TRAUMA AND MEMORY OF CHARACTERS AT MANDAL'S *STATION ELEVEN*

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Abstract

Literary studies have paid a lot of attention to the concept of "trauma." Trauma theory is an important phrase in psychoanalytic methods for studying literature because it represents a critical perspective that makes it possible to read and listen in new ways. For the time being, it's a novel concept that can be applied to people, cultures, and civilizations. This study looks at how people who suffered during the pandemic were affected by trauma. It examines the development of the concept of trauma in relation to current circumstances and provides an overview of the literary trauma hypothesis's beginnings and development. Emily has talked about the present serious conditions and how individuals persevered all through this season's virus plague period. As the story takes place both before and after the George-W.-H.V. pandemic, Station Eleven revealed the horrible conditions that linger in people's memories and caused harm. In terms of memory, Kirsten's life is the most depressing. She tries to remember her life before the epidemic as a victim, but she can't remember most of what happened. One hopes that her involvement with the traveling symphony demonstrates how memory can be a source of consolation and portrays her as an icon struggling to recall the past. The individual's behavior and identity may be affected by this. They were traumatized as a result of their struggle to remember their past. They face terrible obstacles as they try to remember their pasts and how they think about memory.
Keywords: Trauma, Memory, Station Eleven, Pandemic, George flu, Struggle, Nostalgic, Challenges.

Emily St. John Mandel's novel Station Eleven (2014) was named to the shortlist for the National Book Award for Fiction. The work gained widespread praise in literary circles for its prominent themes of beauty, nostalgia, the arts, and social memory. She created the primary themes in order to merge the vision of how the world would be with the major theme of collapse and its aftermath impacts on the individuals. It also focuses on society following the pandemic, as well as pre-pandemic experiences that might cause anguish in people. The protagonists' lives are dramatically changed as a result of their memory loss. It also demonstrates how memory and trauma play a significant influence in people's lives after the pandemic.

Memory incorporates the mental cycles of acquiring, putting away, keeping up with, and recovering data. After an outbreak, it affects how people think and act. Emily St. Kirsten, Clark, and François are characters in the novel Station Eleven by John Mandel who rely a lot

on memory. Kirsten gets tattoos, Clark starts a museum, and François starts a library and makes newspapers to spread their ideas during epidemics. They all create and accumulate to keep their memories alive.

Kirsten Raymond is the novel's primary character, who witnessed countless deaths and lost her parents during the start of the epidemic. As an eight-year-old kid, she saw Arthur Leander's death on stage at Elgin Theatre. Twenty years later, she was discovered with the traveling symphony, which has been preserving the past via performance art. As she says, adhering to the past will not allow mankind to thrive in the new world, and she concerns how these folks can cope with such devastating loss. In the Pandemic scenario, there is a significant gap between individuals who are unable to remember the past and those who are making attempts to preserve history.

The majority of humanity was unable to forget the past or accept the post-apocalyptic situation following the epidemic. Be that as it may, others, like the Orchestra voyagers, flourish in new circumstances fully intent on encountering another world. That's what kirsten trusts "Endurance is deficient, and the more you recall, the more you've lost". She lost a lot of her background as a George Flu survivor, but this didn't stop her from wanting to. She wanted to remember her past in order to preserve the people in her vision, even though she believed in a better future.

In a world where the past holds all of the lost world, remembering may be both terrible and comforting. Kirsten believes that the more survivors remember their history, the more difficult it is to adapt to their new circumstances. She takes comfort in her own forgetting. The events she identifies with trauma, such as the first year after the collapse and the times she murdered to survive, she either forgets or refuses to talk about. This helps Kirsten to escape the memories that cause her the most anxiety.

Since the comic is the only item that makes her want to reminisce about her life prior to contracting the flu, "Kirsten's taken care of the comics as best she can" (p. 42) and she carried them with her at all times even before she realizing that they are only ten copies of an individual's vanity project. Undoubtedly given by Arthur, who was relatively close to her when she was a child.

"WHAT WAS LOST IN THE COLLAPSE: almost everything, almost everyone, but there is still such beauty" (p57) This statement illustrates how individuals lost their way of living and loved ones during the flu epidemic. Some people remain so ignorant of the existence or mortality of a loved one. These types of situations cause them to struggle mentally. They bear the burden of their lost memory. This kind of situations cause them to suffer mentally simply by thinking about them. Both lost and personal memories weigh heavily on people.

