

# PTSD as a Healing Disorder in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*

# Hussein Talib Al-Janabi

*Department of English/ Hilla University College/ Iraq*

[hussein\\_abd@hilla-unc.edu.iq](mailto:hussein_abd@hilla-unc.edu.iq)

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# Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to pave the way towards a unique psychological interpretation of Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*. To this end, the researcher delves into the positive effects that post-traumatic stress disorder has had on the characters depicted in the aforementioned novel. It highlights that recovery and rehabilitation have been achieved with the aid of PTSD. PTSD, as a type of traumatic illness, studies the way people feel during and after traumatic events. Needless to say, Alice Walker is known for her unprecedentedly insightful portrayal of the lives and cultures of African-American women. Her unprecedented presentation of the epistolary form in the aforementioned novel is designed to achieve numerous purposes. In this novel, letter writing is Celie's only means to challenge the patriarchy, to assert her identity, and finally to gain self-acceptance. The researcher touches upon the role of post-traumatic stress disorder in writing letters until the end, which leads to rehabilitation objectives. By defining the concept of PTSD as the cornerstone of this paper, the following inquiries are posited: (a) how PTSD makes Celie a warrior woman, and (b) what role PTSD plays as a stimulant in Celie's letter writing. To shed light on the role of PTSD during the healing process, this paper meticulously investigates the various types of traumatic events, including rape, abuse, and traumatic domestic violence, experienced by some of the characters in the novel.

**Key words:** PTSD, trauma, rehabilitation, recovery, psychological interpretation.

## تأثير اضطراب ما بعد الصدمة كوسيلة للشفاء في رواية أليس ووكر "اللون الأرجواني"

## حسين طالب الجنابي

ق اللغة الإنذلة / تة / لة اللة الامة / العاق

## المستخلص

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الكلمات الدالة: اض اب ما ع ال مة، ال مة، إعادة الأھ ، ال فاء، ال ف، ال ف، ال ساء .

## 1-Introduction

Trauma is the outcome of incredibly stressful circumstances that destroy our sense of security, leaving us feeling vulnerable and defenseless in a perilous environment. Traumatic experiences can harm people in various ways, including psychological trauma. A traumatic event is a singular encounter or series of enduring, recurrent experiences that utterly overwhelm a person's ability to manage or process the thoughts and feelings associated with the occurrence. The sensation of being overwhelmed can come on gradually over weeks or even years as a person strives to address or mitigate an immediate threat. According to historian Jill Matus, the terms "trauma" and "battle fatigue syndrome," which were both first used in the 20th century and are now known as "post-traumatic stress disorder" (PTSD), are historically created categories with roots in theories created by nineteenth-century philosophers.

Alice Walker is widely regarded as one of the most contentious African-American female authors by literary critics throughout the world. She has always been regarded as an artist who accurately depicts the past. Throughout her creative career, Walker has published a large number of poems, short stories, and novels in which she focuses on the life stories of African American women, one of the most marginalized and overlooked social groups. Since Walker comes from the same culture, she may have infused the work with numerous personal notions. Racism and sexism are the predominant themes in all of Walker's novels. She focused mostly on the relationship between men and women in the black community, as opposed to the disparity between blacks and whites. The common issues of blacks are reintroduced in Walker's works to spark new vitality in society. Her novels assisted in reviving the blacks' cultural legacy and historical background.

In her letters to God and, subsequently, her long-lost sister Nettie, the black woman Celie chronicles her life from childhood into old age in Alice Walker's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *The Color Purple*. This narrative of trauma uses the epistolary form to testify to the redemptive power of literature in the face of adversity. Letters are an invaluable tool for self-discovery, re-appropriation, and development, and they are the only way she can re-write herself into existence.

The present paper aims to demonstrate the significance of PTSD in the process of recovery by documenting its role during the various types of traumatic events experienced by the female black characters and examining the subsequent effects on these characters. Through a unique portrayal of the protagonist, Celie, and an examination of how post-traumatic stress disorder serves as her impetus to start writing letters addressed to God and then to her sister, the letters serve as a catalyst for Celie's redemptive motivation, allowing her to reclaim her sense of self. Furthermore, the researcher seeks to accentuate the significance of the aforementioned concept and its role



as a catalyst in the protagonist's endeavor to reconcile the disparity between patriarchal norms and racial discrimination.

