

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Healing Mechanisms in a Novel “Self-Prisoner”

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Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the post-traumatic stress disorders of characters in an Amharic novel ‘Self-Prisoner’ and the healing mechanisms depicted in it. The novel portrays traumatic experiences of characters that cause post-traumatic stress disorder, and reveals how they applied various healing mechanisms. The characters undergo complex and endless horrible experiences, regardless of age, gender, social class, race, and academic status. This paper provides a practical understanding of post-traumatic stress disorder and coping strategy, as well as creates a shared understanding of these methods that would be acceptable across various service systems. This makes it expressive in magnifying the role of literature in healing processes, which is less said about, and it motivates fellow researchers for further investigations. Healing from trauma through literature is fresh insight that can amplify the inspiration of literature in taking part the pain of survivors and paving the way to reconcile their suffering. Purposive sampling is employed to select the novel, which is traumatic in which characters have undergone complex and endless horrible experiences. The study employed a psychological approach focusing on Miller’s (2000) emotion-focused healing and problem-focused healing methods and Herman’s (1992) stages of healing. The study discloses that characters do not have the same reaction for the same traumatic incident because of differences in their socio-economic, family, and educational backgrounds. Those who have supportive families can recover from their traumatic disorders early than those from degrading parents. Similarly, the educated character is portrayed as practicing various scientific mechanisms to heal and is seen succeeded. It was also observed that the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder have different manifestations in characters.

Keywords: emotion-focused healing, post-traumatic stress disorder, problem-focused healing, trauma.

小说“自我囚徒”中的创伤后应激障碍和治疗机制

摘要:

本研究旨在分析阿姆哈拉语小说《自我囚徒》中人物的创伤后应激障碍及其描述的治愈机制。小说描绘了导致创伤后应激障碍的人物的创伤经历，并揭示了他们如何应用各种治疗机制。人物经历了复杂而无尽的可怕经历，不分年龄、性别、社会阶层、种族和学术地位。本文提供了对创伤后应激障碍和应对策略的实际理解，并建立了对这些方法的共同理解，这些方法在各种服务系统中都是可以接受的。这使得它在放大文献在治疗过程中的作用方面表现力更强，而这一点却鲜有人提及，并激励其他研究人员进行进一步的研究。通过文学治愈创伤是一种全新的见解，可以放大文学的灵感，帮助幸存者分担痛苦并为调和他们的痛苦铺平道路。采用有目的的抽样来选择小说，该小说具有创伤性，其中人物经历了复杂而无尽的恐怖经历。该研究采用了一种心理学方法，重点关注磨坊主(2000)的以情绪为中心的治疗和以问题为中心的治疗方法以及赫尔曼(1992)的治疗阶段。该研究表明，由于社会经济、家庭和教育背景的差异，人物对同一创伤事件的反应并不相同。那些有支持家庭的人比那些有辱人格的父母的人更早地从创伤性障碍中恢复过来。同样，受过教育的角色被描绘成实践各种科学机制来治愈并被视为成功。还观察到创伤后应激障碍的症状在性格上有不同的表现。

关键词: 以情绪为中心的治疗，创伤后应激障碍，以问题为中心的治疗，创伤。

1. Introduction

Natural disasters such as droughts and floods as well as artificial ones are no longer breaking news in Ethiopia. Numerous people experienced hardships connected to internal displacement, civil conflict, famine, and other issues. Regardless of their age, gender, class, or maternal age, these catastrophes do significant harm to many people. Others experienced the loss of their husbands and children, leaving their kids orphaned and homeless. Following these losses, material fulfillment receives much focus. The psychological turmoil is still present. Though the severity varies, all the victims—both those who see and hear about—are experiencing trauma in their lives. Therefore, trauma is something that many of us actually experience, and literature depicts and observes trauma in various ways; therefore, we should focus on exposing it to pave the way for healing. Life goes through various situations, including traumatic losses.

