

The Prophetic Voice of a War-traumatized Poet: Representation of Trauma in the Early Poetry of Robert Lowell

Mohamed Saad Rateb*

Department of English Language and Literature, Fayoum University, Egypt

Department of English Language and Literature, Shaqra University, Saudi Arabia

Received on: 16-11-2020

Accepted on: 22-2-2021

Abstract

This paper aims to show how Robert Lowell's first volumes *Land of Unlikeness* and *Lord Weary's Castle* can be examined from a trauma conceptual point of view. It attempts to explore Lowell's representation of his traumatic experiences in his early poetry by drawing heavily on Freud's and Cathy Caruth's theorizations of trauma. More specifically, the paper attempts to illustrate how Lowell's mode of representing his traumatic experience of World War II is based on witnessing and documenting the war events and how he endeavors to use this mode of representation as a strategy for transcending his war trauma. In his first two volumes, Lowell identifies with the war sufferers and becomes so much imbued with their trauma that he starts to experience a secondary trauma. However, he attempts to survive his trauma by using two alternative strategies which conform to specific psychoanalytic techniques of healing trauma. He achieves this through his spiritual resignation and alternatively through his description of the traumatic scenes of World War II in order to reassure himself that these war scenes are only a matter of the past.

Keywords: War poetry; Robert Lowell; *Land of Unlikeness*; *Lord Weary's Castle*; trauma; Freud; Cathy Caruth.

Introduction

Through the analysis of selected poems in Lowell's first two volumes *Land of Unlikeness* and *Lord Weary's Castle*, this paper aims to show how the early poetry of Robert Lowell, who has not himself been directly attached to World War II, can be examined from a trauma conceptual point of view. It attempts to explore Lowell's representation of his war traumatic experiences in his early poetry by drawing heavily on Freud's and Cathy Caruth's theorizations of trauma. More specifically, the paper attempts to illustrate how Lowell's mode of representing his traumatic experience of World War II is based on witnessing and documenting the war events and how he endeavors to use this mode of representation as a strategy for transcending the trauma of war.

© 2022 JJMLL Publishers/Yarmouk University. All Rights Reserved,

* Doi: <https://doi.org/10.47012/jjml.14.2.4>

* Corresponding Author: msr02@fayoum.edu.eg, mohamedsaadm@su.edu.sa

Literature Review

Lowell's war poetry has always been the focus of much critical concern. Some critics have attempted an exploration of Lowell's war poetry from historical and biographical perspectives, while others have analyzed its cultural and political implications. For instance, Paula Hayes (2013), in *Robert Lowell and the Confessional Voice*, explores the confessional poetry of Robert Lowell focusing on various aspects of the poet's personal life and how he renders them in verse. One of these aspects has to do with the poet's spiritual life including his puritan background and his skepticism. Another aspect is the development of Lowell's poetic career. Hayes divides Lowell's development into three stages. The first stage deals with Lowell's ironic style and religious themes. The second stage refers to Lowell's emergence as a confessional poet. The third stage marks the publication of Lowell's political poetry which is confessional in mode but political in perspective.

Similarly, Adam Kirsch (2005), in *The Wounded Surgeon: Confessional Transformation in Six American Poets*, introduces a close reading of the confessional poetry of Robert Lowell, Elizabeth Bishop, John Berryman, Randall Jarrell, Delmore Schwartz and Sylvia Plath. Through the analysis of their poetry, Kirsch demonstrates how these poets took the initiative by writing this type of poetry in which they honestly convey their personal experiences. He starts his book with an opening chapter on Robert Lowell. Through a close reading of Lowell's confessional poetry, Kirsch demonstrates how Lowell's mental illness influences his poetry both in logic and structure. He also explains how Lowell is much influenced by modernist poetry particularly in his use of symbolic style and allusive language. Moreover, he justifies Lowell's later abandonment of the New Critical traditions in order to use his own distinctive style. By focusing on Lowell's techniques in his confessional poetry, Kirsch investigates what makes Lowell successful in communicating his personal experience in a confessional mode.

In her book *With Robert Lowell and His Circle: Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton, Elizabeth Bishop, Stanley Kunitz, and others*, Kathleen Spivack (2012), likewise, provides a memoir of her relationship with Robert Lowell and how she approached him as a poet and as her teacher. She sheds light on the literary and historical background of the period when Lowell and his contemporaries emerged as well-known poets. She uses a narrative style recounting how other poets including Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton and Elizabeth Bishop were associated with Lowell and how this helped to enrich their poetic experience.

Furthermore, Christopher Ricks (2010), in *True Friendship: Geoffrey Hill, Anthony Hecht, and Robert Lowell Under the Sign of Eliot and Pound*, explores the literary impact of the poetry and criticism of Eliot and Pound on the poetic creativity of Hill, Hecht and Lowell. He illustrates through the analysis of selected poems, how the poetic works of the three poets have affinities to Eliot's and Pound's poetry both intellectually and technically. Intellectually, they are concerned with the same critical, cultural and poetic interests of Eliot and Pound. Technically, the three poets are influenced by Eliot's and Pound's metaphorical language and poetic style.

On the other hand, Kay Redfield Jamison (2017), in *Robert Lowell, Setting the River on Fire: a Study of Genius, Mania, and Character*, offers a psychological study of the impact of Lowell's manic illness on his poetic imagination and his changing mood. Jamison, thus, traces the development of

The Prophetic Voice of a War-traumatized Poet: Representation of Trauma in the Early Poetry of Robert Lowell

Lowell's mania. Then, she explores how mania is responsible for Lowell's emotional distress and bitterness which are always palpable in his poetry.

