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قواعد النشر وشروطه

آداب مجلة علمية محكمة تصدر في يونيو وديسمبر من كل عام عن كلية الآداب جامعة الخرطوم وتقبل البحوث في مجالات الآداب والفنون والعلوم الإنسانية مع مراعاة الآتي:

١. ألا يكون البحث المقدم للمجلة قد نشر أو قدم للنشر في مكان آخر.
٢. تخضع البحوث المنشورة في هذه المجلة للتحكيم العلمي الذي يتولاه أساتذة مختصون وفق ضوابط موضوعية.
٣. تسلم نسختان مطبوعتان من البحث على معالج نصوص (حاسوب) مع أسطوانة مدمجة تحتوي على البحث. أو ترسل على البريد الإلكتروني adabsudan@gmail.com.
٤. يراعى في البحث أن يتراوح حجمه بين ٣٠٠٠-٥٠٠٠ كلمة، ويرفق الباحث مستخلصاً باللغتين العربية والإنجليزية لبحثه بما لا يتجاوز صفحة واحدة (٢٠٠) كلمة، ويذيل هذا المستخلص بما لا يزيد على خمس كلمات مفتاحية تبرز أهم المواضيع التي يتطرق إليها البحث. ويراعى أن تحتوي الصفحة الأولى من البحث على عنوان البحث واسم الباحث، والجامعة أو المؤسسة الأكاديمية وعنوان البريد والبريد الإلكتروني.
٥. تنشر المجلة مراجعات الكتب بحدود (٢٠٠) كلمة كحد أقصى، على ألا يكون قد مضى على صدور الكتاب أكثر من عامين، ويدون في أعلى الصفحة عنوان الكتاب واسم المؤلف ومكان النشر وتاريخه وعدد الصفحات. وتتألف المراجعة من عرض وتحليل ونقد، وأن تتضمن المراجعة خلاصة مركزة لمحتويات الكتاب. مع مراعاة الاهتمام بمناقشة مصداقية مصادر المؤلف وصحة استنتاجاته.
٦. أن يوثق البحث علمياً بذكر المصادر والمراجع التي اعتمدها الباحث في نهاية البحث. وترتب المراجع في نهاية البحث هجائياً على ألا تحتوي قائمة المراجع إلا على تلك التي تمت الإشارة إليها في متن البحث. يشار إلى جميع المصادر في متن البحث بالطريقة التالية (اسم العائلة. سنة النشر. الصفحة أو الصفحات) مثال: (Adams. 2000. 14). وتوثق في قائمة المراجع والمصادر كما يلي:
للكتب:
 - أحمد بدوي. أسس النقد الأدبي عند العرب، القاهرة، دار نهضة مصر، ١٩٦٤م.للمقالات:
 - قاسم المومني. علاقة النص بصاحبه دراسة في نقود عبد القاهر الجرجاني الشعرية، عالم الفكر، الكويت: العدد الثالث يناير/مارس ١٩٩٧م. ١١٣-١٢٨.
٧. تعبر البحوث التي تنشرها المجلة عن آراء كاتبها، ولا تعبر بالضرورة عن وجهة نظر المجلة أو أية جهة أخرى يرتبط بها صاحب البحث.
٨. لهيئة التحرير الحق في إدخال التحرير والتعديل اللازمين على الأبحاث. وتعد هيئة التحرير رأي محكم المقال نافذاً بالنسبة لنشر البحث أو عدمه أو إدخال التعديلات التي يوصي بها المحكم.

