and when our id and ego unites, we are able to attain greater heights in our evolutionary adventures. This awakening of the ecological unconscious awakens our inherent sense of environmental reciprocity which ascertains the survival of our species on the planet.

The ingrained attitude of ignoring the psychological significance of human-nature relationships has been seen as a major concern in the field of Eco-psychology. Humans have to develop and also acknowledge the psychological status given to nature as it “conceptualizes the natural world in a way that is more satisfying for the purposes of psychological understanding than are the more usual representations of nature as a realm of mere scientific objects, resources, or scenic vistas” (Fisher 7). The embodiment of nature within oneself enables humans to perceive the natural surroundings as part of the human psyche and this union would no longer separate man from the other-than-human beings setting as the “others” are ensouled in their own right, as fellow beings or kin” (Fisher 8).

As Eco-psychology concerns our state of mind, it delves into our state of consciousness, responsibilities as well as in seeking for true meaning and purpose in life. Once we have acknowledged the links between our psychological world and the natural setting that environs us, our psyche from its “confinement is loosen and we begin to free our sentience to return back to the visible world that contains us” (Fisher 13). The wilderness plays a prominent role in developing human personality as it personifies “ways of being

and relating to others” (Fisher 8). This idea is agreed by Harold F. Searles too in *The Nonhuman Environment: In Normal Development and in Schizophrenia*, when he suggested that nature plays a pivotal role in our own psychological life and ignoring it would amount to harm to our own psychological well-being (xi). It was explained that whether humans are aware or otherwise, the non-human environment weaves into making a larger matrix for the affairs for humans to explore and perceive as part of it.

One of the most notable connections man has with nature is through animals. Animals possess certain inherent qualities that facilitate therapy for humans. According to this view, the mere presence of the animal, its spontaneous behaviours, and its availability for interaction may provide calming effects in humans as well as serve as catalysts for human social interactions (Kruger and Serpell 26). Animals are seen as interactive beings that can be used to help people see both themselves and the world in new ways and add new skills and responses to their behavioural repertoires. Animal therapy is making strides in the treatment of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). For years, animals have been used with great benefit in the treatment of the aged and the terminally ill (Debra and Waddel 454). The intrinsic qualities that animals possess are surely worth exploring in understanding better how trauma can be healed with the intervention of animals.

In view of the above concerns pertaining to trauma and recovery, the literary texts that have been chosen for this study are mainly trauma fiction whereby the form of recovery involves interaction between humans and the non-human natural world. The three literary texts that have been selected as the primary source for this study include *Suspect* (2013) by Robert Crais, *Archipelago* (2012) by Monique Roffey, and *Life of Pi* (2001) by Yann Martel. The first novel, *Suspect*, revolves around the main character Scott, a law enforcer, who was left in a state of shock and trauma upon losing his partner as well as his love interest Stephanie in line of duty. After a short rehabilitation effort initiated by the agency, Scott was then moved to the canine unit to carry out simpler tasks as the trauma experienced was still too overwhelming for him to be assigned to more complex tasks. This was when Scott was first introduced to Maggie; a 3-year-old German Shepard. The unique relationship formed between the two helped Scott to re-evaluate his life goals and served as a therapeutic mechanism for him to negotiate the trauma that he experienced.

The second novel, *Archipelago*, narrates the conflicts and despair experienced by a family that was badly affected by a flood that killed a family member as well as massive destruction to their humble abode. The death of their son left the lead characters Gavin and Claire in a state of desolation and hopelessness. As a mean to escape the traumatic memories, Gavin decided to set sail with his daughter Lucy and dog Suzy into the Galapagos. The entire voyage that lasted for several months played a huge role in helping Gavin and his daughter to re-examine themselves and their beliefs about life. The various

encounters with numerous different animals, landscapes and people in general shaped their perspectives and a more positive outlook about their life.

Similarly, the third novel, *Life of Pi* too explored on a journey of trauma and survival involving the main character Piscine Patel. Piscine, or better known as Pi, was left stranded in the ocean on a tugboat for over 200 days before he was saved after a ship mishap killed all on board including his parents. Throughout his ordeal, Pi was only accompanied by a few animals that managed to save themselves from drowning which hopped onto the tugboat. As days passed on, series of hallucination and other traumatic traits began to affect Pi and at many junctures, Pi was seen to have almost given up. Nonetheless, the close relationship that was formed with another animal character, Richard Parker, was the basis of his survival. The immense role that Richard Parker played pushed Pi to endure the whole episode.

These novels are deliberately chosen as they contain elements pertaining to trauma as well as link to Eco-psychology, animals and also healing. Some traumatic events are being examined in this study have stemmed from natural disasters, murder and personal tragedy. All these catastrophes ultimately led the characters in the fiction to experience trauma and the only means that help them to heal was through their observations and interaction with nature in the novels. Herein, I am interested in exploring the relationships between human and nature and how this union is crucial in helping to heal trauma in the literary characters of the novels selected for this study. While the recovery of trauma in literary studies has often been studied using other forms of recovery such as acting-out, working through, narrative techniques and music; the central to this study is to identify the role nature plays in the awakening of the ecological unconscious of the literary characters as well as investigating the therapeutic role the animal characters play in negotiating the psychological trauma experienced.