In *Robert Lowell and the Sublime*, Henry Hart (1995) traces Lowell's quest for the sublime throughout his poetry. He investigates Lowell's concern with the religious, psychological and political aspects of the sublime. Psychologically speaking, Hart relates Lowell's search for the sublime to his mania which ultimately leads him to be disillusioned about his sublime model in both religion and politics. On the religious level, Lowell finds nothing more than a world rife with violence. On the political level, he witnesses the United States' power struggle which results in wars and human catastrophes. Hart relies on Freud's psychological theory in his interpretation of Lowell's poetry in terms of the sublime.

Lowell's war poetry has also been discussed as an anti-colonial, political discourse. In the first chapter of *Behind the Lines: War Resistance Poetry on the American Homefront Since 1941*, Philip Metres (2007), for example, discusses the various forms of Lowell's resistance to war including his letter to President Roosevelt, his political activism and his poetry. Metres, ultimately, concludes his chapter with an analysis of Lowell's "Memories of West Street and Lepke" and "Memories" as two major examples of Lowell's anti-war poetry.

In the same vein, Simon Van Schalkwyk (2014), in "Translation and the Transatlantic Frontier: Robert Lowell's *Land of Unlikeness* (1944) and *Lord Weary's Castle* (1946)," argues that Lowell's first two volumes express his rejection of The United States' desire for colonial expansion after World War II and during the Cold War period. Schalkwyk develops his argument by explaining that in *Land of Unlikeness* Lowell attacks the United States' misuse of power and relates it back to the days of the early colonial settlers. Similarly, Lowell's translated poems included in *Lord Weary's Castle* imply the United States' tendency to impose its colonial culture on other parts of the world under the guise of democracy. Schalkwyk, thus, is concerned with the impact of the United States' imperial policies on the cultural and literary discourse of men of letters as reflected in Lowell's early poetry.

In addition, Raphael Falco's article "The Weary Nihilism of *Lord Weary's Castle*" (2003) refutes the argument that Lowell articulates an apocalyptic vision of the world in *Lord Weary's Castle*. The article sheds light on Lowell's condemnation of people's corruption and emphasizes his use of the didactic tone throughout the volume. Falco concludes his article by demonstrating that Lowell, in *Lord Weary's Castle*, repudiates the traditional forms of poetry, his puritan background and his ancestral history of violence and aggression as illustrated in his poem "The Quaker Graveyard in Nantucket."

It is now evident that all such critical discussion of Lowell's war poetry more or less falls into three distinct categories: the psychological approach, the biographical approach and the post-colonial approach. Yet, Lowell's war poetry has never before been analyzed from a trauma-theoretical perspective.

Trauma-theoretical Framework

The theorization of trauma started in the 1960s. Sigmund Freud was the first psychologist to observe traumatic symptoms in his patients. Trauma, for him, is "any excitations from outside which are powerful

enough to break through the protective shield” (Freud 1961, 23). Freud differentiates between two different theories of trauma: the repression theory which focuses on the study of spontaneous neurosis, and the psychoanalytic theory which examines traumatic neurosis. He is more concerned here with traumatic neurosis:

Traumatic neuroses are not in their essence the same thing as the spontaneous neuroses.... The traumatic neuroses give a clear indication that a fixation to the moment of the traumatic accident lies at their root. These patients regularly repeat the traumatic situation in their dreams. Where hysteriform attacks occur that admit of an analysis, we find that the attack corresponds to a complete transplanting of the patient into the traumatic situation. It is as though these patients had not finished with the traumatic situation, as though they were still faced by it as an immediate task which has not been dealt with (1991, 314-315).

Spontaneous neurosis, on the one hand, results from the suppression of internal desires into the unconscious mind and their return in the form of dreams. Traumatic neurosis, on the other hand, is caused by a real external event in the past such as wars and accidents, and it disrupts the patient's life emotionally and socially. Freud here enumerates such symptoms of traumatic neurosis as the images which intrude upon the patient's mind as well as the re-experiencing of the traumatic event. He identifies this symptom of re-experiencing an event as the "compulsion to repeat" (1961, 13). This repetition compulsion occurs when the patient “is obliged to repeat the repressed material as a contemporary experience instead of... remembering it as something belonging to the past” (12). Freud, thus, refers to the existence of inner impulses which are suppressed in the unconscious mind from the past, and which reappears later in the form of an action rather than a memory.

Cathy Caruth, one of the leading trauma theorists, attempts a different definition of trauma. She describes a traumatic event as “an overwhelming experience of sudden, or catastrophic events, events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, and uncontrolled repetitive occurrence of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena” (Caruth 1996, 11). She also attributes the cause of trauma to “a shock that appears to work very much like a bodily threat but is in fact a break in the mind’s experience of time” (1996, 61).

In their definitions of trauma, both Freud and Caruth focus on the idea of the unexpectedness of an event and the unpreparedness of a person’s mind to assimilate this upsetting event with the negative result of leaving a distressing impact upon the person’s mind. Furthermore, a traumatizing event, according to Caruth’s definition of trauma, takes the form of ‘intrusive’ thoughts, repeated actions, flashbacks, nightmares and ‘hallucinations.’