According to Harvey (2002), trauma as a term is used to refer to extreme psychological and physical responses to major losses. If traumatic events are not handled adequately and there is no or insufficient intervention, it remains an unresolved problem for victims. In effect, Levine (2005, p. 3) states,

“Unresolved trauma can have some or all of the following effects: alter people's habits and outlook on life; take its duty on family and interpersonal relationships; trigger physical symptoms and disease; cause problems with decision-making; lead to addictions; cause dissociation; precipitate self-destructive behaviors.”

Similarly, Herman (1992) suggested that even though the individual may survive the trauma, the permanent effect of trauma significantly alters the person's psychological and physical life. According to her argument, this leads to a fragmentation in the survivor's perception of self, reality, emotions, and

memories. In this study, the traumatic experiences of characters, post-traumatic stress disorder, and healing mechanisms in the selected Amharic novel are addressed. Literary works reflect the various aspects of human lives to be analyzed through different literary theories. However, the researchers believe that the traumatic effect and its burden on victims have not received significant attention. While reading fictional works that depict the horrible experiences of children, orphans, and adults, regardless of their age and gender, we need literary theories that treat these subjects inclusively, like "trauma theory," which motivates the researcher to conduct research in this area. Moreover, though many studies are conducted in this arena abroad, in the Ethiopian context, it lacks attention compared with the prevalence of the problem. And this gap restricts the role of literature in its healing.

Caruth (1996) explains trauma as a wound of uncontrollable violent experience. According to her explanation, violence causes physical wounds, and these bodily injuries affect the psyche, whether the survivors' minds or the minds of witnesses who listen to and read the victims' stories. Furthermore, trauma may affect transcendent observers who hear from other witnesses. The psychological scars in the aftermath of the traumatic incident provide a new identity and behavior for the survivor, which is called post-traumatic stress disorder.

According to Harvey (2002, p. 5), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can happen following a traumatic event that threatens the victim's safety; in turn, it makes the survivor feel helpless. As Harvey (2002) suggests, PTSD develops differently from person to person. Regarding the way the symptoms of PTSD are reflected, Levine (2005) argues that there is no exact setting; different victims may display the symptoms of PTSD at different times, hours, or days following the traumatic event. However, Caruth (1996)

argues that it will thrive someday since it has inherent latency, except when some interventions are made to help victims solve their problems. According to Levine (2005), the interference or healing mechanisms from trauma help survivors to reconnect to their everyday activities or to start a new normal life, which is an accepted new personality, after the traumatic incident.

There are studies conducted in the area of literary trauma. Tembo (2017) draws attention to the depiction of civil war in East African fictional and autobiographical works. Specially, it studies the several ways in which East African writers use literature and art to translate and transmit the physical, vicarious, and psychological trauma resulting from intra-state conflicts in East Africa. Similarly, Rogers (2004) focuses on the paradoxical relationship between narrative and trauma. Powell's (2011) dissertation exposes the impact of 9/11 on Americans in creating cultural trauma. In this study, attention is paid to the post-traumatic experience of characters and the healing mechanisms in the selected Amharic novel *Self-Prisoner*.

The novel *Yeras Esregna* (Self-Prisoner) was written by Misgana Asmare, a psychologist, in 2018. Misgana (2018) created characters who suffered from various types of violence and mistreatment, and he offered different mechanisms for withstanding the problem. The novel is a trauma novel that depicts the horrible experiences of the characters' physical wounds, restlessness, and sexual attacks. The study analyzes how the characters in the selected novel are affected by post-traumatic stress disorders and how they challenge these for healing. The study also highlights the fear, tensions, haunting memories, and sorrowful situations of the characters and their traumatic experiences. In this novel, a country girl who was repeatedly raped in her childhood is affected by complex post-traumatic stress disorder for an extended period. It was only after frequent follow-ups of psychological medication that she could come to her senses. Similarly, Bitania, who was frequently abducted by criminals and faced violence, went through shocking experiences. According to Dereje (2019) and Surafel (2021), nowadays, witnessing the hurt of citizens, observing displaced inhabitants from their home village, their suffering, and inhuman maltreatment of civilians have become our daily experience. As Getish (2021) notes, in Ethiopia, females face gang rape regardless of their age and maternal status (children, girls, pregnant women, and nuns). Others lost their children and spouses, and the children became orphans and homeless. All the victims, the eye witnesses, as well as those who hear about these horrific experiences, are living traumatic lives, although the degree varies. Trauma theory is inclusive and entertains the painful experiences of human beings irrespective of age, sex, religion, or socio-economic background. This is the reason that motivates the researchers to conduct research in this area. Comparing the real events, in Ethiopia, with the fictitious world, trauma texts express a fear of representing the actual experiences happening to