## 2- Literature View

In 2020, Qing interpreted the trauma in *The Color Purple* From the standpoint of trauma theory. The study detailed a woman's evolution from a submissive to an autonomous disposition. Throughout her entire life, the protagonist experienced a variety of traumas, including domestic abuse trauma, isolation trauma, and gender trauma, among others. Through self-redemption and the assistance of others, she attained a new existence and realized the transformation of her life.

Trauma is a severe and often irreversible injury to a person's mind, body, and spirit:

Contemporary theories seem to agree on a definition of trauma in terms of overwhelming life experiences that shatter the social and psychological sense of self and precipitate existential crisis, characterized by flashbacks, nightmares and other reexperiences, emotional numbing, depression, guilt, autonomic arousal, explosive violence or a tendency to hypervigilance. [1,p.160].

Thus, a person's mental state is typically described as "traumatized" if they have experienced things like family troubles, poverty, accidents, war, rape, etc. Because of the intense worry, sadness, or shock that follows a traumatic experience or a state of distress, the individual's behavior is altered. To which Linett explains:

Trauma does not always happen in a good situation, it also happens when the individual has a bad experience, it can cause trauma. Trauma is the result of extraordinarily stressful events that shatter our sense of security, making us feel helpless and vulnerable in a dangerous world. Psychological trauma is a type of damage that occurs as a result of a traumatic event. [1,p.437].

A traumatic event is an encounter-either one that occurs just once or one that persists and recurs over and over again-that utterly overwhelms the person's capacity to deal with or assimilate the concepts and feelings involved in the situation. As the individual strives to deal with the present threat, the feeling of being overwhelmed may not set in for weeks or even years. Numerous occurrences can qualify as traumatic, but there are some constants among them. A condition of great bewilderment and unease results from the frequent violation of the person's established beliefs about the world and their human rights. This occurs, for example, when a person's basic needs are not met because someone or something they relied on violated or betrayed them.

Both Carlson and Rosser-Hogan point out that many capable, strong, and good people experience trauma. Unfortunately, there is no foolproof method of avoiding painful events. Those who have suffered a sudden injury, such as from an accident, an injury, or an impact, are said to have suffered trauma. The original meaning of the Greek word trauma was a wound, and up until the turn of the last century, it was used only to relate to actual physical harm. [2,p.160]

Additionally, trauma may be viewed as a process wherein an individual's mind is set up in a particular way in order to deal with this incident, suggesting that it is a type of



terrible or overpowering occurrence that happens to a person. This procedure includes the production of trauma, a pre-traumatic phase, and the acute phase of the traumatic state. The aftermath of trauma might be one of two things: rehabilitation and growth, or decline and stagnation [2,p.7].

A traumatic encounter is one that leaves a lasting impression on a person's emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being. The impact of sexual assault on a youngster is quite complex. Those who have experienced trauma may exhibit erratic behavior, including engaging in out- of -character activities, having trouble remembering the events that caused the trauma, and having trouble sleeping because of recurring nightmares. [3, p.79]

## 2.1 Points of Trauma Theory

As long as there have been people, there has been trauma. The aftermath of trauma has been the subject of numerous ancient works. In contrast, the concept of emotional trauma has just been fully articulated within the past 20 years [4] . Trauma was called hysteria, nerve shock, the big neurosis, or combat neurosis before that, and its manifestations were still seen as indicators of weakness and laziness as recently as the Vietnam War.

PTSD was officially recognized by the American Psychiatric Association in the late 1980s, when it was included in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders III. [5]

The group reached the following conclusions on the conditions under which a person might experience PTSD after being exposed to a traumatic event:

- Someone who has been through or seen anything that could have resulted in death, injury, or a threat to one's physical integrity.
- The person whose reaction was a sense of hopelessness or fear.

An occurrence is considered traumatic if the survivors suffer out-of-the-ordinary intense emotional responses that could impair their capacity to function, either immediately following the event or at a later time. An out-of-the-ordinary occurrence is one that causes significant disruption to the victim's regular functioning and coping mechanisms.

As a result of the Freudian and Lacanian reinterpretations of the term trauma, there has been a recent uptick in theoretical analysis of these themes. The growing political influence of historically oppressed groups, as well as the overlap of interests between post-structuralism and movements like feminism and post-colonialism, are what drive authors like these.

Social constructivism is also widely used, which makes it an easy tool to use to figure out how text and identity are connected. This makes other interpretive media less important since they usually show broken, sad, and jumbled emotions in their stories. This fact emphasizes the growth of multidisciplinary discourse, with trauma theory as the dominant discipline. Major contributions to the elucidation of this topic can be traced back to Cathy Carruth, who has edited volumes including Trauma: Explorations in Memory (1995); the publication of Geoffrey Hartman's article "On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies in PsyArt" in 2004; and Rosemary Winslow's Troping Trauma: Conceiving of Experiences of Speechless Terror (2004).