Therefore, it is obvious that trauma is such a complex phenomenon that there is no clear-cut definition of the term and there is no single interpretation of the nature of a traumatic event. What is more problematic is the various interpretations of how a traumatizing event affects a person’s psyche in a way that makes him look traumatized. Freud (1961, 23-24), for instance, argues that trauma is characterized by a number of features including an external event which functions as a stimulus, a state of imbalance in the

The Prophetic Voice of a War-traumatized Poet: Representation of Trauma in the Early Poetry of Robert Lowell

adaptive system and the inability of "the protective shield" (23) to resist any external stimuli. Ultimately, trauma leads to the dominance of other external events which act as stressors and, thus, cause pain and psychic injury. In this sense, trauma, according to Freud (1961, 24-27), negatively affects the traumatized person in such ways as the difficulty of expressing emotions, performing mental and physical processes, or even establishing well-balanced relations with the surrounding environment. Such difficulties ultimately generate the feeling of anxiety.

Freud makes a distinction between two types of anxiety: "realistic" and "neurotic" (1991, 441). He describes "realistic anxiety" as a "rational and intelligible" response to an external threat (1991, 441), whereas he defines "neurotic anxiety" as an unjustified state of "anxious expectation" of misfortune (1991, 446). Moreover, Freud (1961, 34-5) identifies two types of threats causing trauma: an internal threat which refers to sexual drives and an external threat such as wars and natural disasters. On the other hand, Bessel Van Der Kolk argues that a person is traumatized only "when both internal and external resources are inadequate to cope with external threat" (1989, 393). Thus, while Freud mentions both internal and external sources of trauma, and gives priority to the internal threat, Kolk mentions only the external threat. Yet, regardless of types of threats, a traumatic experience, according to Daniel J. Neller et al. (2005, 151), is generally characterized by generating the feeling of helplessness, impotence and fright. Freud here differentiates between fear, fright, and anxiety. "Anxiety," Freud explains, "describes a particular state of expecting the danger or preparing for it.... 'Fear' requires a definite object of which to be afraid. 'Fright', however, is the name we give to the state a person gets into when he has run into danger without being prepared for it" (1961, 6). With regard to Freud's reference to the types of traumatic threats, war fright belongs to the external threat. Freud describes the traumatized person who is haunted by fright of whatever kind as a person suffering from psychological trauma or, to use Freud's term, "traumatic (psycho) neurosis" (1961, 25).

Contrary to Freud's view, Marianna Torgovnick (2005, 135) contends that those who are obsessed with fear of World War II, though they are not directly exposed to its atrocities, experience a different kind of trauma which is far from being psychological. What afflicts them is a war-related, socio-cultural trauma which involves an entire society. Thus, according to Torgovnick's model, it is not necessary for a person to be directly exposed to a traumatic event in order to be inflicted with trauma. In other words, indirect witnesses of war events are also afflicted with traumatic pain since they are implicated in the process of disrupting the symbolic social system. Andrew Armstrong (2000, 174) accentuates the fact that even those who do not go to war, as is the case with Lowell, are also engaged in the trauma of war. Therefore, applying the theory of trauma as propounded by Freud and Caruth on Lowell's selected poems in his first two volumes will reflect his experience of war trauma.

Lowell as a War-traumatized Poet

Robert Lowell (1917-1977) is an American poet who never participated as a soldier in World War II. Yet, he produces anti-war poetry in which he resists the American ideology of war; an ideology which is based on greed and power aspirations. Lowell, in this sense, is regarded as a "conscientious objector poet"

(Metres 2007, 5). The term ‘conscientious objector’ refers to those who refuse to be conscripted in the Armed forces. Being a conscientious objector, Lowell refused to participate in the fighting during World War II and, in consequence, went to prison.

Lowell wrote a letter to the American president, Franklin D. Roosevelt, in 1943 to acknowledge his responsibility for refusing to go to World War II. In this letter, Lowell justifies his objection to the war on moral grounds by asserting that the Americans “are collaborating with the most unscrupulous and powerful of totalitarian dictators to destroy law, freedom, democracy, and above all,... national sovereignty” (1987, 370). He also condemns the United States’ rejection to stop the fighting without the “unconditional surrender” of the Axis forces (1987, 369).

Ian Hamilton (1982, 264) ascribes Lowell’s refusal to serve in World War II to his affliction with severe mania which made him depressed and not willing to go to war. Lowell’s depression, however, was not simply the result of his mania. It was associated with his sense of helplessness and guilt that he experienced during the war. Yet, the fact remains that Lowell’s depression developed into inner anxiety. This type of anxiety, according to Freud (1961, 6), refers to the subject’s anticipation of future disaster. These forebodings are based on the immediate effect of war trauma which he experiences in reality. The subject’s anxiety forces him to return to his earlier state of helplessness. Lowell’s letter to President Roosevelt obviously attests to his traumatic anxiety. In this letter, Lowell himself admits his anxious feelings as a fact: “I watched the approach of this war with foreboding” (1987, 368). Lowell’s forebodings focus on the idea that the war generally leads to tyranny and dictatorship and shows “no indications of peace” (1987, 369).

In his letter, Lowell also confesses his rejection of his early Puritan ancestors, those early immigrants who established the first settlement in the United States in 1620, because of being corrupted by “money, politics and imperialism” (1987, 368). Consequently, he announces his conversion to Catholicism in 1940. Lowell’s rejection of the early ancestors and his conversion to Catholicism reveal his protest against the early ancestors’ hypocrisy, greed and abuse of power as well as his anticipation of the United States’ excessive use of power during World War II.