survivors. As Caruth (1996) said, written words are not enough to depict the pain of the victims because of the non-representable nature of trauma.

2. Materials and Method

The study employed a qualitative method with a psychological approach. A qualitative method of the analysis procedure is used to analyze the quotations. This method is intended to analyze extracts that are related to trauma, post-traumatic stress disorder, and healing mechanisms as portrayed in the selected Amharic novel. The selected novel is traumatic, which lends it to be analyzed from the viewpoint of contemporary trauma theory. Tyson (2006, p. 454), suggests that "not all literary texts lend themselves equally well to all theories." In other words, every literary text may open itself to a certain theory. This research gives special attention to exploring the traumatic experiences, the causes of the trauma, and the post-traumatic stress disorder of characters as reflected in the selected novels. A purposive sampling technique is used to select the novel that represented trauma. As far as the researcher's knowledge is concerned, the novel is not studied from the selected theory's perspective. The method of data collection is a close reading of the selected novel. The data is analyzed based on the theoretical models of Miller's (2000) emotion-focused healing and problem-focused healing methods.

To translate the selected Amharic novels into English, the researchers applied both communicative and literal approaches to translation. According to Newmark (1982), the communicative approach is the most appropriate way of translation, which enables researchers to make the text easier and lighter for the reader in the target language. By considering these advantages, the researchers applied them.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in *Yeras Esregna* (Self-Prisoner)

Wastina, a protagonist in the novel, lives with post-traumatic stress disorder because of her traumatic experience in her past. It was in her babyhood that she was raped by four men. This caused her a serious health problem called fistula, which needed special treatment. She was taken to Norway for medication, and got better. However, she became homeless after getting out of the hospital. She had no one to help her except an Ethiopian nurse who helped her by connecting her with Norwegians and taking care of her since she started her medication in Debire Markos hospital. After she gone through a challenging life on the streets in Norway with Mr. Teshale, the nurse, they got a residential license. Although Wastina lives in Norway, she used to dream about Gojam, Ethiopia, a place where she was raped in her childhood and left a decade ago. She does not feel comfortable whenever the issue of engagement is

raised. She hates men, and she always gets far away from them. She perceives them as a source of danger. However, after a long time, she became friends with a man, who later loved her. Mr. Teshale was happy about this because it was a big change for Wastina to be able to communicate with men. However, he later became worried about whether the relationship had changed to a sexual affair. He is worried because if a certain error happens, she may face psychological disorder. Therefore, Mr. Teshale and her doctor are afraid of the question of marriage, which may remind her of the pain she went through, which may cause her to relive the past trauma. They express their fear as follows:

እኛም እሷም ስጋት አለን፤ ወንድ ጋር መቀራረብ እንድትችል ህክምናው ቢያስችላትም ግን አንድ ጉዳት ወደ ማታገግምበት ውጥንቅጥ ውስጥ ነው የሚጥላት። ከዚያ በተጨማሪ አካላዊ ግንኙነት ማድረግ እንዲህ በቀላሉ የምትችል አይመስለንም፤ ምክንያቱም አካላዊ ግንኙነት ለሷ የሚያስታውሳት ህመምን፣ ጥላቻንና ጭካኔን ነው። የሷም ስጋት ይህ ነው። (2011፤121).

“Although the treatment assisted her to be friendly with men, we have a doubt that a certain inaccuracy may leave her in a state of shock. Additionally, we do not think that having sex is so easy because physical contact reminds us of pain, hater ship, and cruelty. This is also what she was worried about too” (Misgana, 2018, p. 121).