To address the gap that this study aims to fulfil, the first aspect that will be accomplished is to analyse the varied manifestations of trauma experienced by the characters in the literary works. The next objective would then be to examine the awakening the aforementioned concept of ecological unconscious of the characters in the selected texts by examining how they challenged their dualistic nature by turning their psyches inside out. Once the awakening has been achieved, the focus will then be on human-animal bond and how this mechanism is useful as a healing tool in overcoming trauma that is caused by the aforementioned catastrophes.

1.2 Statement of The Problem

While there has been extensive amount of scholarly works done analysing the works of trauma and recovery with reference to racism, rape, slavery and also war, the main aim of my study is not to ignore the importance of the aforementioned studies but instead to build upon the precedence that has been set. It is my aim to investigate a new branch of mechanism for the recovery of trauma among literary characters involving nature and animals. Nonetheless, it is pivotal firstly to examine recent studies in in the field of literary trauma studies as well as new forms of trauma recovery that has been studied pertaining to works of fiction. The findings from these studies would provide a better reasoning to what the gap this study aims to fulfil as well as to provide justification to the significance that this study aims to contribute to the body of literature.

Banerjee in a recent 2020 article entitled “Defiance and the speakability of rape: Decolonizing trauma studies in Mahasweta Devi’s short fiction” studied the traumatic representations of violence in the short stories of *Draupadi* and *Behind the Bodice*. In both the aforementioned literary works by Mahasweta Devi, the female characters subjected to violence and racial prejudice. These subaltern women were often arrested for no reason and raped by senior officers while in being custody. Hence, the main aim of Banerjee was to explore the lead characters in these fictions as how they decided to break free from the typical stereotype of merely succumbing to the traumatic ordeal but to act up in defiance and agency in the face of trauma which inadvertently called for social justice and change. This article investigates the complex ways in which the trope of rape works in Devi’s work and it empowers her female protagonists and make them powerful critiques of the patriarchal systems of exploitation. The works of Devi radically destabilizes the premise of female vulnerability and violent objectification of women in regards to sexual exploitation and expected traumatic aftermath.

Subsequently, the scope of trauma and recovery was also explored in “Trauma and Memory in Maya Angelou’s Autobiographical Fiction” by Nina Maria Roscan. The writer chose the fiction works produced by Maya Angelou written between the years of 1969 and 2013 in which the main theme was the depiction of trauma, marginalization and psychological integrity of the Black female. While obvious traumatic representations were analysed in all these works, the central to this article was to identify how the memory functions as the process of psychological healing through the narrative reformulation of the author throughout her life. By using techniques such as silences, metaphors and self-censorship, Angelou was able to show how social injustice and prejudice towards women can be combatted in her fictional works an also as a mean to empower Black female to negotiate the psychological trauma experienced.

In Megan Crotty's "Kathleen Costello-Sullivan, Trauma and Recovery in the Twenty-First-Century Irish Novel", the focus is on shifting the scholarly focus away from renderings of traumatic histories and towards depictions of recovery. A genealogy of trauma narratives in Irish literary production was traced to build a case for the curative potential of twenty-first century fictional accounts of trauma which the focus is primarily of how the characters negotiated the ordeal rather than mere accounts of what they experienced. Drawing on Dori Laub and Soshana Felman's work on testimony and the Holocaust, the author identified that narrating one's trauma is essential to recovery. In most of the literary works used in this study, the characters experienced numerous accounts of traumatic experiences and the main way that they managed to overcome the harsh experiences were by working through the ordeal rather than evading it. Speaking out on what actually happened helped them to look into the problem better as harbouring was not the best option available to these characters.

The aforementioned scholarly works provide a great insight of the latest trends and scope of discussion that concerns the field of trauma and recovery in literary studies. As seen above, some of the more common trauma recuperative strategies investigated in most works of fiction involve concepts of acting-out, working through, narrative style, defiance and many others. While these studies have contributed immense to the body of literature, it most certainly does provide some room to identify other trauma recovery strategies that can be explored too. Hence, the idea of how nature can be incorporated in negotiating psychological trauma among literary characters sparked and became the central focus of this present study. To address the gap that this study aims to fill, the concept of Eco-psychology was identified as an area that is rather green and worth to be examined further. In doing so, this study wants to investigate how the human-animal bond under the lens of Eco-psychology help in the process of trauma recovery in the literary works selected for this study.

Literary studies on Eco-psychology, specifically in regards to human-animal bond, have been making strides of late. DellaValle in "Eco-psychology in J.G. Ballard's Fiction" discussed the effects of urban and natural surroundings on the human psyche and how this imbalance affected the psyche of the characters involved in the selected text. In this study, DellaValle examined the imbalanced interconnectedness of the characters in Ballard's Science-fiction texts with the environment which ultimately affected their psychological equilibrium. When there is disconnection between men and nature, the deep consciousness fails to reconnect with the natural surroundings and live in isolation. The findings from this research concluded that estrangement from nature impedes positive evolutionary growth of the characters from the selected text.