According to Caruth (1995, 4-5), the trauma a person experiences cannot be solely conceived by a single traumatic occurrence, but by the haunting, emotional effect of various past and present traumatic events on the person’s consciousness. In a similar vein, Cristina Pividori (2010, 95) explains that it is difficult to identify a specific setting for a person’s traumatic experience. Accordingly, Lowell’s response to the trauma of war is the result of accumulative traumatic experiences. Such experiences include his position as conscientious objector, the reasons included in his letter to President Roosevelt for not going to war and his jail experience as a result of his refusal to go to war. There are other considerations such as his sense of guilt for his direct kinship with the early Puritan ancestors, his conversion to Catholicism, and, finally, his haunting fear of an apocalyptic war. Lowell manages to represent such traumatic experiences in his first two volumes through the manifestation of various traumatic feelings including fright, depression, anxiety, helplessness, powerlessness and wish-fulfilment.

The Representation of Lowell's War Trauma in *Land of Unlikeness*

The traumatic obsessions in Lowell's war poetry are perceptibly expressed in his first two volumes *Land of Unlikeness* (1944) and *Lord Weary's Castle* (1946). Lowell's choice of the phrase 'land of unlikeness' to be the title of his first volume is specifically revealing. The volume's title refers to the state of faithlessness before embracing Christianity. Lowell uses it to refer to the United States which is devoid of the true sense of Christianity. The American people are the target of Lowell's blame in the first volume. He blames them for abandoning their spiritual and moral values and seeking materialistic matters instead. Lowell's description of the modern American people as having lost their spiritual values accentuates his sense of traumatic depression and helplessness throughout the volume.

Lowell's traumatic experience of World War II is explicitly articulated in his poem "On the Eve of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, 1942." In this poem, Lowell is concerned with presenting his experience of trauma which "emerges most prominently within the wider historical and political realms" (Caruth 1996, 11). The title of Lowell's poem refers to the eighth of December which marks the day Christians celebrate Mary's Conception. The poet's reference to the specific year of 1942 is particularly significant. It refers to the year when the four major world powers: The United States, the United Kingdom, China and the Soviet Union declared forming the Alliance against Germany, Japan and Italy during World War II. What is ironic in Lowell's title is the fact that the day celebrating the Immaculate Conception of Mary is the same day of the United States' actual participation in World War II. The title, in this sense, alludes to two heterogeneous events: a religious feast and a military action.

From the very beginning of the poem, Lowell reveals his protest against the Americans' atrocities and war crimes during the Second World War:

Freedom and Eisenhower have won
Significant laurels where the Hun
And Roman kneel
To lick the dust from Mars' bootheel
Like foppish bloodhounds; yet you sleep
Out our distemper's evil day
And hear no sheep
Or hangdog bay. (2003, 866)

In these lines the poet presents a historical description of the horrors and atrocities committed by the American forces during the Second World War. The poet presents this historical account by alluding to the United States' invasion of Sicily, France and Germany under the command of the American General Dwight D. Eisenhower who supervised this military invasion. In addition, "the Hun" and the "Roman" refer to the German and Italian soldiers who were defeated in the war. More significantly, the poet describes the victorious Eisenhower as winning "Significant laurels" and the defeated Germans and Italians as licking "the dust." He also uses a classical allusion to Mars, the Roman god of war and destruction. All such images and allusions reflect the Americans' way of expressing their pride and their

way of celebrating power and victory. They also provide a telling example of the Americans' way of provoking and humiliating their enemies.

The poet uses another visual image describing Hitler and Mussolini as "bloodhounds". This horrible image reflects the brutality of those leaders who are responsible for the murder of millions of their soldiers because of their blood-thirsty attitude. What adds bitterness to this image is the connection the poet makes between Eisenhower or the Americans and Mars in the sense that they are the worshippers of Mars. The poet uses such warlike imagery to render a historical treatment of World War II. Therefore, in his articulation of the traumatic experience of war, Lowell tends to use minute details reinforced by warlike imagery as well as allusions to historical figures and events. In so doing, Lowell, as Philip Metres suggests, serves to be "a docupoet" (2007, 41) who is mainly concerned with documenting the historical trauma of World War II. Such a characteristic adds to Lowell's contribution to war trauma and lends his poetry an air of realism.

Moreover, the poet attempts to put his traumatic, warlike description in a religious context as manifested in his futile invocation of the Virgin Mary. This invocation is suggested by addressing her with the pronoun 'you' and by describing her as sleeping and hearing no sheep or dogs on the eve of her Conception. Meanwhile, the poet's appeal to Mary emphasizes the Americans' alienation from God. Thus, they are identified with "sheep". The word 'sheep' is a Christian symbol which refers to Christian people particularly when they need Christ's or Mary's guidance. Their prayers on the eve of Mary's Conception are not heard by Mary. They are damned because they are celebrating military victory while remaining indifferent to commemorating the religious event of Mary's Conception. The poem, in this sense, creates a painful feeling of helplessness and impotence.

