



The Trauma Of Death In Louise Gluck's Selected Poems: A Psychoanalytic Study

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ABSTRACT:

The present paper is a study to bring out the nuances of the word trauma of death from different angles. It also endeavours to analyze the theme of the trauma of death in modern literature in general and Louise Glück's volume "Ararat". One of the most famous modern poets in America is Louise Glück. In 2020, Glück won the Nobel Prize in literature, making history the first American woman to do so in 27 years. Since Toni Morrison received the award in 1993, Glück is the 16th woman to receive the Nobel Prize. She is the Pulitzer Prize winner and the author of twelve critically praised books. This article includes an introduction to the concept and the feeling of the trauma of death, as well as the background of the study and the author. Then it deals with "Ararat" (1990), Glück's sixth poetry collection confronts, with devastating irony, her father's hollow life and her mother's inability to express emotion. This might seem like a daughter's belated rebellion, except that these fierce, rock-strong, deeply felt lyrics are steered by love and understanding. Although the poems in this collection focus on the poet's family, death is as prominent a part of the collection as it is a part of the poet's life. Not only the last part of the poet's life, as it is all life, but as it related to the death of her father and her sister.

Key Words: Louise Gluck, trauma, the trauma of death, "Ararat", "

1. The Concept of Trauma: An Overview

Trauma is an expression of the human experience, but how it manifests depends on how each individual or group responds to its various manifestations. In literary works, recollections of unforgettable incidences are used as data. The cleverness of these works lies in their ability to connect literary imagination with the spiritual and psychological impacts of actual or imagined individuals. To deal with the extensive descriptions of trauma and its impact on human conduct in the future, it is necessary to analyze the cultural context of social appreciation, which emphasizes the significance of remembering the past and

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the impact it has on one's own identity (Sulaiman,2020,p12). In its general definition, trauma is described" as the response to an unexpected or overwhelming violent event or events that are not fully grasped as they occur but return later in repeated flashbacks, nightmares, and other repetitive phenomena"(Caruth,1995,p91). First and foremost, the term trauma comes from the Greek word "trauma," which means "wound" or "blow", and is increasingly being used to refer to mental health issues. The word trauma, according to Freud's work, refers to harm inflicted on the victim's psyche rather than his or her body. "the sequence of the incidence of the event, its denial, and eventually its reappearance" (Verbestal,2010,p 11). In the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English (2010) (8th edition), A.S. Hornby explained the meaning of trauma as "a mental condition caused by severe shock, especially when the harmful effects last for a long time" (Hornby,2010,p19). It is a consequence of hostile life experiences that engulf an individual's capacity to deal with and adjust positively to whatever threat s/he faces (Van der Kolk,1995,p 96).Cathy Caruth (An American author who was born in 1955 Professor of Literatures in English at Cornell University, where she works in the departments of Literatures in English and Comparative Literature). She describes Freudian trauma as follows: "Wound of the mind—the breach in the mind's experience of time, self, and the world—is not, like the wound of the body, a simple and healable event..." (Caruth,1995,p4). The Oxford definition is "a mental state induced by significant shock, particularly when the adverse consequences continue for a long time" or "an unpleasant event that makes you feel sad and/or nervous". Many critics, including Geoffrey Hartmann, Shoshana Furan, Dori Laub, Spiegelman, and Versluys, have created trauma theory. A trauma victim is subjected to both physical and psychological pain. A lot of studies have been done on the issue or notion of trauma in the latest year. After World War I, Sigmund Freud determined that women's hysteria was caused by psychological trauma. In addition, he explains the hysteria in his Program for a Scientific Psychology (1895) by stating that the ladies were sexually assaulted as children. Following WWI, Freud's study coincided with an increase in interest in the phenomena of "shell shock" (Bond,2014,p 19), a condition that foreshadowed modern knowledge and understanding of traumatic experiences. "Shell shock". Cambridge psychologist and Army medical officer, Charles Myers, was the first person to use the phrase "shell shock" (almost 100 years ago)(BBC .n .d), was not properly classified until the nineties, when it was included under the wider category of post-traumatic stress disorder (Bond,2014,p 19). In his Program for Scientific Psychology, Sigmund Freud used the word hysteria to describe this psychological damage based on women's experiences (1895). This trauma later became recognized as "Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD or post-traumatic stress disorder, leapt to the public's consciousness when the American Psychiatric Association added the health issue to its diagnostic manual of mental disorders in the 1980s.Caruth views trauma as amnesic and indescribable. Her theory has long resisted criticism because she built her critical structural system on a scientific foundation; this resistance contributes to her system's enduring usefulness. Two important books in trauma studies are *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995) and *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (1997). (1996). She explores her concept of trauma in the introduction portion of *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Caruth's fascination with trauma theory prompted her to publish "Unclaimed Experience", a book that investigates trauma and its link to literature and is considered one of the most important works in the field of trauma studies. "An overpowering experience of abrupt or catastrophic occurrences in which the reaction to the incident happens in the frequently delayed, uncontrolled recurring emergence of hallucination and other intrusive phenomena", she writes in her book (Caruth,1995,p11). Caruth may be implying that the victim's brain is not told to

