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FRAGMENTS AND HEALING: LITERATURE'S ROLE IN REPRESENTING TRAUMA

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the intersection of literature and trauma studies, focusing on how narratives of pain and recovery illuminate the human capacity to endure, remember, and heal. Trauma theory emphasizes the difficulty of representing experiences that resist language, yet literature provides a unique medium for articulating fragmented memories, silences, and testimonies. Drawing on theoretical frameworks from Cathy Caruth, Dominick LaCapra, and Judith Herman, the paper examines how literary texts engage with trauma through disrupted narrative structures, metaphors of suffering, and testimonial voices. Case studies include Holocaust memoirs, African-American literature, postcolonial narratives of Partition, and contemporary works addressing gendered violence. The analysis highlights literature's dual role: bearing witness to pain while offering pathways to recovery through storytelling, empathy, and collective memory. Ultimately, the paper argues that trauma narratives are not only records of suffering but also acts of resilience, enabling individuals and communities to reclaim agency and foster healing.

KEYWORDS: *Trauma Studies, Literature and Trauma, Narratives of Pain, Narratives of Recovery, Holocaust Literature, Partition Narratives, Slavery and African-American Literature, Dalit Autobiographies, Postcolonial Trauma, Collective Memory, Resilience and Agency, Confronting Ghosts (Beloved), Narrative Therapy, Cultural Identity and Healing*

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