In the next few lines, Lowell continues to address Mary in a desperate tone of appeal:

Mother of God, whose burly love
Turns swords to plowshares, come, improve
On the big wars
And make this holiday with Mars
Yours Feast Day, while Bellona's bluff
Courage or call it what you please
Plays blindman's buff
Through virtue's knees. (2003, 866)

The poet here reveals his wishful thinking that his repeated invocations of the Virgin can change this "evil day" of the American participation in World War II to a feast of her "Immaculate Conception". The poet's evocation of the Virgin's collaboration with Mars and Bellona, the Roman god and goddess of war, to change people's war crimes and sins to virtuous actions seems merely wishful thinking. Freud attributes this kind of wishful thinking to the existence of "repressed impulses" (1991, 338) in the unconscious mind. In his helpless supplication, Lowell, according to Carl Krockel's (2011, 21) description of a traumatized subject, shows himself to be exposed to a violently shocking event for which he is unprepared, and which puts him under traumatic stress and ultimately leaves him feeble. Lowell, now

The Prophetic Voice of a War-traumatized Poet: Representation of
Trauma in the Early Poetry of Robert Lowell

stressed by the effect of the United States' involvement in World War II, is constantly engaged in his attempt to emotionally survive the horror of war and attain salvation. Consequently, he anxiously takes refuge in his religious faith to be able to face the stress of war and alleviate this traumatic obsession. In other words, he endeavors to cure his traumatic war experience by putting it in a religious context of faith which hopefully might end his suffering.

The poet's evocation of Mary continues till the end of the poem:

Oh, if soldiers mind you well
They shall find you are their belle
And belly too;
Christian's bread and beauty came by you,
Celestial Hoyden, when our Lord
Gave up the weary Ghost and died,
You shook a sword
From his torn side. (2003, 866)

The poet starts this penultimate stanza with a sense of disappointment and sadness. This is suggested by using the interjection "Oh" and the conditional "if" to refer to the soldiers' lack of religious faith since they are careless of the religious feast of Mary's Conception. Then the poet recalls the Virgin's defeat of Satan in an attempt to invoke her help for putting an end to this evil war. His invocation of Mary, however, comes in vain and turns out to be frustrating.

The poet's appeal, nonetheless, remains consistent through his repeated call to the Virgin Mary to stop the atrocities: "Celestial Hoyden," "mankind's Mother" and "Jesus' Mother." Lowell's resorting to religious invocation, nonetheless, proves helpless in the face of this catastrophic war. He concludes with a horrible image of soldiers killing each other from "pole to pole" (2003, 866). This image indicates the senselessness of war and alludes to Cain's crime of killing Abel. What is significant here is the point that Lowell's religious appeal to Christ and Mary for salvation seems more of a wish than desire since horrible scenes of violence and chaos are prevalent throughout the poem. Through his use of Biblical allusions, Lowell looks at the traumatic past of mankind since the first murder of Abel and uses its implications to form his apocalyptic vision of World War II seeing it as a destructive war. He also shows his awareness of how traumatic experiences historically repeat themselves from the early violent times of human history to the horrible event of World War II. Such significant messages imply the failure of religion in bringing about salvation.

In his ten-line poem "Children of Light," Lowell pours his resentment and accusation against the early American Puritans who settled in New England. The poem's title is a Biblical allusion to the apostle Paul's advice to Christians in the church at Ephesus to "walk as children of light" (Eph, 5: 8-9). Lowell chooses this title to satirize his early Puritan ancestors whom he refers to as "Our Fathers" and "Pilgrims:"

Our Fathers wrung their bread from stocks and stones
And fenced their gardens with the Redman's bones;
Embarking from the Nether Land of Holland,

Pilgrims unhoused by Geneva's night, ... (2003, 660)

These initial lines describe the early ancestors' aggression against the indigenous peoples after coming to the New World. In such a conflict, they committed crimes of murder, violence, exploitation and slavery for the sake of their colonial purposes. They abused their power both militarily and economically. What is ironic here is the fact that those early Puritan ancestors fled from religious persecution in Europe referred to as "Geneva's night" to seek religious freedom in the United States while they themselves imposed religious restrictions and practiced acts of violence and persecution against objectors.

Furthermore, Lowell regards his early Puritan ancestors as "Pilgrims" who were deluded by hypocrisy and human greed. Consequently, they were involved in violence. Unfortunately, the present generations have their own share of their ancestors' curse. Therefore, Lowell uses the tone of resentment to show his rebellious attitude against the past traumatic history of his ancestors. Such feelings of distress and anger, according to Caruth (1996, 136), suggest the possibility that the traumatic stress can afflict not the present generation, but a later generation. She attributes this possibility to "the (inter)generational structure of trauma" (1996, 136). It is Lowell's ancestors, thus, who play an essential part in his experience of trauma.

Lowell's protesting attitude accounts for his apocalyptic vision which, as Selim Sarwar (2001, 18) points out, is due to his realization of the greed and hypocrisy of the Puritan ancestors. Hence, Lowell criticizes the United States as an imperial country which holds on to power at any cost. He informs us here that the problem of power struggle is dated back to the older generation of ancestors. It is quite evident that the traumatic situation involved in this poem conforms to Freud's description of one of the main features of a traumatic experience. "It may happen," Freud argues, "that a person is brought so completely to a stop by a traumatic event which shatters the foundations of his life that he abandons all interest in the present and future and remains permanently absorbed in mental concentration upon the past" (1991, 316). Lowell's focus on the violent past of his ancestors becomes here an unavoidable source of traumatic stress that can in no sense be ignored. He realizes that all Americans of the modern age are victims of this oppressive system of power struggle.