Even though Freud had difficulty simplifying trauma theory and even failed to adequately define the phenomenon, his disciples utilized his understanding of trauma, as demonstrated in the following passage:

The post-Freudian theory holds that the knowledge of trauma, or the knowledge which comes from that source, is composed of two contradictory elements. One is the traumatic event, registered rather than experienced. It seems to have bypassed perception and consciousness, and falls directly into the psyche. The other is a kind of memory of the event, in the form of a perpetual troping (literally turning, but Hartman also means \_metaphorizing) of it is by the bypassed or severely split psyche. [6]

Individuals who have been traumatized are unable to objectively evaluate, assess, or rationalize the traumatic incident because it occurred outside the spectrum of ordinary human experience. Unresolved memories of the event manifest as symptoms that the conscious mind can only interpret automatically. Most compulsions involve some kind of ritual or ritualistic conduct. Similar to irrational fears and singular phobias, the nature of such actions may consist of an ingrained plan of avoidance activities. The concept of trauma proposed by Huang is closely related to its three E's. A group of therapists (including Drs. Ryan, Foderaro, and Bloom) who treat patients with post-traumatic stress disorder ranked them according to events, the experience of the events, and their effects.

Trauma never happens for no reason, there is always a deeper story. It can be noticed from what is collected in the publication entitled Trauma Theory. When an individual is subjected to an externally-inflicted blow or sequence of blows that are abrupt, unexpected, overwhelming, and powerful, the result is trauma. Although traumatic experiences take place in the outside world, they swiftly become internalized.[7]

Caruth adds that the person who develops traumatic pathology does so precisely to the degree that he or she ceases being present to the event at the time in which it is occurring. She goes on to say that while the incident did take place, no one was able to fully absorb its significance until many years later. In her words, the significance of the traumatic experience is found in the fact that it occurred at a later time than expected, that it defied easy geographical placement, and that it insisted on making itself known despite being unrelated to a certain location or period [8].

Trauma, despite the severe experiences it labels, is not an inborn category but rather a culturally produced technique to distinguish between different kinds of encounters and events. Our understanding of trauma, its cultural archetypes, the nature of illness and suffering, the nature of the mind and the person, and the moral politics of victimization, blame, and accountability have all evolved over time. The concept of trauma originated in medicine, but it has since been adopted and adapted in other fields, including science, medicine, psychology, culture, and most crucially, literature. [9].



### 3-Method

Although their foci are different, both literature and psychology focus on human beings. Literature delves into the human imagination, while psychology focuses on the concrete, everyday world. "By psychology of literature, we may mean the psychology study of the writer, as type and as individual, or the study of the psychological types and laws present within works of literature, or the effect of literature on its reader (audience psychology)".[10,p.81]

Since psychological methods can be used to analyze literature, the two fields are not separate. The scientific study of mental and behavioral processes is known as psychology. Among other things, psychologists study consciousness, mental processes, emotions, character traits, habits of conduct, and interpersonal dynamics. In addition to treating mental health disorders, the discipline of psychology encompasses the application of this knowledge to different areas of human life, including family, education, and employment. One definition of psychology is the scientific study of human behavior. On the other hand, literary psychology is a branch of literary studies that views writing as a psychological activity in which the author makes use of their own ideas, emotions, and abilities [11].

The study of literature's structure, function, and psychological value from a psychological perspective. Along with literature and biography and literature and community, literature and psychology is one of three outside approaches to literature. There are several subfields within the field known as "psychology of literature," the most prominent of which are psychological studies of authors (both as types and as people), the creative process, literary works' psychological kinds and rules, and the effects of literature on readers and viewers [12].

Rene Wellek and Austin Warren state that there are four ways to look at psychological literature. A psychological study of the author's personality or personal life constitutes the first. The creative process stands in for the second. The third delves into the literary classic's use of type and psychological laws. Also, the effect on the audience is the fourth factor to consider when studying literature. The first and second branches of art psychology make up the body of work in this field. Thirdly, the literature review in its purest form is concerned. The fourth one will be assessed in terms of community and literature. [10, p.78].