The Healing Power of Personal Narrative

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Abstract:

This study is an attempt to delineate the healing power of personal narrative, and to identify autobiography as a genre based on the personal narrative, recovered memories of psychological traumas and confessional mode, can transform into therapeutic tools of purgation in art resulting in catharsis. In psychological literature, autobiography is proved that human beings naturally seek to understand how and why significant or life turning events happen in their own lives or in the world they exist in. The autobiographical impulse has undertaken to record the autobiographers' life stories as a form of self-therapy. To construct a story of their lives and to compose memory, emotion and internal experience as well as autobiographical facts into a story helps them to become who they are. Storytelling is an important part of self-development, and the narration that has gone awry can be addressed in psychotherapy. The psychotherapists used to discuss how creative writing can help authors articulate, accept and understand their vulnerability and suffering by releasing their thoughts in the secure medium of art. Discussing the implication of coherence for psychotherapy they maintain that constructing a personal story facilitates the comprehension of significant experiences because the process of writing allows the remembering of events during their organization in a coherent fashion while integrating thoughts and feelings related to those events. The study sets out to get the record right by redefining autobiography as healing fiction –assigning to its writers a vital role in psychological rehabilitation

through the medium of art. Then it presents the theoretical questions and terms concerning autobiography as a genre. The aim is to locate this study within its literary, psychological, socio-cultural, contexts to validate the central concept of - the healing power of autobiography and its implication to the individual and community alike.

المستخلص:

هذه الدراسة هي محاولة لتحديد القوة العلاجية للسرد الشخصي، وللتعرف على السيرة الذاتية كنوع يعتمد على السرد الشخصي، يمكن أن تتحول الذكريات المستعادة للصدمات النفسية ومنهج الاعتراف إلى أدوات علاجية للتطهير في الفن مما يؤدي إلى التنفيس. في الأدب النفسي، أثبتت السيرة الذاتية أن البشر يسعون بشكل طبيعي إلى فهم كيف ولماذا تحدث الأحداث المهمة في حياتهم أو في العالم الذي يعيشون فيه. وقد تعهدت السيرة الذاتية تسجيل قصص حياة الكاتب كشكل من العلاج الذاتي. إن بناء قصة عن حياة أحدهم من خلال تكوين الذاكرة والعاطفة كتجارب خاصه بالإضافة إلى سرد حقائق السيرة الذاتية في قصصهم ساعدتهم على أن يصبحوا ما هم عليه الآن. يعد سرد القصص جزءاً مهماً من تطوير الذات، كما يمكن معالجة السرد الذي ينحرف في العلاج النفسي. اعتاد المعالجون النفسيون مناقشة كيف يمكن للكتابة الإبداعية أن تساعد المؤلفين في التعبير عن وقبول وفهم ضعفهم ومعاناتهم من خلال إطلاق أفكارهم في وسط الفن الآمن. عند مناقشة الآثار المترتبة على التماسك في العلاج النفسي، يؤكدون أن بناء قصة شخصية يسهل فهم التجارب المهمة لأن عملية الكتابة تسمح بتذكر الأحداث أثناء تنظيمها بطريقة متماسكة مع دمج الأفكار، الذكريات والمشاعر المتعلقة بتلك الأحداث. تسعى الدراسة إلى تصحيح المعنى من خلال إعادة تعريف السيرة الذاتية على أنها خيال علاجي - وتخصيص دور حيوي لكتابها في إعادة التأهيل النفسي من خلال الفن. ثم تعرض الأسئلة والمصطلحات النظرية المتعلقة بالسيرة الذاتية كنوع أدبي. الهدف هو تحديد موقع لهذه الدراسة في سياقاتها الأدبية والنفسية والاجتماعية والثقافية للتحقق من صحة المفهوم العام - للقوة الشافية للسيرة الذاتية وتأثيرها على الفرد والمجتمع على حد سواء.

The healing power of creative writing has been recognized as early as the ancient times by the ancient Greeks who connected writing to emotional healing –naming Apollo the god of both poetry and healing. The Greek philosopher Aristotle, in his discussion of tragic poetry in his book: *The Poetics* (1957), coined the term catharsis as the function of tragedy. Catharsis is basically a medical term that means to treat the like with the like. But Aristotle defines it in the context of tragedy as the purgation of embattled negative passions by providing a safe outlet for them in the medium of art. Centuries later, psychologists Josef Breuer and Sigmund Freud, in their book: *Studies on Hysteria* (1895), recognized the healing power of what they termed in psychology 'the talking cure', in as a theory based on a therapeutic approach.