Additionally, Catherine Helen in “Reading animals and the human-animal divide in twenty-first century fiction” discusses how twenty-first century fiction “engages with and practises the textual politics of animal representation, and the forms these representations take when their positions relative to the many and complex compositions of the human-animal divide are taken into account” (3). The representation of these animals are analysed through the works of Jacques Derrida and Cary Wolfe in a selection of twenty-first century novels. The core of this study focused on the relationship formed between animals and humans and how this union is conditioned by the imaginative mind of shaping in humans. The plural and repeatedly folded boundary between human and animals often shaped the awkward and uncomfortable ideas men have about animals.

Besides, a study by Andrianova in “Narrating Animal Trauma in Bulgakov and Tolstoy” also showed the emergence of animal-human studies in modern fiction. It offers new animal-centred close readings of Tolstoy’s *Strider* and Bulgakov’s *Heart of a Dog*, whereby the central focus of the study pays close attention to animal pain as compared to it being an allegory of human society. The writer employed narratological and focalization lenses to redefine the status of animals in literature in which it can change the ontological place of it in the world by urging more critical works and animal advocacy to be executed in all teaching and learning academies. These efforts are aimed to increase the awareness of the inequality and social injustice linked to animal welfare and also as an avenue to develop empathy for animals among students.

Similarly, the inclusion of human-animal bond has also been analysed by Froid in “Didactic Children’s Literature and the Emergence of Animal Rights”. This study primarily investigated the history of social feelings in the context of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century didactic children’s books, where the authors frequently urged emotional and social responses to others’ treatment of animals. This study made a comparison in didactic children’s literature and early animal- rights discourse between American writers; Sarah Josepha Hale and Lydia Sigourney with British writer; Charlotte Smith. These writers sought to reform society by teaching children the proper behaviour in treating animals and the process of establishing kindness to animals as an important signifier of middle-class identity.

The inclusion of nature as a therapeutic avenue has also made its way to a few literary studies in regards to trauma. For instance, in “The River’s For Everybody: The River Chronotope and Trauma Healing in Melvin Dixon’s *Trouble the Water*”, Freeman identified the correlations between river imagery and the articulations of trauma and its recovery in the novel *Trouble the Water*. The geographical and psychological aspects of the settings were studied together to ascertain how nature, water to be specific, played a pivotal role in helping overcome the psychological disturbances faced by the characters.

River imagery is examined in regards to character spirituality and individual collective trauma.

Based on these aforementioned previous studies, the idea of human-nature relationship under the lens of Eco-psychology has not been extensively discussed on how trauma can be resolved or healed through nature. While most studies discussed the inclusion of animals in literature by advocating animal rights, allegory and metaphor, and also textual politics of animal representation, very few findings relate to how animals can be used specifically as a healing tool in trauma. Therein lies my interest in explicating the use of animals as a way for traumatized characters in the selected novels to overcome their trauma through the awakening of their ecological unconscious; the core concept of my study.

It is my interest in examining the awakening of their ecological unconscious and also the relationship these characters have developed with nature to heal their psychological wounds. By examining such traits, the characteristics of Eco-psychology would be matched perfectly as this field acknowledges that nature and humans need each other for healing reasons. While Eco-psychology indulges in the recovery of both; human and nature, this study would only look at the literary characters from the selected contemporary fiction benefited from nature in negotiating the psychological trauma experienced.

The alliance that is formed between the literary human and animal characters will be analysed to ascertain the therapeutic benefits animals possess in aiding to negotiate the psychological trauma that is being experienced by the characters. Unlike in some previous scholarly works that focused more on animal representations in a metaphorical perspective, this study will concentrate on the healing aspects animals hold that is indeed crucial in helping to heal psychological wounds of the literary characters. Animals play an integral role in providing a medium of transference of emotions, sensorial medium to build trust as well as acting as an animate object to allow assuage the traumatic experiences among the literary characters.

1.3 Research Objectives

The three main objectives of this study are presented as the following:

1. To explore the varied manifestations of psychological trauma as reflected through the characters in the selected literary texts.
2. To examine the awakening of the ecological unconscious depicted by the authors through the selected literary characters based on an

integration of psyches between the human mind and the natural world.

3. To investigate how human-animal bond under the lens of Eco-psychology help in the process of the recovery of trauma in the selected literary characters.

1.4 Research Questions

In order to accomplish the above-mentioned objectives, this study is aimed to answer the following questions:

1. How are the manifestations of psychological trauma depicted through the characters as a result of the catastrophes faced in the selected literary texts?
2. How does the awakening of the ecological unconscious help the traumatized characters in the selected literary texts to turn their psyches inside out and be united with nature?
3. How does human-animal bond under the lens of Eco-psychology help in the process of recovery of trauma in the selected literary texts?

1.5 Significance of the study

In recent years, scholars and literary critics have linked the study of trauma to literature, allowing authors to understand how the human mind experiences and handles traumatic events, how they linger with the survivor in the form of nightmares, hallucinations and flashbacks, and what techniques the victim employs to cope with the experiences. These previous findings have been imperative in this present study in exploring the varied traumatic manifestations of the selected literary characters and the different coping mechanism used in order to negotiate the psychological trauma being experienced. As such, this study has been carried out employing the Caruthian model of Trauma Theory as well as exploring the concepts of ecological unconscious and dualism under the lens of Eco-psychology by Theodore Roszak and Andy Fisher.