As the above extract reflects, the issue of losing her healthy life again filled them with dread since they witnessed her pain as well as her hurt earlier. Wastina has recovered from her trauma with psychiatric help. She was helped by the Norwegian doctors’ group for fistula patients, who helped her be treated in a specialized hospital in Norway. As narrated in the novel, the hospital sponsored her for six months, so she gained special treatment. She had to leave the hospital as soon as she recovered. This situation was so confusing for her and her nurse, who had no means of life in Norway. They had nothing to live for; they felt as if an egg was lying on sand. On their first day out of the hospital, they spent the day on the street, and they had to spend the night too. Unfortunately, it was on that night that she faced gang rape again. This caused her complex trauma. She became mad for years, and it was only after exhaustive treatment that she got cured. According to Heidarizadeha’s (2015) explanation, confusion and insecurity cause trauma; the typical causes of trauma, including mistreatment, domestic violence, and particularly childhood experiences, lead to violent behavior. Therefore, Wastina felt unsafe when she was told to leave the hospital. During that time, she had no one she knew, and this caused anxiety. The rape caused her to be mad and aggressive, and made her hit everyone in her sight. This is, according to Davison et al. (2004), a symptom of PTSD. Victims experience high alertness, difficulty sleeping, and increased emotional and physical arousal. According to Herman (2001), hyperarousal among the survivors of trauma is self-preserving and attentive, as if danger

might return at any moment. According to Herman (2001), a traumatized person is shocked easily, reacts angrily to minor shocks, and sleeps poorly. In the following extract, Mr. Teshale witnesses Wastina’s activity as read below: ...ዋስቲ፡ ለሁለት አመታት ነበር አዕምሮዋን የሳተችው ማለቱ እብድ ሆኖ ነበር። ወንዶችን ትደባደባለች፤ ማንንም ማናገር አትፈልግም፤ ሰውስታይ መደባደብ ትጀምራለች። ...ከሁለት አመታት ልዩ እገዛ በኋላ ወደ ራሷ ተመለሰች። (2011፤ 120) ”Wasti has been insane for two years. I mean, she was crazy. She does not want to talk to anyone; when she sees someone, she starts fighting. After two years of special help, she returns to her senses” (Misgana, 2018, p. 120). She did not talk about her rape with her family, and they knew nothing about the causes of her illness. Therefore, they took her to the Holy Water and let her stay home for two months. She had a doubt that if she talked about it, her rapists might hurt her family as well as herself further. However, the doctor asked her father how the fistula happened. It was the first time that her father knew about the injury. He did not spend a minute with his daughter; rather, he returned to his village and started to investigate the criminals. As soon as he heard, he killed three of the men who raped his daughter and got to prison on his own. Since the fourth one was the administrator of the Keble, it was impossible for Wastina’s father to kill him easily. Wastin’s pain is so horrible, it may cause shock to others who witnessed it or read about it. According to Erikson (1995), not only the people who witnessed the trauma are badly impacted by the incident, but also the ones who realize it later on feel its effects. Based on this, the ones who listen to the accounts of the survivors of trauma are very likely to be affected by what they hear. In this way, it is worthwhile that Mr. Teshale, the nurse, is affected by the impact of her trauma. Though not with the same severity as the survivor herself felt, it is transferred to and felt by those who were not present at the occurrence of the incident.

Contrary to what Heidarizadeha (2015) argued above, and LaCapra’s (2001) idea of hyperarousal of victims and Davison et al.’s (2004) notion of extreme alertness, Bitania, another protagonist in the novel, who faced repeated kidnapping, violence, as well as rape in her life, is behaving the opposite of most survivors’ reaction. The combination of various forms of violence and mistreatment rendered her careless and oblivious to everything. This is a new behavior that she developed after the aftermath of her complex traumatic experiences, as the quotation below depicts:

...ስሜት አልባ እያደረጋት መጣ ሰው በመሞቱ ማዘን ወይም ሲወለድ መደደስት በፍፁም ለሷ የማይታሰብ ነው። ለህይወቷ ግድ የላትም፤ አትፈራም ሰዎችን የሚያስነርም አያስነርማትም፤ ሰውን የሚያሳዝን አያሳዝናትም፤ ብዙ ሰው የሚወደውን ትጠላለች ሰው የሚጠላውን ትወዳለች፤ ሰው የማይቀርበውን ትቀርባለች። (2011፤ 5).