They planted here the Serpent's seeds of light;
 And here the pivoting searchlights probe to shock
 The riotous glass houses built on rock,
 And candles gutter by an empty altar,
 And light is where the landless blood of Cain
 Is burning, burning the unburied grain. (2003, 660)

In these lines, Lowell seems to relate the traumatic past of his early ancestors to the present catastrophe of World War II. He describes the early Puritan settlers' violence and religious hypocrisy that is evident in committing massacres against the indigenous peoples to satisfy their colonial greed. Those early settlers, thus, are described as being corrupted by 'the Serpent's seeds of light' in order to reassert their loss of true faith. Furthermore, Lowell's feelings of guilt, as Simon van Schalkwyk (2014, 85)

The Prophetic Voice of a War-traumatized Poet: Representation of
Trauma in the Early Poetry of Robert Lowell

claims, is quite clear in this poem. This sense of guilt is due to the spirit of greed and the military form of colonial expansion. These evils are inherited from Lowell's grandfather, Arthur Winslow, and become deeply rooted in the American community. Eventually, the Americans' spirit of greed and their lust for colonial expansion have led to an expansive world war which is an embodiment of the modern American evil of greed.

The feeling of guilt, which is prevalent throughout the poem, is defined as an "unconscious" motive "which plays such an important part among the motives of neurotic suffering" (Freud et al., 1959). It is this sense of guilt which reinforces Lowell's traumatic awareness of his complicity in the American expansionist policy. Such awareness, nonetheless, represents Lowell's attempt to confront his traumatic experience. To put it differently, the poet reveals his need to address the past traumatic narratives that threaten his identity in relation to his ancestors. Part of his attempt to maintain the balance of his identity is to narrate the crimes and atrocities his ancestors committed against the indigenous peoples. By so doing, Lowell is able to go through his trauma and give his testimony to a traumatic "memory that... disrupts the continuity of [his] identity" (McKinney 2007, 270).

In his condemnation of the early American Puritans, Lowell, according to Neville Braybrooke (1964, 28-30), makes a Biblical allusion to the Parable of the Unjust Steward which was told by Christ to the Pharisees. The parable, as explained by Robert Farrar Capon (2002, 302-9) tells the story of a steward who secretly cuts twenty percent of his master's property for himself and, thus, is not worthy of trust. The moral of this parable is applied to the "Pilgrim Fathers" in Lowell's poem who are not trusted for their religious corruption. Undoubtedly, this allusion raises an accusation against the early ancestors who are seen not as children of holy light, but, ironically, as children of darkness; since the seeds of light which symbolize holiness and goodness turn out to be those of the "Serpent," and the "searchlights" are revealed not as the searchlights of faith but those of crimes and war. This is exactly the source of irony which is accompanied by a sense of despair and doom. The false "Pilgrims," thus, displayed their corruption both religiously and politically as they destroyed entire cities, killed people and burnt fields. Such crimes were committed under the pretext of true faith. Lowell's poem, therefore, conveys the depression and helplessness of an apocalyptic poet who realizes that the present generations are haunted with the trauma of their forefather's sins and, thus, are not spared their share of damnation.

Throughout the poems of *Land of Unlikeness*, Lowell recalls such scenes of traumatic past experiences as the violent history of humanity in general and the early American Puritan settlers in particular. His recollection of past traumatic scenes represents "the painful repetition of the flashback (which) can only be understood as the absolute inability of the mind to avoid an unpleasant event that has not been given psychic meaning in any way" (Caruth 1996, 59). This repetition of traumatic past events creates within the subject an awareness of the possibility of a future traumatic event or what is called "the anxiety-reaction" (Freud et al. 1959, 167). Such anxiety is still more painful than the memory of a past trauma. Lowell's traumatic anxiety is obviously foregrounded in "Children of Light." Lowell's anxiety, according to Schalkwyk (2014, 86), is the result of his fear of the growing spirit of greed and the United States' misuse of military power which could probably lead to its involvement in more expansive wars.

Lowell's forebodings came true a decade later with the American participation in the Vietnam War (1955- 1975). Therefore, the poems of *Land of Unlikeness* obviously articulate Lowell's indignation and objection to the United States' role in World War II on the grounds of an apocalyptic, prophetic vision that is communicated by an anxiously traumatized poet.

The Representation of Lowell's War Trauma in *Lord Weary's Castle*

In *Lord Weary's Castle*, Lowell continues to develop his poetic response to his feelings of helplessness and impotence in relation to the trauma of World War II. By choosing *Lord Weary's Castle* to be the title of this volume, Lowell, as Fein (1970, 6-7) notes, makes a literary allusion to an Irish folk ballad entitled "Lambkin" which means innocent child. The folk ballad, according to Fein (1970, 6-7), tells the tale of a mason who builds a castle for Lord Weary, then kills the Lord's wife and son, and destroys the castle in retaliation for not being paid. The allusive title, *Lord Weary's Castle*, in this sense, sheds light on the motifs of destructiveness and punishment which run throughout the poems' volume. The poems, as Axelrod (1978, 52) explains, convey Lowell's deep concern about the violence and devastation produced by World War II, the moral and spiritual decadence of the modern American community as well as his traumatic obsession with the quest for redemption. By continuing to write about his obsession with the search for redemption in his second volume, Lowell endeavors to survive the traumatic experience of war despite his feelings of depression and helplessness that dominate his poems. The volume is replete with scenes of the victims' suffering and dismay which are dominant features in the modern post-war world. Such features are clearly illustrated in Lowell's initial poem in the volume, "The Exile's Return." The poem's title refers to defeated soldiers returning home after the end of World War II.