The technique works by creating a relaxed state in which patients could talk about their suppressed thoughts and feelings by bringing to consciousness memories of traumatic experiences. Freud's results showed positive health effects enabling patients to cope with post-trauma effects, and to understand and normalize negative passions associated with trauma. As a coping mechanism, the technique equally helped patients to arrive at new insights, solutions and encouraged their perception of personal positive qualities which enhanced identity reformation. Today, diverse psychotherapists S. J. Lepore and Smyth in their article: 'Finding A Voice: Revisiting the History of Therapeutic' (2009), use 'the talking cure' as a technique to promote identification, exploration and expression of stress-related thoughts and passions. James, W. Penna Baker in his book: *Putting Stress into Words: Health, Linguistic, and Therapeutic Implication*, (1993), maintains that talking about trauma is a safe means of releasing negative memories which if suppressed can lead to stress and illness (p.54). In his belief, confronting upsetting experiences help acknowledging them and resulting in positive outcomes. Existential psychologist R.M. May, in the article: 'The Courage to Create' (1979), discusses how creative writing can help authors articulate, accept and understand their vulnerability and suffering by releasing their thoughts in the secure medium of art.

There is also an existing body of literature about the healing benefits of personal narrative viewing it as a form of therapeutic writing. In such studies, a constructed personal narrative is viewed as a form of knowledge that helps to organize the emotional effects of an experience as well as the experience itself.

One basic question in the present study is why authors write autobiographies. In psychological literature it is proved that human beings naturally seek to understand how and why significant life turning events happen in their own lives and their consequences. This motivates them to construct their life- stories to release persistent memories of childhood traumas, unresolved adolescence conflicts, family disfunctionalities or any other unexpected turns in later stages in life, with the aim to understand personal, socio-cultural or political complexities in the world they live in. By retrieving memories of such events in writing they seek to trace their root causes, significance, consequences and implications so that they can comprehend their implications in order to cope with their post-stress disorder. Only then can they grieve, mourn or purge suppressed passions and move on with their lives.

Through the use of overarching themes, characterization or structured plots, writers would be able to tie all of the changes in their lives into a broad comprehensive and coherent whole. Narrative psychologists have long emphasized the importance for people to make sense of significant events in their lives by structuring them into a chronologically coherent narrative. In an article titled: 'Forming a Story: The Health Benefits of Narrative' (1999), James, W. Penne Baker and Janet, D. Sengal, claim that writing about important personal experiences, in an emotional way results in an improved mental and physical health. Their findings suggest that the formation of a narrative serves the function of organizing complex experiences into a coherent form. Discussing the implication of coherence for psychotherapy they maintain that constructing a personal story facilitates the comprehension of significant experiences because the process of writing allows the remembering of events during their organization in a coherent fashion while integrating thoughts and feelings related to those events.

Disclosure of emotionally charged events in organized, coherent form, Baker and Sengal, go on to maintain, can transform into therapeutic means by helping impose order on the chaos of events resulting in reasoning and understanding of what is buried in the subconscious, causing stress and unhappiness. Therapeutic results are significant, in particular, in autobiographies written by members of racially oppressed communities, ethnic minorities or stigmatized persons in a given society. Such autobiographies result, for authors and their communities alike, in improved levels of collective self-esteem, self-worth derived from a rehabilitated collective consciousness. Such autobiographies also help their writers cope with the emotional impact of racial, gender or patriarchal prejudiced attitudes or trauma-related disorders.

In Baker and Sengal's view, the act of converting painful memories and their related negative expressions into art, changes an authors' perception of them in the process of integrating feelings and thoughts into an organized coherent whole. The two authors conclude that it is crucial for a person to confront his/her problems and anxieties by organizing them in a form of a personal narrative to aid the process of comprehending and explaining past and present life concerns. To gain maximum benefits from story-telling they recommend that it should be constructed later in life when sufficient information is discovered or broader perspectives are adopted.