“It made her feel numb. It is unthinkable for her to mourn the loss of a loved one or to rejoice the birth of a child. She does not care about her life. She cannot be

afraid, dismayed, or weary; she hates what many people love, and she loves what people hate” (Misgana, 2018, p. 5).

Because of the mistreatment and discrimination she experienced as a child, Bitania has a different reaction to other people because of the mistreatment and discrimination she experienced as a child. Bitania was kidnapped by a group of gangsters who wanted to horrify her fiancé, Namirud, a competent merchant. The aim of the criminals was to traumatize Namirud and corrupt a bid announced to expire in a few days. To win the bid, these criminals must exclude Namirud, who was expected to grant a higher price, and the best way they devise to distract him is to abduct his fiancée. After they effaced her for days, they sent him five female’s fingers in his mailbox and seven teeth in another post, which caused him to get paralyzed. After a few minutes, his phone rang; when he answered it, Namirud learned why his fiancée had been kidnapped; a man ordered Namirud to fill in the price of the bid as he desired; if not, he promised to send Bitania's dead body after a few minutes. Namirud did what he was ordered.

All the days she spent under the control of the gangsters were full of horror for Bitania. They beat her with brutality and committed sexual violence. Furthermore, she witnessed other victims in the room; some were between life and death; others were burned. There were unfinished chinks in the stove, like firewood. The horrific crime she witnessed there caused her heartbreaking grief and extreme fear. And she did not want to discuss this issue on the phone because she suspected that someone may have spied on her, which caused the damage.

Victims can have different reactions to the same traumatic occurrence based on their various socio-cultural, economic, family backgrounds, and the response they gain from their community or family. For instance, Bitania has no one to appreciate and treat her; she has been an unwanted, abandoned, and mistreated person since her childhood. People around her lessened her; as a result, she perceives herself as valueless and unappealing. As the following quotation describes, her attitude toward her beauty is negative; she does not believe those who appreciate her.

ቢታኒያ ቆንጆ የሚላትን የሚላትን አትወድም፡፡...1.75 ሜትር ቁመት ከቀጭንና ከሚያምር ሰውነት ጋር ተላብሳለች፡፡ ቆንጆና አስደንጋጭ መልክ እነዳላት አታምንም...፡፡ ይህን እንድታስብ ያደረጋት እንዲሁም ከማህበረሰቡ ጋር ያላት ቀረቤታ ጥሩ እንዳይሆን ያደረገው ደግሞ አስተዳደሩ ነው፡፡ ምስጋና፡ (2011፡ 10).

“Bitania does not like to be called “beautiful.” She is 1.75 meters tall with a slim and beautiful body. She cannot believe how beautiful she is. It was her upbringing that made her think that way, and it affected her relationship with the community” (Misgana, 2018, p. 10).

Despite having the above-mentioned appearance and good looks, she has a negative outlook on herself. And this self-hatred resulted from different hurts that she went through.