At the beginning of the poem Lowell attacks the Allies in World War II, particularly the United States, for being responsible for the state of chaos and desolation in the post-war world:

There mounts in squalls a sort of rusty mire,
 Not ice, not snow, to leaguer the Hôtel
 De Ville, where braced pig-iron dragons grip
 The blizzard to their rigor mortis. A bell
 Grumbles when the reverberations strip
 The thatching from its spire,
 The search-guns click and spit and split up timber
 And nick the slate roofs on the Holstenwall
 Where torn-up tilestones crown the victor. Fall
 And winter, spring and summer, guns unlimber
 And lumber down the narrow gabled street (1974, 9)

These lines describe how an exile soldier returns to his own occupied city after the war. The poem specifically introduces a fragmentary description of a nameless, destroyed city in Germany where the exile soldier returns. The poet makes it clear that the city he refers to is in Germany as illustrated by the names of locations mentioned in the poem like the "Holstenwall" hotel and the region of Rhineland in

The Prophetic Voice of a War-traumatized Poet: Representation of
Trauma in the Early Poetry of Robert Lowell

western Germany. The poet describes how the occupying soldiers are marching everywhere down the city squares and streets including "the narrow gabled street" where the exile's old house is located.

The description then shifts to the specific details of the exile's house:

Past your gray, sorry and ancestral house
Where the dynamited walnut tree
Shadows a squat, old, wind-torn gate and cows
The Yankee commandant. You will not see
Strutting children ... (1974, 9)

What is remarkable in this description is the fact that the poet uses the word "house" to refer to the exile returning home. The poet's message is clear enough: what is left for the exile in his country is the house remaining as it is. This house is no longer his home in the sense that the exile soldier lacks the sense of belonging in this house. The description of the house as "gray, sorry and ancestral" and the gate as "old" and "wind-torn" reinforces the gloomy sense of darkness and desolation. Moreover, the exile's feeling of displacement is indicated by using an ironic tone which culminates in lines 19-21: "The unseasoned liberators roll / Into the Market Square, ground arms before / The Rathaus" (1974, 9). The irony here lies in the metaphor comparing the American invaders to liberators who walk down the city streets and squares searching for enemy soldiers and killing them to liberate the city. These lines historically allude to Germany's admission of defeat and its surrender in 1945.

The exile soldier immediately realizes that he returns to a city which is entirely different from the peaceful city he knew well. The children he used to see playing are seen no more. There is only the scene of enemy soldiers marching everywhere. It is a very dark scene of devastation and desolation. Such a scene of physical and psychological displacement represents a shocking reality not only in post-war Germany but all over the entire modern world after World War II.

Through the figure of the poem's persona, Lowell, thus, is presenting a traumatic, historical scene of witnessing which implicitly alludes not only to post-war Germany, but to post-war Europe as well. Hence, Lowell shares the impersonal suffering of the returned soldier by engaging himself with the post-war historical scene of desolation and displacement and by showing the traumatic impact of such a scene on the exiled soldier as being representative of war victims. Lowell's poem, as Crosthwaite notes, serves to embody the type of "unresolved" historical trauma the world faced at the time of the Second World War (2009, 23). Therefore, the kind of trauma that Lowell represents here is an impersonal, historical, rather than private, trauma whose effects seep not only into the American society but the whole world as well.

The poem concludes on a note of consolation in the last four lines:

... but already lily-stands
Burgeon the risen Rhineland, and a rough
Cathedral lifts its eye. Pleasant enough,
Voi ch'entrate, and your life is in your hands. (1974, 9)

The first two lines here suggest a faint possibility of rebuilding and restoring life evoked by the image of the lily which survives destruction. The last two lines, however, allude to Dante's *Inferno*. In addition to the use of the literary device of intertextuality by quoting a line from Dante, the poem's concluding lines are replete with religious language such as "lily" which "represents innocence, virtue and purity" in Christianity (Husti and Cantor 2015, 74). There is also the cathedral which "lifts its eye" as if it asks for Heaven's help. Such Biblical associations as well as the intertextual allusion serve to foreground the poet's traumatic experience. They also suggest that God's forgiveness is the last resort for the traumatized war victims to attain salvation. But even this is hardly attainable as is evident from the allusion to Dante's *Inferno* at the end of the poem. Thus, the concluding sense of hope which, according to Caruth, is "a form of survival" (2001, 7) is ultimately revealed to be nothing but a mere illusion. Hence, the poet's persistent attitude is not only despair, but also develops to be foreboding and menacing as there is hardly any chance for salvation in the modern world as suggested in his reference to hell.

The intensity of the poet's traumatic anxiety that is prevalent throughout the poem is clearly reflected in his use of fragmentary language and the motif of despair and helplessness. Fragmented language is exemplified in the use of such elliptical sentence structures and interrupted syntax as "And winter, spring and summer, guns unlimber," "The Yankee commandant," and "Pleasant enough." Moreover, there are grammatical and syntactic structures that are used randomly with no links. For instance, in line 2: "Not ice, not snow, to leaguer the Hôtel," the poet here uses only juxtaposed structures and elliptical sentences with no links. He also uses unfamiliar words to form sentences such as "a rough Cathedral lifts its eye." Lifting an eye is used here arbitrarily with a rough cathedral. These are some of the characteristics of the poetic language of a traumatized poet. A traumatized person, as Lynn Custers and Yves T'Sjoen (2013, 121) rightly observe, cannot use language or speech freely to communicate his traumatic experience. Language, thus, fails the poet and becomes insufficient in expressing the traumatic experience of war.