In the later part of the 20th century constructionist theorists developed an approach called narrative therapy which uses patients' stories to make sense of their clients' perceptions and address identified problems (Freud, 1977). Techniques include reframing the stories to isolate incidents that constructively address the problem. Telling their stories, help patients externalize the problem as separate from an individual which enables the exploration of the teller's points of strength and solutions utilized as a narrative therapy provide validation.

Stephen Madigan, in his book: *Narrative Therapy: Theories of Psychotherapy* (2011), discussing the relevance of narrative therapy, views it as an important means of helping people speak safely about negative

experiences without the risk of being traumatized, without being ashamed or blamed. Art or the creative process provides a safe territory in which to articulate the experience to envision a better future, for creating well-being -writing and insights gleaned an important part of recovery. Story-telling is also incorporated into psychotherapy to help victims of trauma to recover. J. Lepore and Smyth in their book: *A Voice: Revisiting the History of Therapy* (2009), stress the profound influence of writing on the feelings, thoughts and behaviors of individual writers and entire societies (p.65-66).

An-existing body of literature on the benefits of written personal narratives also explores how therapeutic writing can ensure cognitive, emotional and spiritual release not easily accessed. Baker in his article: 'Forming a story: The health benefits of narrative' (1997), maintains that personal narrative is a therapeutic means of expressing emotional experiences. He tested the hypothesis that repressing thoughts and feelings about traumatic incidents was linked to illness. Expressing those thoughts and feelings in writing was linked to improved health. His research concludes that writing about thoughts and feelings associated with negative experiences can result in improved mental, physical health and a more positive outlook to life.

There is also a general agreement that creative expression can enhance self-esteem, feelings of self-worth which support the quest for identity rehabilitation and healing. In her article: 'Using Creative Writing and Autobiographical Fiction as Self-Cure' (2015), Belinda Hilton points to autobiography as an outlet for overwhelming negative emotions and a medium for exploring the reasons for such emotions so as to be uncovered and challenged. Giving voice to troubles, discussing what happened in times of crisis may also result in resilience. This view is expressed by Ben Lebdai in his article 'Memory, trauma and resilience: The Autobiographies of Winnie Mandel' (1968). Stephen Brook in his book: *Principles of Ecosystem Stewardship: Resilience-Based Natural Resource Management in a Changing World* (2009), emphasizes resilience as "the ability to adapt to difficult, challenging, stressful or traumatic life experiences" (p.313).

In an article titled: 'Autobiographical Memory and Well-being in Aging: the Central Role of Semantic –Self Images' (2015), Judi Ellis Holmes investigates the link between healing in aging, memory and self-image valence and their implication to psychological well-being. In his study findings well-being is found to be associated with better psychological health. The study suggests that processes involving autobiographical memory related to the portrayal of self-images are related to psychological healing. Holmes examines the relationship between healing and the role of affective valence of two types of autobiographical memory- the first is episodic memory relating to specific moments in time and which typically includes sensory, perceptual details of personal experiences and characterized by a sense of mental travel in time. The second type is semantic autobiographical memory in which the autobiographer relates to the reader events or facts without travelling back to the past and reliving the experiences remembered. This type of memory usually includes sets of traits of racial groups, roles and functions of period institutions, but also beliefs and traditions that impinge on and form part of an autobiographer's own semantic self-image. Semantic self-image is thus a particularly self-relevant subsection of an author's episodic autobiographical memory.

As Holmes maintains, specific autobiographical memory plays a range of important roles in the evolution of a writer's personality, resulting in social promotion and engagement in socio-political or communal activities acting thus as landmark events marking transitions in his/her life-story and engaging him/her with his/her long-term life goals. On the other hand, semantic autobiographical memory plays a central role in the retention of self-knowledge that enables an autobiographer to maintain a sense of a diachronic self-integrity in adulthood. Thus, semantic self-image resultant from this type of memory becomes a bi-directional mediator between episodic autobiographical memory and identity evolution. In other words, episodic memory provides the basic for semantic autobiographical memory, since it is those semantic facts that support, sustain and ultimately realize the autobiographer's search for an authentic self. Thus,

self-continuity is maintained by recollection of a combination of episodic and semantic memories.