I have explored the varied manifestations of psychological trauma experienced by the selected literary characters written by authors from different parts of the world. The characters, in their attempt to deal with the horrifying experiences, developed a kinship with the non-human natural world and this unification allowed the mind to develop a new coping mechanism to deal with the problem at hand. All the three authors; Robert Crais, Monique Roffey and Yann Martel were able to illustrate the sufferings experienced by the characters and how the natural surroundings and animal characters helped the traumatized characters to survive the ordeal.

These authors add on to the significance of this study as I am able to take on a unique approach on addressing the problem at hand by analysing it in a more universal and non-bias manner. The themes of these novels do not directly speak of trauma and recovery, nonetheless it does provide an in-depth perspective of how different forms of tragedies that befall the literary characters bring about adverse effects to their psychological well-being. The inclusion of a natural surrounding as the main setting and also the abundance of animal characters adds on to a fresh approach of how these elements can be incorporated in the recovery of trauma as seen in the development of the plots.

This study posits great significance as it not only enriches the scholarship on authors, the selected literary texts, Trauma, Eco-psychology and human-animal bond but also helps to understand better how the healing of trauma in literary works can be viewed from a different perspective. While the recovery of trauma via other means (acting-out, working through, narrative therapy and imagery of nature) has been extensively discussed in literary studies, this study expounds on the role nature plays specifically in awakening the ecological unconscious of the literary characters to provide an avenue for human-animal bond to form in order to heal trauma.

This cross-disciplinary study is aimed at integrating the characteristics of trauma and the healing aspects from Eco-psychology which has not been discussed much by other literary studies. The findings from this study would be beneficial for future researchers in literary works to see how the awakening of the ecological unconscious through nature plays an important role in helping characters to build a human-animal bond to overcome trauma. By merely having a relationship formed with animals may not be enough to heal trauma; but the crucial aspect to be achieved is the awakening of the ecological unconscious to unleash the true potentials and powers this unification provides. Besides, the findings from this study has a potential to apprise traumatized victims or perhaps people surrounding them to adopt the strategies to understand trauma better and how nature stands in as an amazing coping mechanism tool to heal trauma.

Also, the findings from this study may be able to establish a pattern in realizing that trauma can come from any sources yet nature can play a crucial part in helping to heal these psychological wounds. Albeit being surrounded by the thoughts and nightmares of the traumatic incident, this study is able to expound on how the human-nature relationship that is developed between the literary characters and animals in the selected literary texts is able to overcome their horrific experiences. This study has provided an insight into how the traumatized characters can be successful in finding solace and making peace with their disturbed minds with the help of the surroundings that environ them. This further convinces that one must not necessarily escape the root cause of a problem but rather to be able to find alternatives that may be available around them in order to manage it better.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

1.6.1 Trauma

The American Psychiatric Association explicated that individual who experiences “disasters, wars, accidents or other extreme stressor events produce certain identifiable somatic and psycho-somatic disturbances” (qtd. in Luckhurst 1). Recurring dreams, intrusive flashbacks or later situations that repeat or echo the original stressor are common traumatic events that are insistently re-lived by the victims. Besides, some symptoms also include “persistence avoidance of experience that relate to the original trauma and in some cases trauma victims resort to increased arousal; loss of temper, hyper-vigilance and or exaggerated responses” (American Psychiatric Association 467-8). The timeline for these symptoms to appear are inconsistent; ranging from almost immediately after the experienced trauma, to months or years later in belated experiences.

Similarly, leading cultural trauma theorist, Cathy Caruth, defined trauma as an “experience or event so painful that the mind is unable to cognitively grasp it” (17). This ‘inherent latency’; that is, it returns to the victim in intrusive flashbacks and is experienced, as if for the first time, in the recall. In her elaborations of Sigmund Freud’s theories, Cathy Caruth claimed that trauma is a shocking event that the mind is unable to adequately process as it takes place and which is thus not really felt to have happened. The repressed event belongs “intrinsically to the victim, and yet he is the one who cannot access it; he is, as Caruth observes, ‘possessed’ by the unrecoverable” (5). For Caruth, trauma is therefore a crisis of representation, of history and truth, and of narrative time.

Findings from another prominent trauma theorist, Dominick LaCapra, also echo the thoughts of Cathy Caruth in regards to the manifestations of traumatic experiences in affected victims. In studying trauma-theoretical approaches to literature, LaCapra has extended the Freudian Psychoanalysis terms such as “acting-out” and “working-through” to ascertain the reactions and recuperation of trauma victims. This study was also aimed to “elucidate the relation between cultures that come into contact as well as between the present and the past” (LaCapra 9). He identified that these trauma victims re-experienced instances of “flashbacks, hallucinations or dreams which could be seen as an unconscious attempt to cope with the experience” (65). The unconscious minds of the trauma victims force them to relive the unwanted memories and ill thoughts of the past to present times.