To illustrate all the findings, the researcher postulates the theory of trauma in literary studies by employing the first wave of trauma theory. This theory serves as the foundation for the concepts that Freud introduced in his investigations of patients afflicted with traumatic symptoms. The researcher endeavors to establish a connection between the method and certain characters in the novel. Additionally, there have been some benefits from the theories put forth by second wave trauma studies theorists, who support innovative methodologies that leave much more room for variation in response and differences in time, culture, and context rather than Freudian-related ones.

### 4- Literary Analysis of the Color Purple

Black women experience emotional and physical abuse at the hands of their families, in addition to the societal violence they face daily. African-Americans held as



slaves during the age of slavery were considered to be the property of their owners. As a bonus to satisfying their sexual needs, raping female slaves allowed them to multiply their wealth. And the babies born to the slave women were also considered slaves and property of their masters. In response, black males transferred the racism, hatred, and violence they experienced at the hands of white men onto their families. Black women were subjected to both forms of oppression, resulting in severe psychological and physiological harm. Furthermore, they either could not love at all or be loved too much. Trauma from society, not a lack or variety of maternal love, is to blame for the loss of parenthood among African American mothers. A woman's journey from dependence to self-sufficiency is chronicled in *The Color Purple*. The narrative focuses largely on trauma. Celie, the protagonist, has been through a lot in her life, including a lot of trauma. She ultimately built her own sense of self, strengthened bonds with other black women, and made things easier for herself in her relationships with black men.

Male violence against African American females is a theme that is repeatedly discussed in African American literature. Alice Walker, as an Afro-American writer, holds a responsibility to successfully portray the suffering that her community's females are encountering and receiving while living in a patriarchal society that does not appreciate their existence. In her Pulitzer-winning novel, *The Color Purple* (1982), Alice Walker portrays the racial and gender discrimination that Afro-American females encounter all throughout their lives, especially while living in a society that believes in male superiority. Throughout the novel, Walker presents multiple scenes in which her female characters, and specifically the protagonist, Celie, suffer from violence from all the males in her life. Male dominance coupled with racial discrimination crushes down the female and obliges her to endure the suffering silently.

As mentioned earlier, the researcher conducts a textual analysis to exemplify all the findings by documenting various types of traumatic experiences endured by the black female characters. Concurrently, he documents the protagonist's recovery from trauma with the aid of PTSD by exhibiting the role of the aforementioned concept as a stimulant while writing the letters to God and her sister.

Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*, like most of her other works, is told from the first-person perspective. Celie, a girl of fourteen in the novel, was the protagonist. Initially, Celie experiences the trauma of domestic violence. We found out right off the bat that Celie was a black girl in this story. There was a rapid decline in Celie's mother's health, and she was increasingly frail. As a result, she could only provide Celie with emotional support and neglect her physical needs.

Her stepfather had no regard for Celie's dead body, and he trampled on her anyway. Celie's mother had no insight into her daughter's anguish and predicament. On the contrary, she had a negative impression of Celie. Because of the lies told to her by her stepfather, Celie's mother has always thought that her daughter was misbehaving and has been constantly berating her for her clumsiness and poor judgment. This terrible incident resulted in Celie's first real trauma, leaving her with ongoing physical and emotional suffering. In addition, her stepfather abducted her two children. Her ability to have children ceased after that. It is common sense that the psychological damage is fatal, "A girl at church say you git big if you bleed every month. I don't bleed no more". Her



natural resentment of men and women engaging in sexual activity has had a significant negative impact on her subsequent marital life. Celie, the protagonist, is a girl whose stepfather, whom she mistook for her real father, raped her. Yet Celie starts writing letters to God:

Dear God, I am fourteen years old. I-aa I have always been a good girl. Maybe you can give me a sign letting me know what is happening to me. Last spring after little Lucious come I heard them fussing. He was pulling on her arm. She say It too soon Fonso, I ain't well. Finally he leave her alone. A week go by, he pulling on her arm again. She say Naw, I ain't gonna. Can not you see I'm already half dead, an all of these children.[13,p.4].

Celie writes this initial letter in the wake of the effects of PTSD to express how miserable she is. Celie's quest for self-understanding is multifaceted, involving not only racial but also religious tensions. Celie imagines a white man when she prays. As she learns more about who she is, she'll also develop her own concept of who he is. She is both sustained and disillusioned by her belief in a higher power. She complains that God must be sleeping because the violence against her keeps happening.