Kirsten reminds the readers as mentioning, "I can't remember anything about it. I thing I have mentioned before, I've some problem with memory. I can't remember very much from before the collapse." (p113) Francois Diallo, is the librarian who wants to preserve the history by oral history a newspaper. He usually conducts interviews with those who survived the epidemic fifteen years after its collapse in an effort to preserve history. The interest in the pre-pandemic world is explained as, "The more we know about the former world, the better we'll

understand what happened when it fell." (p114) They already know that the post-apocalyptic world is not the same as the old one. People in the old world knew everyone and lived peacefully with their own families. Before the spread of the virus, there were plenty of enjoyments along with desires in life.

Kirsten frequently tries to recall memories from her childhood before to the collapse. She stated, "My memories from before the collapse seem like dreams now. I don't really remember my parents. Actually just impressions." (p195) When she attempted to bring back her forgotten memories, she could only receive an impression. The painful aspect of life is being unable to remember one's own parents' faces. The happiest days of life are spent with parents and loved ones, and they will never be forgotten. This will make their existence dubious. When no one is there for you, it leads to trauma that cannot be treated till the end of life.

John says, "The pleasure of remembering had been taken away from me, because there was no longer anyone to remember with." This statement explains the cruelness of memory loss. It seemed as though losing a co-rememberer meant losing the memory itself, as if the actions we had taken were less real and significant than they had been hours earlier. Since Kirsten does not have anyone to remind her, this line reflects her life. However, the collapse altered not only their identities but also their lives. That can be made sense of by the existences of the ensemble artists, who were recognized by their instrument as opposed to their genuine name. Identity is the only thing that gives people a sense of purpose in life. She stated, "She'd had a different name when she was younger, but had taken on the name of her instrument after the collapse."

Peng Shepherd mentioned in her work *Book of M* as, "The memory means more, the more it's worth to you—and to who you are." That statement explains how the memory is important to a person, remembering the past and childhood days make the person more alive and think positively. The life without memory makes them to fell in trauma that tear them apart. They less enjoy the new world and it can be inferred that the moments after the outbreak of Forgetting are narratively associated with the pre-collapse fictional world.

Survivors can merely speculation about what led them to this point. In such circumstances, it is reasonable to assume that all of the characters have an unbreakable connection, and the vivid descriptions of Forgetting "do not typically revise or restore what has come before the catastrophe, but attempt to figure out what remains after and emerges from it" (Doyle 2015, 105). This passage demonstrates that all characters' constant connection with the Forgetting is for more than just survival, as well as to understand their own forgotten former life.

Jeevan Chaudhary, one of the main protagonists, became engrossed in his own former recollections, believing that all of his activities reminded him of his past existence. At the outbreak of the pandemic, he remembered photographing Arthur in Hollywood years ago. After the epidemic, he confined himself and his brother in their flat. Life during the pandemic became

the hardest aspect of their lives, and "Jeevan found himself thinking about how human the city is, how human everything is." (p178)

All of the characters were reflecting on the previous world, where they were happy and free of fear and trouble. Jeevan was continually wondering about his life before the catastrophe. Jeevan frequently finds herself recalling her former existence in Toronto a good life with his lover Laura, who vanished at the start of the pandemic. "He was thinking of Toronto, of walking through snow. Thoughts of Toronto led inevitable back of thoughts of his brother, a tower by the lake, ghost city crumbling, the Elgin Theatre still displaying the posters for *King Lear,* the memory of that night at the beginning and the end of everything when Arthur died." (p274-275)

He's been in the flat for nearly forty-seven days. He's exhausted and hasn't spoken to anyone outside of it. He also hasn't seen anyone else. He longs for the days when he lived a normal life without the flu. People almost perceived the collapse's aftermath as the end of humanity and civilization. The end of the world almost seems to mean the end of everything. Nothing has been made, and everything looks like scrap from the past.

The faith Kirsten has for the better world makes her live and travel through the different towns and villages. Kirsten believes the new world to be a deserted region with nobody in or out, which makes it appear more fake. They travel to various locations to get to know the people and ensure that civilization does not end with the pandemic. The hunt for civilization became more difficult for the traveling orchestra. As many members of the Traveling Symphony don't get along or carry frustration toward one another. Despite their disagreements, their friendships, camaraderie, and love of doing art keeps them together. Twenty years after the calamitous collapse, "The Traveling Symphony" continues to captivate audiences with not only musical pieces but also plays featuring works of Shakespeare. Although technology has come and gone after the collapse, Shakespeare's beauty and poetry lines endure. Following the performance, audience members said, "Let us thank, the Traveling Symphony for this beautiful respite from our daily cares" (p59).