Acting-out can be manifested in a number of ways. As aforementioned, trauma victims may have instances of nightmares which force them to revisit their traumatic experiences. Sometimes, it is a personal choice of the trauma victims

to revisit these experiences deliberately as a form of being reunited with their loved ones who may have perished in the incident. LaCapra calls such deliberate actions as a “fidelity to trauma and its victims [...] and is a kind of memorial that is not based on suppression or oblivion” (144). Besides, the act of acting-out of the traumatic pact can also happen via the development of multiple identities and deliberate acts of denial in negating thoughts of the unwanted negative memories. In *Writing History*, LaCapra reiterated that being in denial of an actual traumatic incident is described as “fetishized and totalizing narratives that deny the trauma that called them into existence by [...] harmonizing events, and often recuperating the past in terms of uplifting messages or optimistic, self-serving scenarios” (78). In such a narrative fetishism, trauma victims relate to their personal traumatic incidents in an untruth manner which negates them to accept the truth and to move on in life.

1.6.2 Eco-Psychology

Eco-psychology studies the connection between people and the common world through the principles of psychology and ecology. This field looks to create and comprehend methods for growing the emotional association amongst people and the natural world. This relationship enables us to assist individuals to develop sustainable lifestyles as well as minimising or eradicating distance from nature. The term ‘Eco-psychology’ was coined by Theodore Roszak in *The Voice of the Earth*. Nonetheless, the term was also used independently by other groups of environmentalists and psychologists to describe their own particular works around the same period.

A focal commence of Eco-psychology is that while today the human mind is influenced and moulded by the cutting edge social world, its profound structure is definitely “adjusted to and educated by the more-than-human natural environment in which it developed” (Roszak 3). In Roszak’s terms, while “other psychologies seek to heal the alienation between person and person, person and family, person and society, Eco-psychology seeks to heal the more fundamental alienation between the person and the natural environment” (320). This particular notion of human-nature connection was also supported by a profound Biologist, E.O. Wilson. Wilson claims that humans have an “innate disposition to connect emotionally with nature” (6). This connection, as he proposed, is what humans subconsciously seek for the rest of their life through their deep affiliations with other forms of life and nature as it is rooted in their Biology.

One of the main struggles identified within the field of Eco-psychology is “the idea of challenging dualism by turning the psyche inside out” (Fisher 9). The soul of a man can only be returned to its natural surroundings if one is ready to locate its mind in the world itself. An avenue that has been identified to challenge the notion of dualism is through the idea of tapping into the ecological unconscious. In *The Voice of the Earth*, Theodore Roszak affirmed

that “the core of the mind is the ecological unconscious; open access to this is the path to our sanity” (329). He included that this deep part of the human psyche houses our ecological intelligence and only through the union between our id and ego, our evolutionary success would emerge. Hence, should this awakening fail, our inherent sense of environmental reciprocity may not materialize subjecting to hardship in the survival of the human species.

As aforementioned, the awakening of the ecological unconscious and challenging the dualistic approach to nature can only be done if the mind sees nature as an embodiment of the self. The mind has to perceive nature not only as a space of security and safety, but also a medium to “facilitate relationships and to increase mindfulness through their sensory experiences” (Fisher 173). The interactions that humans have with their surroundings in nature must enable them to see nature as not a threat but an avenue to soothe their troubles. Once this has been accomplished, humans are able to revive a sense of purpose in life and also comprehend their deep affiliations with the natural surroundings. They are then more open to benefit from what nature has to offer that would bring positivity to mankind.

Having established such a connection with nature, the mind is able to learn a lot from the various species that inhabit the natural surroundings. One of the most beneficial inhabitants of nature that can be useful to the human mind is the animals. The study of the human-animal bond is an emerging body of research mostly concerning the “emotional relationship between humans and animals” (Pacelle 133). Humans relate with animals and nature with a variety of motivations as some could be for companionship or consumption, but historically these “relationships have often been forged for mutual survival” (Haraway 17). Animals can be used to help humans in not only realising their true potentials but also to learn new skills and responses to their behaviour patterns. This form of eco-therapy would indeed be ideal as animals do play an integral role in most human life.

1.7 Research Methodology

In order to answer my research questions and also to achieve the aforementioned objectives, the research designs that will be employed in this qualitative study include hermeneutic and interpretative analysis. As it is an interdisciplinary study, I have correlated literary texts with non-literary texts in the field of trauma, Eco-psychology and animal studies to investigate how nature plays a pivotal role in helping the characters in my selected novels to awaken their ecological unconscious which eventually helps them to negotiate their trauma through the interaction and observations they have with animal characters.

To answer my first research objective, I will use concepts under the field of Trauma studies by Cathy Caruth and other trauma theorists to explicate the varied manifestations of psychological trauma displayed by the characters in the novels used for this study. As mentioned earlier, in all the three selected literary novels for this study, series of unfortunate events have most certainly weighed down the protagonists in all the novels severely resulting to many traumatic displays. In the first novel, *Archipelago* by Monique Roffey, the catastrophic flood that swept away the entire village and killing the son of the chief protagonist, Gavin, had surely affected the emotional stability of the entire family. Likewise, the shipwreck that killed the family of Pi Patel in *Life of Pi* as well as the murder of Stephanie in *Suspect* brought about a great display of emotional and psychological turbulences to the characters that experienced the ordeal. Hence, by applying the concepts and understanding the trauma theory, this study would be able to analyse the varied manifestation of trauma that were displayed by the aforementioned characters. The emotional well-being and their mental states would be analysed thoroughly prior to identifying the recuperative strategy used to negotiate their trauma.