Celie's stepfather subjected her to rape and physical assault. When her mother went to the doctor, he raped her, telling her:

You gonna do what your mammy wouldn't.... I cry, He start to choke me and saying you better shut up and git used to it. But I don't never git used to it. And now I feels sick every time I be the one to cook. My mama she fuss at me an look at me. She happy, cause he good to her now. But too sick to last long. [13,p.5].

In addition, after she gave birth to her first child, he took him while she slept, and then he took her second child:

He took it.. He took it while I was sleeping. Kilt it out there in the woods. Kill this one too, if he can.... He took my other little baby, a boy this time. But I don't think he kilt it. I think he sold it to a man and his wife over Monticello I got breasts full of milk running down myself. He say Why don't you look decent? Put on something. But what I'm sposed to put on? I don't have nothing. I keep hoping he fine somebody for marry. I see him looking at my little sister. She scared. But I say I'll take care of you. With God help. [13,p.6].

In the novel, Celie's status as a slave is revealed when she is coerced into marrying the man known as Albert. To begin with, her stepfather compelled her into that marriage by convincing Albert to marry her on the grounds that she could take care of his children and was hard-working. In addition to obeying him:

She not much of a chook.... She ain't no stranger to hard work. And she clean. You can do everything just like you want to and she ain't gonna make you feed it or clothe it. I take out the picture of Shug Avery. I look into her eyes. Her eyes say Yeah, it bees that way sometimes. [13,p.8-9].

The black male was of the opinion that black women needed to be beaten into submission. Celie still has a healthy amount of fear of men due to their history of violent



interactions with her. Like the time her stepfather beat her because he thought she had winked at a boy in church. Despite having informed God in her letters that she fears men and can't even look at them, she resumes writing letters to God:

I don't even look at men. That's the truth. I look at women, tho, cause I'm not scared of them Maybe cause my mama cuss me you think I kept mad at her. But I ain't. I felt sorry for mama. Trying to believe his story kilt her. Sometime he still be looking at Nettie, but I always git in his light.[13,p.7].

Since the initial letter directed towards God up until the present moment, Celie is currently experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). At this stage, an individual who is experiencing trauma will likely face one of two outcomes: rehabilitation or stagnation. She directs her letters to God, expressing her contemplation, depiction, and grievances with her suffering. PTSD triggers the need to resume writing the letters. When Albert complains to Harpo about Sofia's disobedience, he encourages Harpo to beat her by telling him:

You ever hit her? Mr. ?? ast. Harpo look down at his hands. Naw sub, he say low, embarrass. Well, how you spect to make her mind?? Wives is that like children. You have to let 'em know who got the upper hand. Nothing can do that better than a good sound beating. [13,p.36-37].

In a lamentable psychological depiction, in addition to numerous indicators that demonstrate Celie's lack of education, her letters also revealed her extremely limited ability to compose them correctly. Nevertheless, PTSD continues to exert a positive influence on her internal psychological conduct. This inspires her to proceed with penning the letter addressed to God. The traditional role of the man in a family is one indication of the dominance of men in society. Sexual encounters between Albert and Celie were never as passionate or tender as they should have been, as evidenced by the following lines: "He git up on you, heist your nightgown round your waist, plunge in. Most times I pretend I ain't there. He never know the difference. Never ast me how I feel, nothing. Just do his business, get off, go to sleep." [13,P.78-79].

Another PTSD-induced letter was addressed to God in the form of a complaint. Many people who have experienced trauma report feeling detached from reality and from others around them. Victims of trauma may experience a complete disconnection from their local community. These events have a significant impact on the victim's sense of security in the world as well as their sense of self-worth. Reinforcing negative perceptions about the value and relevance of the disadvantaged group deepens their previous sentiments of worthlessness and loneliness. Because suffering is a universal human experience, trauma is a common thread in literature.

It is noteworthy that Walker's novel structure, consisting of a compilation of individual letters, effectively represents post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This structure effectively conveys the anarchy and disintegration experienced by the female characters due to their victimhood of sexual and physical assault. These letters, which are PTSD-related triggers, also serve as a means of healing for the characters from their life of slavery.



Nevertheless, the novel shows an acceptance of male dominance. Celie finds it frustrating that Albert always takes the lead in their relationship, but she accepts it because, in her mind, that's how things were supposed to be in her society back then, and she has to adapt. For example, she says, "After all the evil he done, I know you wonder why I don't hate him" [13,p.32].

However, Celie resumes writing letters to God:

He beat me like he beat the children. Cept he don't never hardly beat them. He say, Celie, git the belt. The children be outside the room peeking through the cracks. It all I can do not to cry. I make myself wood. I say to myself, Celie, you a tree. That's how come I know trees fear man. [13,p.30].