prepare for a smashing experience by using the term "overwhelming experience" in this context. Traumatic memory acts as a collective memory that reclaims narrative construction and, also, engages the reader in the process of textual healing. Traumatic events intrude into the traumatized subject's everyday life and impair her/his belief, confidence, dignity, and sense of security. Speech ceases to function in the aftermath of a traumatic event, such as rape, domestic abuse, or an accident. However, the traumatizing situations are etched in our minds as indelible memories (Al-shwillay,2019,p 17). Unable to regain their lives and their integrity, the traumatized subjects give themselves over to despair, break off all relations with the outside world and have no interest in or plan for the future. Remembering the traumatic event is a precondition to achieving healing (Suleiman,2017,p10).

3. The Concept of Trauma of death

Traumatic experiences interfere with the traumatized person's daily life and undermine their self-worth, dignity, and feeling of security. To be sure, death is the worst possible situation for human beings, in that it eliminates life in all of its dimensions and makes a man a lifeless body with no ability to perform any earthly activity. Death, loss, and pain are natural parts of life, but when death arrives suddenly and unexpectedly, such as with a car accident or suicide, the overlap of the traumatic experience and the sorrow of the loss can crush us. According to K. R. Eissler, man is the only creature that is aware of death, and this awareness determines his existence. As a result, the death drive is not (innate), and no one desires death. Furthermore, coping with the death of a loved one can be one of the most difficult challenges anyone faces. This can be due to murder, accident, or suicide. Death can be traumatic, and often violent, which can lead to increased distress(195). Many people believe that the world is a predictable and safe place, that they are generally secure, and that other people can be trusted. When the pain starts, it can be hard to believe there is any way to get relief. Freud maintained that the unconscious does not include a vision of our demise. Nevertheless, just as the issue of "to be" is settled for us at birth, the question of "not to be" is answered by our previous history, in which everything that was born perished. To ameliorate this bleak fate, man has attempted several attempts to "escape" death or to find some solace for it—through religion, philosophy, mysticism, art, and psychology. Additionally, Freud stated in "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" that the purpose of existence is revealed through death. This sentence is commonly taken to suggest that one of man's fundamental desires is to die. Even though Freud thought that man's natural propensity is to return to his primitive origins, he made two critical changes modifications: To begin, "all that is alive perishes for internal causes". Second, the organism seeks to die "naturally". To die according to its terms. Concerning death, we talk of "fear". However, when examined properly, we are dealing with a desire to live one's life to the utmost extent possible. The issue is not so much dread of dying as it is a desire to live in a dignified and humane manner. When it comes to death, there is no (living), no resolution, no diminishment. And there's no (beyond) it since it's the beyond itself. Every man's life is haunted by its haunting shadow, no matter how carefully (analyzed) it may be. Every time we come face-to-face with it, we suffer some degree of trauma. There is just one (trauma of birth). Throughout a man's life, he is subjected to the trauma of death several times. The realization of one's mortality is one of life's most enduring, persistent, and tragic traumas (Slochower, 1964,p21). The theme of Death has stayed and constantly will be a fascinating and captivating topic in poetry and prose alike. It has continually remained mysterious and will continue to remain mysterious. The subject of death interests both writers and readers as it is a universal theme and an undeniable fact of life. It fascinates the readers'

attention due to its power and reality Gluck writes about these traumatized subjects with a vision that comes from personal understanding. Louise Gluck's effortless contribution to the presentation of the theme of death is notable. She has presented a common theme uncommonly and extraordinarily. She has revealed and portrayed death as harshness, bleakness, gloominess, pain, and agonizing. There is no angle from which death can be adored and glorified. The way she has revealed the gruesome aspect of death makes the readers think about its power. In both poetry and prose, death has been and always will be an interesting and thrilling subject. It has remained a mystery for all time, and it always will. No matter the author's period, the issue of death plays a significant part in our lives. From time to time, many authors have expressed the theme of death in their works. It has always existed and remained enigmatic and will stay enigmatic in the future. Death is a significant subject in our lives, no doubt. No matter the author's chronological period, different writers have occasionally addressed the issue of death.