Moving on, in attempting to address the second research objective; the awakening of the ecological unconscious in humans through integration of psyches between the human mind and the natural world, the concept of Ecological Unconscious by Theodore Roszak would deem to be a perfect fit. In all the selected literary texts, a thorough examination would be carried out to ascertain how the literary characters were able to awaken their deep ecological unconscious and close affiliation to the natural world. The integration of the psyches; of humans and the natural world, would be the key tenet to establish as this would show how the minds of the literary characters were able to perceive nature as part of them rather than an alien entity. Only upon establishing this unification, the minds of the psychologically wounded literary characters were in a better state for healing to take place.

Only when the above two research objectives have been achieved, the third objective of the study which is to investigate how human-animal bond under the lens of Eco-psychology help in the process of recovery of trauma in the selected novels, would be successfully attained. Having the ecological unconscious awakened, the human mind is now able to enjoy the therapeutic benefits that the natural world has to offer. It is through this understanding that the literary characters from my selected novels would be able to accept nature as part of their identity and benefit if any help is rendered indirectly. The bond that is established between the psychologically affected and animal characters in all the novels will play an integral role in the process of trauma recovery among the literary characters. The intrinsic and extrinsic qualities that these animals possessed will help these characters to negotiate the trauma experienced. By simply observing and emulating the behaviour and temperaments of the animals, these literary characters will be able to understand their predicaments; a crucial aspect in helping them to overcome the psychological disputes that they are experiencing.

This study will be purely based on textual evidence in interpreting and analysing the text as part of the methodology, employing concepts of ecological unconscious and human-animal bond under the lens of Eco-psychology by Theodore Roszak and Andy Fisher as well as Trauma studies by Cathy Caruth. Thus, all the possible data are gathered from reliable sources, such as journals from library databases, books and articles, and any secondary methods that I could rely upon in completing this study. To ensure the validity and reliability of this study, I will also include discussion of evidence and commentary by research scholars and academicians in the concerning field.

1.8 Scope and Limitations of the Study

There has been a lot of scholarly works in contemporary fiction that expounds on the themes of trauma and recovery. This study is no exception but decides to be carried out from a different viewpoint by interweaving the field of Eco-psychology and Trauma studies. I have done analysis of the writings of 3 different literary texts; *Suspect* (2013) by Robert Crais, *Archipelago* (2012) by Monique Roffee and *Life of Pi* (2001) by Yann Martel. The time period that has been chosen is long enough (2001-2013) which has given me a lot to examine in regards to the contemporary and social milieus of the varied societies. All these authors come from different countries with dissimilar cultural and geographical backgrounds. They have never been studied jointly from the perspectives of Trauma and Eco-psychology.

This initial focus of this study will focus on the application of Trauma theory in explicating the manifestations of trauma in the literary characters and also to understand how severely psychologically affected are the characters. Having identified trauma in the characters, this study would then examine the awakening of their ecological unconscious through nature as well as the role human-animal bond plays to overcome trauma experienced by the characters in the selected literary texts. In pursuing to accomplish the above-mentioned objectives, this study expounds on a few concepts under the lens of Trauma studies by Cathy Caruth as well as Eco-psychology by Theodore Roszak and Andy Fisher. While other concepts such as Dominic Lacapra's working through and acting-out as well as narrative therapy by Michael White have provided alternate perspectives in regards to coping mechanisms in trauma recovery, this study will be confined mainly to two key concepts; ecological unconscious and human-animal bond.

The two proposed concepts by Theodore Roszak and Andy Fisher will examine the awakening of the ecological unconscious of the characters in the selected literary texts and also lay the foundation to the research in allowing them to benefit from the reciprocal relationship that can be established with nature. The role human-animal bond, through the viewpoint of Eco-psychology, plays to expedite the recovery would also be an essential element that will be

utilized in this study. The intrinsic qualities that animals possess and how they help to serve as an animate object, medium of transference as well as other aspects would be examined to ascertain how these and many other animal qualities help to negotiate the trauma experienced by the characters. Furthermore, other supporting resources and empirical findings in the field of trauma and recovery, with specifics to nature, would also be utilized in providing a more in-depth analysis of the issue.

In this study, I will be limited to only using three novels which are *Archipelago* (2012) by Monique Roffey, *Suspect* by Robert Crais (2013), and *Life of Pi* (2001) by Yann Martell. This study focuses solely on the theory of Trauma & Eco-psychology, and how they are depicted in the novels. In *Archipelago*, the author showed how animals are used in helping flood victims in overcoming their trauma through their observation and interaction with the dolphins and other sea animals. Subsequently in *Suspect* for instance, the author entails the symbiotic relationship between man and his dog and how this union helped each other to go through the darkest moments in their lives and overcome the trauma experienced. Finally, in *Life of Pi*, Martell narrated the importance of animals in keeping the traumatized protagonist at sanity after the mishap caused onto the ship he was on in the ocean.