Above is the most severe letter addressed to God. It stands for the disintegration and disorder of Celie's spirit as a result of her stepfather's and her husband's sexual and racial subjugation. The present researcher contends that the process of reconstructing and redefining one's identity after it has been fractured has only been acknowledged with the emergence of PTSD and its triggers on the inner psyche. Because without the suffering, they would not have been traumatized, and without the trauma, they would not have been in the stage of post-traumatic stress disorder, so they find themselves faced with two points: rehabilitation (PTSD-positive effectiveness) and stagnation (PTSD-negative effectiveness).

The power of love and the PTSD triggers left behind foster themes of personal growth, resiliency, faithfulness, unity, and happiness in *The Color Purple*. Through her interactions and friendships with a close-knit group of strong women, Celie learns about love and friendship. In addition, she realizes that she is deserving of more favorable treatment than what she has received thus far.

#### 4-1 Traumatic Repetition

In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), Freud expands upon his earlier theories concerning the defense mechanisms of the ego and the origin and consequences of trauma on the psyche through his investigation of war neurosis and traumatic repetition. Traumatic incidents generate internal strife within the ego, which becomes fragmented and repressed; however, it frequently resurfaces in the form of dreams. Traumatic neurosis is the result of these conflicts; it is the consequence of a significant disruption in the protective barrier against stimuli. [14].

The frequent exposure of the female black characters to traumatic occurrences did not leave any mark on their psyches; rather, they created a defense mechanism that finally contributed to their rehabilitation. This defense mechanism was the factor that ultimately led to their rehabilitation. The novel is intended to evoke the power that is associated with traumatic experiences by depicting a sequence of violent physical and sexual occurrences along the course of the story. By depicting these experiences in a manner that is both overt and implicit, it is able to accomplish this goal. The relevance of the recent traumatic events and the 'pathogenic reminiscences' [15] within the individual are what drive the intensity of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which ultimately results in a positive power from the individual. Therefore, in order to re-appropriate and



re-exist oneself, it is important to have a sufficient quantity of tough power through the accumulation of unpleasant experiences. This is the only way to accomplish this.

If not, what will be the driving force that will push Celie to prove that she has value and a human existence, regardless of her race, color, or gender? But because she had been through such painful experiences throughout her life, this was the reason behind that strength.

Right after the distribution of letters to everyone in society and the spotlighting of Celie and the other women who have suffered abuse at the hands of the male characters in the novel, the conclusion that was reached was that the novel presents an overt breakdown of patriarchy as a destructive force and offers the ideology of womanism as an alternative to the ideology of patriarchy. This conclusion was reached after everything was said and done regarding the novel.

As Celie is reunited with her sister, she has the impression that she has at long last discovered a sense of tranquility in her life. Eventually, she falls in love with a jazz singer by the name of Shug Avery, despite the fact that she has endured a significant amount of abuse at the hands of every man in her life, including her stepfather. At the conclusion of the novel, Celie has triumphed over her traumatic experience and discovered peace within her circumstances with the family she has chosen. Celie and Albert develop a friendship by the time the letters reach their conclusion. Throughout the course of Celie's journey toward coming to terms with who she is as an individual, she experienced both her agony and her courage. When Albert makes the official proposal, he tells her that he will not only become her husband legally, but that he will also be her husband in her heart.

## 5- Conclusion

In conclusion, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) has had a significant impact on the characters who have experienced trauma, particularly Celie, whose PTSD compels her to seek liberation from enslavement. She wrote letters to God and her sister, seeking a means of survival amid the turmoil and disarray she had experienced. PTSD compels the protagonists to reimagine their own lives and free themselves from the oppressive system. The effects of PTSD have facilitated the sisters' reunion, while Albert and Harpo are still going through changes in their familial and interpersonal dynamics as a result of their miserable situation. And they learn about the empowerment and self-sufficiency of women.

Finally, it may be concluded that stressful and harmful events can set off a person's defense mechanism; this defense mechanism is then activated along with the effects of PTSD, opening up a number of ways to recover. The result is the creation of a means that the main character, Celie, uses to write letters. The researcher highlighted the traumas that the majority of the female characters in the novel were exposed to, focusing on how post-traumatic stress disorder is used as a unique means of healing from trauma. In fact, Celie not only faced physical and spiritual challenges but also developed into a resilient and empowered woman under the influence of the above concept.



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