3.2. *Healing from Trauma in the Novel Yeras Esregna (Self-Prisoner)*

In this novel, we can see the characters who are victims of trauma exposed to different healing mechanisms. Some of the post-traumatic stress disorders depicted are appropriate to be analyzed by Miller’s (2000) emotion-focused and problem-focused healing models. According to Miller’s (2000) explanation, the first one is a method, which refers to a mechanism that aims at working on the feelings of victims or treating the survivor psychologically; the second one focuses on physical medication or applies an action visible to the external body too. In this novel, characters apply various ways to handle their trauma. To manage the debilitating effects of trauma, one of the pioneers in this field, Herman (1992), suggested a coping mechanism to treat survivors. Based on Herman’s (1992) statement, the first stage to coping with trauma is establishing safety in the life of the survivor, which should include not only physical safety but also a sense of safety in one’s surroundings. So, this sense of safety should take the survivor out of fear, and he or she should be sure that they are out of danger. As portrayed in the novel, Wastina started talking about the incident for the first time after seven months of silence only when she was assured that she was out of the danger zone. She gave the numbers of the criminals and their names after she knew about their deaths. This is evident in the extract: እናቷ ገብታ “ልጄ አበባዬ አባትሽ ሁሉንም አይቀጡ ቅጣት ቀጥቷቸዋል”፡ የሚል ስትሰማ የመጀመሪያ ቃል የነበረው “አራቱንም” ነበር፡፡ ...በተዘጋ ድምጽ የአራቱንም ስም ዘረዘረች...፡፡ ምስጋና፡(2011፡ 50–51). “Her mother came in and said, ‘my daughter, my darling, your father has punished them all.’ Wastina’s first words were ‘all four.’ In a closed voice, she listed the names of all” (Misgana, 2018, pp. 50-51). After Wastina laid open the names of the rapists, her mother understood the involvement of Keble’s administrator in the crime. She left her daughter in the care of Mr. Teshale, the hospital’s nurse, and returned to their village, where she began stalking the rapist in search of vengeance; she eventually killed him and vanished from the village. As a result, Wastina lost both her father and mother in her childhood. Since then, Mr. Teshale treated her as a family member. The complexity of her trauma, which made her mad, was the cumulative effect of all these losses, her health problem (fistula), as well as her pregnancy in this situation and age. Despite this, she recounts what she went through after learning of the criminals' deaths.

Based on Herman’s (1992) suggestion, the victim, either a witness or direct victim, should not only be physically safe but s/he should also develop a sense of security. This means that the survivor should build a continuous feeling of security and be sure that s/he is out of danger. It was only after she met Namirud and affirmed her safety that she talked about what happened to her in detail, as read in the extract below:

“...ታፍኘ ነበር አፍነው ወሰዱኝ፤ የሆነ ምድር ቤት ውስጥ አስቀመጡኝ፤ ይመስለኛል ከስድስት ቀን በፊት ነው ቀኖችን አላውቅም ምክንያቱም ጨለማ ክፍል ውስጥ ነበር የተዘጋብኝ ጉልኮስ

ተተክሎላቸው ሞታቸውን ከሚጠባበቁ እና ተቆራርጠው ከተጣሉ ሰዎች ጋር በሚገማቡት ውስጥ ነበርኩ፡፡” (ምስጋና፡2011፤ 155).

“I was kidnapped. They put me in an underground room; I think it was six days ago. I do not know the dates because I was in a dark room with victims who had glucose implants and in a stinking house with people dying and being cut off” (Misgana, 2018, p. 155).

According to Herman (1992), the first stage of healing from trauma is establishing the physical and psychological safety of the survivor. Bitania is sure of her safety since she is with her fiancé, and this helps her to mourn the traumatic incident she went through. And mourning is the second stage of healing from trauma based on Herman’s (1992) suggestion. According to Herman (1992), one of the difficulties of survivors is their inability to isolate post-traumatic experiences from the traumatic incidents. Alexander (2004) argues that the ability to remember and talk about one’s traumatic experience helps the victim identify themselves between the experience and the present life out of the trauma. This helps them reconnect to everyday life or their new normal life.

Bitania applies writing to cure herself and to shield herself from her trauma. She had no one who wanted to treat and help her before she was engaged to Namirud. Since her father disowned her, she got no better treatment from the people around her. Nobody took care of her as a child, and this made her hate people. She shared her pain in her diary and got relief, as read from the extract below.