1.9 Justification of text

The novels *Archipelago* (2012) by Monique Roffey, *Suspect* (2013) by Robert Crais, and *Life of Pi* (2001) by Yann Martell will be used as the primary data for this study. All three literary texts selected are of modern times ranging from early 2000s to 2013. The first aspect that was crucial in the selection of the literary texts was surely due to its theme of trauma and recovery. In all the selected texts, various tragedies have befallen the characters which ultimately brought about calamitous effects on them and many were seen to lead to a traumatic life henceforth. Varied manifestations of trauma were displayed by all the characters from the very beginning of each plot. Evidences of hallucination, fragmented thoughts, nightmares and many more seemed to be a frequent occurrence in the build-up of each story.

Besides, the awakening of their ecological unconscious through the natural world was seen as another key element that contributed to the selection of these texts. Rather than living an isolated and depressed life upon experiencing a traumatic event, the traumatized characters in all the selected texts chose to break free from the confined solitude and embraced life. They got themselves closer to the natural world and this helped them immensely to identify a new identity that is deeply rooted in their conscious. By accepting the natural world that surrounds them as their own identity, the literary characters were able to awaken their ecological unconscious. Eventually, the emergence and association with animals, be it directly or indirectly, was seen as another prominent feature in the selection of these three texts as they helped the

traumatized characters to overcome the catastrophic experience endured and also to re-build a new perspective of life. The union formed between the animal and traumatised human characters helped them greatly in negotiating the emotional turbulences and social stigma faced. The qualities that these animals possessed helped them to understand their personal tragedies better which eventually allowed them to overcome their problems better.

In *Archipelago*, Monique Roffey started off the novel by showing how a natural disaster, flood to be specific, destroyed the character's home and their nightmares continued with several unfortunate series of bad weather then on. These incidences surely left a great black mark in the lives of the characters and the only way they saw to put the past behind was actually by facing nature again, with the aid of animals and sea voyages, to overcome their struggles. During this journey, the traumatised characters were able to see and learn numerous ways to negotiate their horrifying experiences from the various animals they encountered with.

Robert Crais's *Suspect* explored the unique relationship between man and canine and how this union allowed each other to heal from their personal traumatic ordeals. The protagonist, Scott James, had lost a partner during a night time assault during an investigation while Maggie had experienced an almost similar experience of losing her dog handler to an explosion. Ultimately, Scott and Maggie were teamed up and were set to unveil the identity of the man behind the murder of Scott's former partner. It was during this journey of investigation that helped Scott to go through the darkest moments of his life and Maggie played a huge part in helping Scott to get through his traumatic ordeals. The presence of an animal in Scott's life helped him to evaluate life from a more positive perspective and not to resort to violence or other destructive means.

As for *Life of Pi*, Martell draws a rather colourful background of Indian and Western cultures and how they observe nature in varied manners. In here, the lead character, Pi, had lost all of his family members due to a mishap caused upon his ship while on a voyage from India to Canada. Consequently, as the only human survivor, Pi started experiencing episodes of hallucinations and nightmares which eventually made him depressed and disoriented. The entire experience of isolation and losing his entire family was surely something rather traumatising for Pi. Fortunately, the presence of animals on his boat played a pivotal role in helping Pi not to give up as he learnt crucial survival skills and ways of recuperating from them.

The focus of this study encroaches over selected novels from authors of three different countries; Caribbean Island, America and Canada. The reason for selecting these literary texts was due to the fact that all of these three novels have different reasons which contributed to their traumatic ordeals and that

eventually allowed me to explore further how a common source; animals, can play a crucial part in helping them to heal. Additionally, the characteristics of Eco-psychology, namely on the aspect of awakening the ecological unconscious in the characters, was very evident in most of the characters after experiencing the initial trauma. Finally, through this close association to nature as well as the awakening that took place, it can be seen how human-animal bond played a pivotal role in all three literary texts to overcome the trauma experienced which eventually strengthened and justified the text selection for this study.

Prior to selecting the three literary texts for this study, I have combed through a large number of different authors who shared the similar themes of trauma, nature or animals in their fictions. While the other contemporaries, within the same time range and regions of the present selected texts, did display the aforementioned themes, nonetheless I was not able to find any that had all the three aspects of trauma, the awakening of ecological unconscious and human-animal bond that helped to negotiate the trauma experienced in the same text. Taking the fictional works of prominent Canadian author Margaret Atwood for instance, many of her novels did have references to the natural world and animals. In her *Oryx and Crake* trilogy, Atwood mainly wrote about dystopian society with a lot of references made to the natural world and animals. However, none of her works looked at how animals play an integral in helping humans recuperate trauma but rather focused on animal rights and animals being a metaphorical representation of political milieus. Fictional works by other Canadian and American authors such as Rohinton Mistry, Miriam Toews, and Alice Munro were also explored to ascertain the inclusion of trauma and nature themes in their works. While most of these books were rather promising and have won many awards, none of them had the integrated ideas and concepts of trauma and recovery that this study aimed to achieve.

The Caribbean literature on the other hand provides unique perspectives of postcolonial studies focusing on themes regarding exile, resistance self-determination as well as trauma. Contemporary authors such as Marlon James, Patricia Powell, Andrea Levy as well as Colin Channer have contributed numerous works of fiction that has captured the true spirit of modern Caribbean energy as well as struggles faced by the communities. With a heavy influence of the colonial history being part of their writing repertoire, it is undeniable that the theme of trauma has been rather predominant in most works produced from this region. These authors have represented the pain and sorrows experienced by the migrant communities based on historical perspectives. Besides, nature has also been an important aspect in most of these works. The representation of Caribbean's amazing geological characteristics has often made a debut in most works of fiction produced. Nonetheless, both trauma and nature have been represented separately in most novels whereby a direct link on how nature can offer its therapeutic benefits to negotiate psychological trauma has not been established or explored by the authors.