4. Louise Glück

Louise Glück, a contemporary American poet, was born in New York City on (April 22, 1943) and she grew up on Long Island. She was the second child of her parents, but the first to survive, her father is Daniel Gluck, a businessman and a dreamer. Gluck's mother was a housewife and famous cook. . and Freudenberg's mother was of Russian Jewish origin. Glück's mother attended Wellesley College and graduated with honours. Gluck's ancestors were Hungarian Jews, they immigrated to the United States, where they eventually owned a grocery store in New York. Glück's parents instilled in her a love of Greek mythology as well as classic legends. Because of her physical condition, Glück was unable to join college full-time as an undergraduate student. While this was no longer available, she took part in poetry seminars given by Columbia University's School of General Studies from 1963 to 1966, as well as the poetry She married Charles Hertz Jr. in 1967. In 1973, Glück gave birth to a son, Noah in 1973. Her marriage to Charles Hertz Jr. ended in divorce, and in 1977 she married John Dranow, an author who had started the summer writing program at Goddard College(29). In 1980, Dranow and Francis Voigt, the husband of poet Ellen Bryant Voigt, co-founded the New England Culinary Institute as a private, for-profit college. Glück and Bryant Voigt were early investors in the institute and served on its board of directors(Flagg,2020,p6). She has written twelve collections of poetry and one book of essays for nearly fifty years, starting with *Firstborn* in 1968 and ending with *Faithful and Virtuous Night* in 2014. The Wallace Stevens Award (2008), the Pulitzer Prize (2003), and the Bollingen Prize (2001) are only a few of the outstanding prizes she has garnered for her writing. She was designated the 12th United States Poet Laureate in 2003. Glück's poetry may be found in the *Vintage Contemporary American Book of Poetry*, as well as in *No More Masks: An Anthology of 20th-Century American Women Poets* (Parker,2016,p 4).

5. Traumatic shock in *Ararat*(1990):

In "*Ararat*", Gluck takes off the mask of a mythical or fabled figure to reveal the unmasked manifestations of traumatic shocks in her language: "I was wounded a long time ago". The first poem in this collection is, "*Parodos*", a poem in which the poet presents herself as the teller of her autobiographical drama. (Glück ,1995,p15). This poem seems to be the boldest of the risks taken in "*Ararat*": with no loss of economy, Glück challenges a key axiom about poetry - that its language should suggest rather than explain - forcing the readers to rethink the poetic craft. Furthermore, as if to emphasize the book's insistence on inactivity, the

auxiliary verb "to be" dominates in Ararat's predicates - another vivid challenge, this time to the evidence that good writing requires active verbs. And throughout the book, Glück's generally short sentences employ parallelism "setting the table, clearing the dishes away", apposition "not a sentence, but a breath, a caesura" and balanced antithesis "she was born, she died" to insert static duality into the syntax. As a hero, Ararat's speaker attributes to herself both blindness and hubris and, balancing self-dramatization with self-incrimination, she writes in the first poem, "Parodos", a poem in which the poet presents herself as the teller of her autobiographical drama. (Glück, 1990, p. 15). The title alludes to a Greek play's choral start and so denotes a shift toward theatricality, alienation, and allusion. However, the shared component of the traditional frame Glück has selected, is unable to contain the unexplained disturbance that the individual speaker is experiencing. "Alerts us to the separate uniqueness of the fragmentary being whose battle starts at birth, the breaking into existence leaving a wound that never heals," Melissa Brown says of the poem (Brown, 1997, p. 67). The narrator of "Parodos" describes an event that unsettles the line between life and death, between everyday speech and the mysterious tones of a narrator who sees herself as a mysterious vehicle, a medium who has paid a high price for her clairvoyance:

Long ago, I was wounded

I learned to exist, in reaction, out of touch with the world: I'll tell you what I meant to be a device that listened. Not inert: still. A piece of wood. A stone.

Why should I tire myself, debating, arguing? Those people breathing in the other beds could hardly follow, being uncontrollable like any dream- Through the blinds, I watched the moon in the night sky, shrinking and swelling-

I was born to a vocation: to bear witness to the great mysteries. Now that I've seen both birth and death, I know to the dark nature these are proofs, not mysteries"— (Glück, 1990, p. 15).