ሊያሳብደኝ የደረሰን ሀሳብ የማካፍለው ስጋ ለባሽ ስለሌለኝ ውድ ማስታወሻየ ላንች ለመናገር ተገደድሁኝ፡፡ ...ሀሳቤን ሳታቋርጭ ስለምትሰማኝ ላንቼ በመናገሬ ደስተኛ ነኝ፡፡ የቱንም ያክል ሚስጥር ብነግርሽ ሁሌም ለኔ እንደምትወግኝ አውቃለሁ፡፡ እናም ከነገርኩሽ በኋላ ደግሞ ከታመመ ስሜቴ ፍጹም እፈወሳለሁ፡፡ ምስጋና፡(2011፡ 53).

“I had to tell you my precious diary because I had no family to share my crazy thoughts with. I am glad I told you that you would continue to listen to me. I know that, no matter how much I tell you, you will always be alongside me. And after I told you, I would be completely healed from I felt sick” (Misgana, 2018, p. 53).

As can be read from the extract, Bitania confirms that when she writes, she gets relief. People who have family or friends share with them what they have faced. This is remembering and mourning the traumatic event, which is the second stage of Herman’s coping with trauma. After lamenting this problem, survivors realize that the trauma has passed, and they are expected to reconnect to everyday life. In addition to the writing cure, Bitania applies other methods to heal from her trauma. Since she is a graduate psychologist, she exercises healing, as the following quotation reflects:

ካደገች በኋላ ለምን እንደዚህ አይነት ሰው እንደሆነች ለማወቅ ለረዥም ጊዜ አልቻልኩም፤ ነገር ግን የተማረችው የስነ-ልቦና ትምህርት ጠቅሟታል፤ እናም አሁን ምክንያቱን በዝርዝር ታውቃለች...፡፡ ለወንዶች ያላትን ጥልቅ ጥላቻ፤ ለራሷ ያላትን ጥላቻ፤ ሰዎችን

ያለመቆረቢን ምክንያት ጭምር ተረድታልች፡፡ እናም እራሷን በማስታመም እና በመለወጥ ብዙ ጊዜዋን አጥፍታለች፤ ለራሷ አሳይመንት በመስጠት፤ መፈተንና ማበረታታት እለት እለት ስራዋ ከሆነ ቆይቷል፡፡ እራሷን አስሮ ካስቀመጣት የራስ እስር ቤቷ ለመውጣት ትግሉን ጀምራለች፡፡ (ምስጋና፡2011፤ 11).

“After growing up, she did not know for a long time why she was such a person. But the psychology she learned benefited her; now, she knows in detail why.... She understood her deep-seated hatred for men, her hatred for herself, and her reasons for not approaching people. And she spent much time caring for and changing her. Delegating, testing, and encouraging her has been her daily routine. She began a struggle to get out of her cell” (Misgana, 2018, p. 11).

She can communicate with men; the others would be simple. She believes that men are her enemies, including her father, who denies her. This belief grows with her and affects her way of life. She builds relations with men for revenge only. To be fit for revenge, she got trained in karate. She faced repeated violence; however, she tried to defend herself. After all, she decides to reshape her attitude toward men and tries to see the other sides of life apart from hatred of men, and she is practicing it as the quotation shows: ወንዶች የመጀመሪያ ሙከራ ያደረገችባቸው የሙከራዋ ግብአቶች ነበሩ፡፡ ወንዶችን ማቅረብ ከቻለች ሰዎች ጋር መቀራረብ እና መግባባት እንደማይከብዳት ስላመነች የቤት ስራዋን ከከባድ ለመጀመር ስለወሰነች ነው...፡፡ ምስጋና፡ (2011፡11–12). “The first of her experimental inputs during this experiment were men. She decided to start her homework early because she believed that it would be easier for her to get along with people that she could handle” (Misgana, 2018, pp. 11–12). The narrator suggests that Bitania employs different mechanisms to heal herself from her post-traumatic stress disorder. Fortunately, Bitania is conscious of psychological scars and their solutions, so she can treat and practice them to heal herself from her trauma using her own mechanisms. To achieve this, she decided to create a close relationship with a man.

Like Bitania, Wastina faced a complex traumatic disorder. Unlike other characters in the novel, she can recover from her complex case with a strong follow-up of psychiatrists. When she was in the hospital with a fistula to be treated, foreign doctors met her and realized that her case was so multifaceted. On the one hand, she was a rape victim. However, she got pregnant by a rapist in her early childhood. Due to these, she was sent to Norway to receive special treatment.