Subsequently, fictional works in regards to trauma and recovery in contemporary American literary scene was also skimmed through to identify the latest trends and scope of scrutiny. Novels such *Beloved* by Toni Morrison, *The Small Backs of Children* by Lidia Yuknavitch, *An Untamed State* by Roxane Gay and the award winning *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy were all analysed to identify how trauma was explored in the novels. With themes revolving on war, sex and violence, brutality and gender conflicts, the aforementioned authors have most certainly allowed readers to explore the varied manifestations of trauma that the literary characters displayed in the build-up of the plots. In regards to trauma recovery, some authors rather have a more realistic ending by not providing any happy ending or conflict resolution. This was seen in *An Untamed State* whereby Gay believes that there is no happily ever after ending as no one emerges unscathed. Not all characters are able to recuperate from the trauma experienced as help is not necessarily found. However, in other trauma-themed novels, some help is received by the traumatised literary characters towards the end (by family members, friends or agencies) which was crucial in helping them to deal with the situation more effectively.

Hence, after reading a plethora of different fictional works by other contemporaries, the aforementioned selected literary texts; *Archipelago* by Monique Roffey, *Life of Pi* by Yann Martel and *Suspect* by Robert Crais have undoubtedly been the perfect novels to address the gap this study aims to address. I attempt to scrutinize how all my selected literary texts; authored by different writers from three different backgrounds, have subtly voiced out the predicament and anguishes of trauma in the literary characters as a result of various tragedies that have befallen them. By exploring the chronological development of trauma in literary studies, I am able to identify the wide-ranging aspects of trauma discussed by a plethora of writers and the findings can most definitely aid in the identification of psychological trauma traits in the selected literary texts for this study. Some of the findings in these studies are based on real cases of trauma which further makes the exploration of trauma fiction studies more engaging and relevant. Besides, the void that has been left by the existing studies helps me to identify the niche area to be explored in order to make the findings in this study more relevant and able to contribute to development of the trauma studies.

1.10 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis will be divided into six organised and interconnected chapters. In this first chapter, the identification of problems and concepts under the lens of Trauma studies, Eco-psychology as well as human-animal relationships are explored in regards to the three research questions and objectives set. In the following chapter, all relevant literature pertaining to trauma, ecological unconscious and human-animal studies will be presented in order to address the gap of the study. Subsequently, in chapter 3, the theoretical framework of the study as well as the framework of the methodology will be explained in

detail. Next, the fourth chapter will analyse and discuss the findings of the study pertaining to the first research objective; the varied manifestations of psychological trauma depicted in the characters of the selected literary texts. The fifth chapter then will address the remaining two objectives of this research which are to examine the awakening of the ecological unconscious of the characters as well as to investigate how human-animal bond help in the recuperation of psychological trauma of the traumatised literary characters. The sixth chapter will then provide the summary of all the findings and ultimately show the contributions of this study as well as some recommendations for future researchers to work on in certain areas of study.

1.11 Definition of Terminologies

This section will present a compilation of relevant terminologies as well as its definitions pertaining to Trauma Studies, Eco-psychology and human-animal relationships. The selected terminologies and the definitions are presented as follows:

Psychological Trauma:

In its most general definition, trauma describes an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena (Figley xxiv).

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD):

PTSD is defined as a response, sometimes delayed, to an overwhelming event or events, which takes the form of repeated, intrusive hallucinations, dreams, thoughts or behaviours stemming from the event, along with numbing that may have begun during or after the experience, and possibly also increased arousal to (and avoidance of) stimuli recalling the event (Castillo 4).

Latency/Belatedness:

The period of during which the effects of the traumatic experience are not apparent (Caruth 17).

Acting Out:

The tendency to repeat something compulsively (LaCapra 3).

Working Through:

A kind of countervailing force; an effort to break away from the problem at hand and is able to differentiate between the past and the present (LaCapra 9).

Eco-psychology:

Eco-psychology studies the relationship between human beings and the natural world through ecological and psychological principles (Roszak 18).

Ecological unconscious:

The core of the mind is the ecological unconscious. For eco-psychology, repression of the ecological unconscious is the deepest root of collusive madness in industrial society; open access to the ecological unconscious is the path to sanity (Roszak VI)

Dualism:

The separation of the inner and outer psyches of the human mind and the natural world (Fisher 10)

1.12 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has presented the background of the study by highlighting the main issues that will be explored in this study as well as the concepts that will be used in overcoming the problems that have been stated. Besides, previous studies from the selected concepts and theories have been examined and presented to explicate the statement of the problem as well as to show how the gap of the study is intended to be filled. I have also included the three research questions and objectives that have been designed in order to guide me throughout this study. The scope and limitation of this study has also been explained in detail in order to place this study in relevant field of research. Finally, the justification of texts has been provided to show the importance of selecting the literary texts for this study by triangulating the different subject matter that this study aims to research upon.

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