At this point, the poet also tells the bare bones of her internal conflict, one which she agonizingly hopes to resolve: the reader becomes to see the origins of this wound and her unshakeable sense of detachment from the whole world. Glück romanticizes her detachment, her rejection of her emotional damage, by telling herself, as a desperate explanation, that as a poet, she has been "born to a vocation: / to bear witness / to the great mysteries...birth and death." But this turns out to be an illusion, the poet learns this throughout the book, when the speaker later discovers that birth and death are actually "proofs, not / mysteries" (15) proofs of the valuableness of her mortality and that without them, no event in life would seem significant. The speaker portrays herself as "a bit of wood" who is "out of touch / with the world." "A stone", she says. Glück describes her speaker's emotional state as mental numbness and geographical disorientation using these visuals (Selinger, 1993, p. 20). She may relate herself to the inert elements of nature, but she is cut off from her immediate surroundings. She does not exist as a whole person with a mind and a body, but rather as a voice that goes through her thoughts. Glück's speaker is repurposed as a broken medium, claiming to be "a gadget that listened". Selinger says that Glück reminds me of Adrienne Rich's an American poet of "half-destroyed instruments / that once held to a course" in "Diving into the Wreck." We perceive the acceptance of harm humorously in Dickinson, Rich, and Glück. It's a record of how the manifestations of trauma upend the concept of truthfulness and generate authenticity via an inaccurate narrative, not of modesty or self-disgust (Selinger, 1993, p. 20). (Ararat is a figure in Glück's family who represents three

generations of women who had lately lost a father, a little brother, a husband, a daughter, and an uncle. "If you want the truth, you have to close yourself to the older daughter, and block her out: when a living thing is hurt like that, in its deepest workings, all function is altered". "The Untrustworthy Speaker" signifies the epicentre of the speaker's sadness above these family members' losses through such an admission that her text integrates the wound in the word :

If you really want the truth ,

You have to close yourself to the older daughter

block her out: when a living thing is

That is why I should not be believed.

Because a mental hurt is the same as a physical wound. (Glück ,1990,p35).

Glück invites us to distinguish between deception and insincerity by describing her character as untrustworthy (Morris, 2021,p122). Dishonesty provides credibility to the description of how the "wound to the heart" gets expressed like the "wound of the intellect" in trauma writing:

Don't believe me when I say that my heart has been shattered.

Nothing is objective in my eyes.

I'm invisible in my head, which is why I'm dangerous.

People like myself, who seem to be unselfish

They are the cripples and liars who should be factored out for the sake of truth. (Glück 1990,p34).

The narrator describes herself as an ideal victim, a scapegoat who has to be "factored out / in the interest of truth.". In "The Untrustworthy Speaker", the total poem is the speaker saying "don't trust a word I say, I have had my heart broken, so now my mind is broken too", but should you trust that the speaker is telling the truth?" On one hand, the narrator seems to be objective, they are dropping their truths on the canvass knowing precisely what they are achieving, but conversely, the narrator said not to trust them, so are they being subjective since they are hurting, are they only concentrating on what they think is the "bad" parts of them?

"Don't listen to me; my heart's been broken.

I don't see anything objectively.

I know myself; I've learned to hear like a psychiatrist.

When I speak passionately,

that's when I'm least to be trusted".

Gluck sometimes purposefully omits things because, she expects the reader to fill in the blanks, while other poets might just straight spoon-feed the readers their story. There is a multitude of aims behind both of the approaches, but it is a kind of boils down to whether the speaker trusts that the reader will put things together (or might not expect the readers to, they might explain the clues throughout the poem, or just wants to tell their story "as-is' to act as a diary. One should trust the readers more. In "The Untrustworthy Speaker", endures an eponymous allusion to the story of Noah, the speaker distinguishes that, for all her interpretation of her childhood. Glück has partly imagined herself in poetry, by adopting the mantle of traumatic victim: In "The Untrustworthy Speaker", poem Glück declares autobiographical terms the way her lyric self-fashioning as a traumatized has disguised from readers her violent natures and aggressive instincts. Glück turns to biblical comments in several examples to evaluate the type of exploitation of authority in the poem as the misuse of language and traumatized status to hide violence. She associates her observation of the Bible to languages of imaginative power in a materialistic culture, in which the literary canon might be understood as a typical site to show in writing the aggressive character for personal recognition that Glück gradually hides and reveals through the proof text. An unusual writer, Glück nevertheless keeps a strange relationship with the Bible in her fight for gratitude. A method that has tended to remove the female opinion, Judaism, when believed of as interpretive practice rather than as an important identity creation, has nevertheless provided Glück with a revision model. Glück takes gender, Jewishness, and identity together as typical concepts. Glück poetry, like the Hebrew interpretation tradition to which it contributes, favours dialogue and review over essential law or essentialist kinds of communal identification and selfhood. She is near and familiar, but distant and alienated from the scripture, giving a public weight to her anguish and understanding. Simultaneously, through mentioning to the canon, Glück dismisses herself from the everyday life that she symbolizes as painful and isolating

The speaker in "Lost Love" is a victim of a traumatic event. She is the one who lacks affection and kindness from parents who are also preoccupied with their sorrow at the premature loss of another daughter:

Something did change: when my sister died,

My mother's heart became very cold, very rigid ,

Like a tiny pendant of iron (Glück,1990,p17).