Wastina’s healing is based on Miller’s (2000) techniques of healing: problem-focused and emotion-focused coping with trauma. The emotion-focused coping is working on the survivors’ thinking strategy. The following text applies this idea: የስነ-ልቦና ሀኪም ተቀጠረላት፡፡...ከሁለት አመት ልዩ እገዛ በኋላ ወደራሷ ተመልሰች፡፡...ሁሉም ከጎናችን የነበሩ የዋስቲ የስነ-ልቦና አማካሪ እና ቤተሰቦቻቸው ነበሩ፡፡ ብዙ ጉዳት አደርሰንባቸዋል፤ ግን ተስፋ ሳይቆርጥ ነበር ዶክተሩ ከትትል የሚያደርገው እና ልጄን ያው ለዚህ አበቃት፡፡ (ምስጋና፡2011፤ 119–21). “She was hired by a psychiatrist.

We always had Wasti's psychologist and his family by our side. We caused him much damage, but he did not give up. As a result, he makes my daughter normal" (Misgana, 2018, pp. 119-121). The above speech is Mr. Teshale's testimony about how Wastina was treated to heal from the traumatic disorder she went through. If she could not get such a treatment, she might stay mad.

Similarly, by applying Miller's (2000) action focus healing mechanism, the therapist decided to make a face change to Wastina, which helped her forget her pain. Miller's (2000) problem-focused coping is action-centered and it is employed to avoid physical wounds that remind the victim of the traumatic event and cause the survivor to relive the trauma, as can be read in the citation: ፊቷ ላይ የነበረውን ጠባሳ በመስታውት ባየች ቁጥር የተደፈረችባቸውን ጊዜያት ስለሚያስታውሳት ሰርጀሪው ሊያግዛት እንደሚችል ታምኖበት ነው የተሰራው፡፡ አሁን ከእድሜዋ አስር አመት የሚያንስ የፊት ገጽ ነው ያላት፡፡ (ምስጋና፣ 2011፣ 121). "The scar on her face reminds her of the times she was raped every time she looked in the mirror. She now has a face that is ten years younger" (Misgana, 2018, p. 121). Wastina's surgery helps her to forget painful past experiences, motivated by the scars on her face caused by extreme violence. Additionally, making her face younger than her age deliberately is like adding her extra time to think about the new normal life.

4. Conclusion and Implications

Applying psychological approaches of trauma theory, the researchers make the following conclusions. Trauma is naturalistic because traumatic events are unexpected and uncontrollable by its nature. Particularly for the psychic wound, its recovery lacks a clear-cut coping mechanism because each character has different sociocultural and familial origins, making it possible for one method to be effective for one character but ineffective for another. Some treatments may help some survivors get better; others who have had comparable experiences may require more time and psychotherapy to recover. This study demonstrated that the characters in the book Yeras Esregna (Self-Prisoner) experience post-traumatic stress disorder and employ various coping strategies to recover from it. Accordingly, it was seen that different characters react differently to the same traumatic situations depending on various characteristics, including the degree of support or difficulty they receive, their age and academic standing, and the beliefs they form throughout their lives. Additionally, some characters have symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, while others do not. The way each character handles trauma differs from one to the next similarly. Wastina receives treatment from a psychiatrist, whilst Bitania attempts to treat herself. Some treatments may help some survivors get better; while others who have had comparable experiences may require more time and professional care to recover. These healing mechanisms have limitations for their inaccessibility for illiterate community since it is applied via professionals. Work on the feeling of survivors and on their physical change

needs experts' effort; so the researchers believe that in addition to the mentioned mechanisms in the study, ordinary ways of coping are needed to treat victims in remote rural areas.

5. Limitations of the Study

This study does not treat everything in the selected novel; rather it will focus on post-traumatic stress disorder and the way of healing from it as depicted in *Self-Prisoner*; besides, the healing mechanisms are only those reflected in it.

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