The sentence "Because survival is insufficient" is a universally acknowledged code of life that Mandel utilizes to describe the hardships of those who must accomplish more than just exist. So, she hires the Travelling Symphony, an art group that strives to illustrate that life is more than just survival. As for the Travelling Symphony: Twenty years after the collapse, they continued to cruise along the beaches of Lakes Huron and Michigan, as far west as Traverse City. The Symphony played both music and Shakespeare. What no one expected was that people preferred Shakespeare over other theatrical offers.

The group's actors stage old Shakespeare plays in an effort to bring back memories for those who have survived and are looking for a strong connection to the past. They have adopted the motto "Survival is insufficient," which is a poetic statement, to demonstrate their resolve in this field. Because the motto emphasizes the supremacy of art in preserving humanity, it is a necessary affirmation from poetry that recognizes the significance of various forms of art in reshaping the world in order to achieve desired outcomes.

As the travelling symphony embraced their motto of life, soon prefer to discover civilization. They helping the people to remember their past world before pandemic. As they remember the past through the Shakespeare drama which creates nostalgic to the people who tries to adopt the new *post-apocalyptic* world. The memory and the past life of pandemic has explained by John M. Barry in his book *The Great Influenza: The Story of the Deadliest Pandemic in History* as,

The disease has survived in memory more than in any literature. Nearly all those who were adults during the pandemic have died now. Now the memory lives in the minds of those who only heard stories, who heard how their mother lost her father, how an uncle became an orphan, or heard an aunt say, "It was the only time I ever saw my father cry." Memory dies with people. The writers of the 1920s had little to say about it.

Mandel's depictions of such elements include religious cults that threaten to destroy peaceful communities, as well as poverty and loneliness. Considering the novel's basic qualities and its core premise of collapse, Station Eleven appears to be remarkably tranquil and noiseless, with a focus on nostalgia, memory, and art rather than post-collapse tragedy and threat. Post-apocalypse appears to be concerned not with abrupt moments of death, but rather with an infinite time of dying and losing memory.

The trauma lens, in turn, gives context and explanation to the characters' experiences in apocalyptic literature. In certain cases, it allows characters to reflect on their actions and decisions in life, causing them to realize that changing their way of life is required to live a more purposeful, meaningful life. Based on the findings, "the feeling of loneliness leads to emotional distortions such as higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression," which have a negative impact on time reasoning abilities. Though not an entire list, a few in particular might function as phases of progression through the aftermath of trauma, beginning with reframing, followed by re-enactment, and finally healing.

One significant aspect of trauma theory in literature is that the majority of the plot and character development are descriptions of coping with trauma. Station Eleven explores a variety of trauma-coping mechanisms and deviates from the traditional post-apocalyptic narrative. Its premise and goal are not based on the severe circumstances of the pandemic. The reader is made aware that the focus shifts to the characters' actions and the impact of the virus in society. Mandel introduces the darker side of a pandemic, the rapid collapse of civilization, which is regarded as worse than ordinary survival struggles, because the society must be realigned with its dynamics in order to remain resilient.

The novel's use of memory, which alternates between scenarios occurring prior to and following the pandemic, is crucial in assisting readers in adjusting to the modern world and way of life. The terrifying effects of the pandemic transform the characters into forbidden ones. One pervasive element in pandemics is individuals losing their memory of or experience with everything going on. While some people, like Kirsten, have lost their memories, Clark has managed to preserve his past through the Museum of Civilization, and he is now remembered by his family and friends.

Station Eleven delves into a wide range of trauma-related experiences, including many character perspectives, timeframes before, after, and far after the end of civilization, and an

ongoing discussion about memory. Much of the suspense in Station Eleven's plot resembles the conflict of the trauma experience its own existence, it depicts the different strategies the human psyche can employ in its effort to absorb things which cannot be absorbed. Investigating the link between trauma reactions in particular, contains a wide spectrum of trauma features, including nostalgia and recall.

The story shows what can happen to people in a world after the end of the world and how society can be affected. As a result, the goal of this study is to demonstrate how Station Eleven responds to the twist by providing explanations for the virus. In addition, it focuses on society following the pandemic and traumatic pre-pandemic memories. The protagonists' memory loss has a significant impact on their lives. Additionally, it demonstrates the significance of traumatic memory in the lives of those affected by the pandemic.

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