The speaker's youth was effectively stolen by her sister, who carried her mother's adoration with her to the grave. In "Lost Love," "The Untrustworthy Speaker" concedes that her identity as an unfortunate victim of terrible circumstances has obscured rather than exposed a key aspect of her identity:

I never see myself,

Standing on the front steps,

Holding my sister's hand.

That's why I can't account

For the bruises on her arm, where the sleeve ends. (Glück,1990,p 34).

She claims that part of recovering from trauma is admitting accountability for why her language has failed to reconstruct the self in the past (Sadoff,2001,p82). In this example, she acknowledges that she needs to come to grips with her angry emotions and violent conduct toward her sister when they were both youngsters to rehabilitate (Sadoff,2001,p82). The "Widows" are a group of emotionally traumatized individuals who, like "The Untrustworthy Speaker," are coming to grip with their violent inclinations toward one another over the regulating form of a deadly serious card game:

My mother's playing cards with my aunt,

Spite and Malice, the family pastime, the game

my grandmother taught all her daughters.

Midsummer: too hot to go out.

Today, my aunt's ahead ;

she's getting the good cards.

My mother's dragging ,

Having trouble with her concentration.

She can't get used to her bed this summer.

She had no trouble last summer,

Getting used to the floor .

She learned to sleep there

To be near my father.

He was dying; he got a special bed.

My aunt doesn't give an inch, doesn't make

Allowance for my mother's weariness.

It's how they were raised :

you show respect by fighting.

To let up insults the opponent (Glück,1990,p 42).

Personal identity and the dignity of the opponent are formed by "fighting," rather than any empathic association with the tiredness of the wounded, weakening foe, as on the chivalric battlefield in Homer (Sadoff,2001,p83). The sorority, as archetypal Glück women, bear enormous suffering, foregoing their desire to sample the riches of life lest they risk drowning in the sweltering heat of summertime. { "They have each other; they have cards. / They don't need any further company" } (Glück,1990,p 23).

The ladies, like the Glück authorial figure, see personal obscurity as the basis of their symbolic significance above life's grief, loss, anxiety and

insecurity:

My aunt's been at it longer ;

maybe that's why she's playing better.

Her cards evaporate :

that's what you want, that's the object:

in the end, the one who has nothing wins (Glück,1990,p48).

Conclusion:

In psychology, many theories have appeared that aim to heal trauma. Pain, any type of pain, is a test— harsh, cruel, and unfair. Pain strips away any affectations, facades, masks, and posturing and challenges all kinds of relationships in a way that no other human feeling can. Through Louise Glück's Poems vision of loss, sorrow, pain, heartache, and the everyday problems that life throws at us. ." Ararat ", Glück's sixth poetry collection confronts, with devastating irony, her father's hollow life and her mother's inability to express emotion. This might seem like a daughter's belated rebellion, except that these fierce, rock-strong, deeply felt lyrics are steeled by love and understanding. "Ararat", in this collection of poetry, a semi-autobiographical narrator tells about the relationships in a family. There are poems about the death of her newborn sister, sibling rivalry with her other sister, the early death of her father, and her mother reacting to these losses. Ararat also includes poems about being a parent herself and struggling to connect to her child. Ararat's poems are accessible to most readers and deal with grief and family dynamics in an unsentimental way. Both the first and last poems in Ararat start with the line, "Long ago, I was wounded." By the last poem, the narrator is coming to terms with her silent, undemonstrative father, and understanding him and herself better. The sequence begins and ends with pieces dedicated to meditating on the death of Glück's father, and between these are poems exploring sibling rivalry, selfhood, and the trials of parenthood. Compared to the poet's later work, the language is more formal and self-conscious, the imagery more developed and controlled; family, grief, and memory take precedence over nature and the present moment. While the collection at times feels repetitive, the individual poems are well crafted and affecting. . In her poetry, Glück frequently draws on her own experience, and the overall story that unites her poems traces her progress toward healing and self-discovery. The subject of trauma attracts passionate advocacy and passionate skepticism in a quite disproportionate measure

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