Autobiographical memories in which semantic self-images and episodic memories play a central role in the quest for healing as psychological well-being is the assumption which supported by the above surveyed researches which conceive of healing.

1-1 Autobiography: The Limitations of the genre:

The last two decades of the twentieth century continued to witness an increase in autobiographical writing paralleled by a growing critical interest in the genre. In academic circles courses on autobiography are being deployed accompanied by a growing body of research investigating notions of truth, confession and the relationship between the personal and the public in the texts of this genre. In the process new theories and their related approaches, encompassing a broad variety of critical perspectives, are being developed. This gave rise to many practical and theoretical controversies questioning the limitations of the genre all the way to its debated usefulness in areas alien to the literary field like psycho-therapy and its related psychoanalytic theory and approach.

Autobiography is a genre brought back to the field of literary criticism by several means after being excluded as irrelevant due to its classification by formalist theorists as non-fiction. Today the theory of reception which views the reading process as a text mediated by an author to a reader, has shifted the emphasis back to the reader and his/her reception of a text expressed in the critical notion of hyper-textuality. This notion is a key concept that sheds light on the multiplicity of discourses in autobiographical texts that involve various areas including psychotherapy, rendering the genre as a healing fiction.

This poses the need for more researches in the field that may shift the focus back from prevailing formalistic studies of autobiographical texts -from their literariness-to emphasis on other discourses such as psychological healing. Because personal narrative and its related notions

of truth and the confessional mode are at the center of the autobiographical pact, it may be theorized that autobiographical writing may help its authors obtain therapeutic benefits from telling their personal life stories. Addressing this assumption in his article: 'The Limits of Autobiography' (2012), Leigh Gilmore argues that autobiography as a genre is characterized less by a set of formal elements than by a rhetorical setting in which a writer places herself/ himself within testimonial contexts as seemingly diverse as the Christian confession, the scandalous memoirs of the rogue and the coming-out story in order to achieve as a proximate a relation as possible to what constitutes truth in that discourse, or as Gilmore puts it "to approximate truthfulness" (p.9). In particular, this may reveal, he goes on to state, "new conventions through which some writers fictionalize their traumas in autobiographies" (p.9). Since, he concludes, the demand for truth may result in a therapeutic function in autobiography, "notions of truth and truthfulness may acquire a therapeutic function in autobiography" (p.9).

1-2 The Meaning of Autobiography:

In genre criticism, autobiography, is defined as a writer's own biography or a written account of his/her life story distinguished from the journal or diary form by being a connected series of incidents and personal experiences molded in one form. Broken down, the words auto/ bio/graphy denote self/ life/ story – the narrative of events in a person's life. Autobiography is also referred to as life writing or the literature of self-development. Characteristically, an autobiography is narrated in the first person's voice, synonymous with that of the autobiographer who is the protagonist in his/her own life- story. Events are arranged in a chronology corresponding to that of significant factual events in the writer's/narrator's life. As Alfred Kazin states, in his book: *Autobiography as Narrative* (1964), that an autobiographer "uses facts as strategy for chronicling a history of the self and exhibiting a concern for this self as the character of the autobiographical account" (p.213). As a chronological account of a person's life, James Olney in his book: *Metaphors of Self: The Meaning of Autobiography* (1990), refers to autobiography as "the entire life of an individual up to the time of

writing" (p.19). Emphasizing the elements of recovered memories and personal narrative in autobiography and in a different phrasing, Philippe Lejeune in his book: *Autobiography in the Third Person* (2014), defines autobiography as "a retrospective account in prose that a real person makes of his own existence stressing his individual life and especially the history of personality" (p.8). Referring to its historical and cultural dimensions, Sidonia Smith and Julia Watson in the article: 'The Song of a Caged Bird: Maya Angelou's Quest after Self-Acceptance' (2001), describe autobiography as "memory that reaches its tentacles out into each of the difficult times of an individual's historical context" (p.19).

However, in *Reading Autobiography* (2001), Smith and Watson discuss the multiple form of autobiography whereby genres of fiction, auto-fiction and memoir tend to merge by virtue of their sharing two particular characteristics-their chronicling through retrospection of a factual first person account of an author in personal narrative and their using techniques and devices distinctive of fiction.

The Jungian-oriented psychotherapist and the author of multiple memoirs books, Maureen Murdock in her book: *Turning Memory into Memoir* (2003), defines memoir as the "taking of slices of one's life, as opposed to an autobiography, which typically begins at birth and tells the story of one's life up until the point they are famous enough to write an autobiography" (p.192). Nikole Hollenitsch in her article: 'Racism, Cultural Violence, and Conscious Change: How the Truth Telling Project is Transforming Society' (2017) Murdock's view of a memoir is "the production of a dynamic or evolving self – rooted in cultural and historical facts - in gender and race" (p.192). Murdock goes on to offer key elements of a memoir: "Memoir is based on a memory, and no memory is too small" (p.192); she insists and goes on to state another memoir element that of its imparting "a universal truth, and a universal idea" (p.121), thus stressing that memory has to have a universal truth, which provides a context for other people to relate to this memory" (p.192). Murdock's definition of episodic memory and semantic memory are "collected in the original perspective that occurred when the memory was encoded" (p.192). These memories are differentiated into two: "The

source of a remembered memory attributed to a personal experience, and the source of a known memory attributed to an external event, that is not personal memory" (p.192). Merging memoir and fictional techniques, Murdock claims, is typical of memoir: "A memoir is built on scenes or scenery memories, and on scenery-and even dialogue, just as you would in fiction writing" (p.192).

Murdock maintains: "Uncovering what one has learned about one's self, about others, or race are all powerful products of a good memoir" (p.141), she concludes. This view places memoir in a communal context rendering it far from being narcissistic because as Murdock believes "a good memoir is always related to the collective and delivers a cultural and historical perceptive" (p.192).

Auto-fiction is a newly emerging term applied to works that play at the boundaries of fact and fiction, blurring the distinction between the two. Critics refer to it, as a form of fictionalized autobiography, and as the starting point for a narrative form that produces a complete conflation of fiction and reality." (2012) But Serge Doubrovsky, asserting the truth factor in the genre, in his novel *Fils* (1977), defines auto-fiction as "fiction of strictly real events or facts that are real and the project is to reach a certain truth" (p.459). Camille Laurens writes, in his book: *Dialogue Entre Nous* (2012) "What I respect in auto-fiction is an intimate truth, a mental landscape, what got engraved in my memory-what left an imprint on me. But the writer of auto-fiction has a pact with him/herself, which is not to lie, not to invent just for the sake of fiction, but to be as honest as possible, and to go as far as possible in his/her quest for truth" (p.141).

Auto-fiction usually feeds on extreme and painful experiences like death, loss and illness, which renders emotion into organizing force. Doubrovsky, in a conference on Auto-fiction at New York University (April, 2012), states that "auto-fiction is about being as honest as possible, by saying what is usually not said, by venturing into the petty, ugly and shameful paths of the human mind, to show man in the truth of his

nature and to reach a truth that those readers would recognize as their own" (p.459).

However, auto-fiction is not an equivalent of a memoir. While a memoir records in writing what happened in a clear simple factual, descriptive language, auto-fiction brings the reader inside what happened, using techniques of fiction. In the words of the linguist John Austin, in a paper presented in a conference in New York University, states: "Auto -fiction doesn't just tell, it acts at the same time" (p.141). Behind this choice is an implicit quest for healing investing in the power of personal narrative as a tool of purgation resulting in catharsis.

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