"The Exile's Return," in this regard, is considered to bear testimony to a war trauma that negatively affects the language of his poetry. This clearly shows, as Caruth (1996, 3) remarks, how literary language is the most suitable for expressing the unspoken realities of traumatic experiences. Lowell's language is not simply constructed for conveying his feelings and inner thoughts. On the contrary, it is a language which is devoted for representing the trauma of World War II and for articulating his desperate attempt to find a way out of the crisis. By using this kind of fragmented language, Lowell endeavors to present scenes of violence and devastation produced by the Second World War as traumatic obsession.

Lowell's motif of powerlessness and helplessness remains consistent in his poem "To Peter Taylor on the Feast of the Epiphany." The title alludes to the Christian feast commemorating the three wise men's visit to Bethlehem to celebrate the birth of Christ. The title also refers to Lowell's best friend, Peter Taylor, an American short-story writer, novelist and dramatist. Lowell addresses him in the first line of the poem:

Peter, the war has taught me to revere
The rulers of this darkness, for I fear

The Prophetic Voice of a War-traumatized Poet: Representation of
Trauma in the Early Poetry of Robert Lowell

That only Armageddon will suffice
To turn the hero skating on thin ice
When whore and Beast and Dragon rise for air
From allegoric waters. Fear is where
We hunger: where the Irishmen recall
How wisdom trailed a star into a stall
And knelt in sacred terror ... (1974, 52)

The speaker here refers directly to the Second World War which "has taught [him] to revere / The rulers of this darkness." Lowell, thus, starts his poem by expressing a horrible sense of war fright which, according to Freud, "is caused by lack of any preparedness for anxiety" (1961, 25). By using the verb "revere," the poet tries to find something positive in war. In other words, he suggests that the political leaders involved in World War II, whom he describes as "the rulers of this darkness," can incite people's fear of being punished. The feeling of fear, in this way, can precipitate a new epiphany or a rebirth of a more civilized world. That is why the poet ironically "reveres" these warmongers who are responsible for the devastation of the world. To Lowell, as Henry Hart notes, "the fear of war is also, paradoxically, its attraction" (1991, 80). Hart's words insinuate Lowell's attempt to heal his war trauma by acknowledging it and confronting its ensuing fear instead of repressing it. Lowell's obsession with fear, in this sense, is an "act of survival" and a "repeated confrontation with the necessity and impossibility of grasping the threat to one's own life" (Caruth 1996, 62). The sense of fear, thus, becomes a prominent motif that runs throughout the poem.

The poet's statement that "Fear is where/ We hunger" ironically refers to the American people who are described as heroes "skating on thin ice." This description implies that they are strictly obeying their political leaders in time of war because they approach them with sacred fear. The poet identifies with such people by using the personal plural pronoun 'we', even though he satirizes them as being heroes. His point is that the American people, by submitting to their leaders and by justifying their actions out of their lust for greed and imperial expansion, are not close to God. Lowell here searches for a redemptive function of World War II by regarding it as an irrevocable reality and by trying to anticipate something positive out of it. This obviously refers to Lowell's wishful thinking that the war would put an end to the American lust for greed and power and would make them conform to their Christian faith.

Yet, redemption is not possible unless there is a new epiphany that generates people's longing and fear; just as the birth of Christ was to the three wise men, the Magi, who followed a star to reach the birthplace of Christ at Bethlehem and who approached the Christ child with sacred fear. Such feelings of fear and longing, however, can be possible in the modern world only by the coming of the Day of Judgment manifested by the Armageddon which might be brought up at the hands of "the rulers of this darkness." The poet here reveals an apocalyptic vision through which he introduces the idea of fear as the real sacred motivation behind the war.

The poem, in an apocalyptic, didactic sense, presents a contradiction between two different types of fear: the sacred illustrated by the piety of the Magi and the secular manifested by the materialism and

greed of the American people. This contradiction implies that there is no salvation for the poet till the Judgment Day as he clearly states in the last two lines of the poem: “Until their cash and somersaulting snare / Fear with its fingered stop-watch in mid-air” (1974, 52). These concluding lines present Lowell’s description of what might cause people’s real fear in the post-war world. It is the sacred fear of damnation on the Day of Judgment.

Ross Labrie (1997, 162) ascribes the apocalyptic voice dominating the poem to Lowell's conviction that an apocalyptic vision of World War II might prove effective in inciting fear which is urgently needed to bring about salvation. The poet's quest for salvation amid the darkness of the world becomes a recurrent hallucination as it creates a traumatic obsession which runs parallel to his apocalyptic view. By regarding the Second World War as an apocalyptic war whose political and military leaders are to be revered, Lowell attempts to deal with his war fright in favorable religious terms. In other words, he tries to convert his traumatic experience of war into a form of religious transcendence by constantly searching for salvation and survival in the face of damnation and violence of war. Yet, traces of Lowell’s traumatic war fright are overtly disclosed in the poem through his testimonial confession of the feelings of helplessness and impotence. The poet conveys such negative feelings by repeating the word “fear,” both as verb and noun, and by using the personal subject singular and plural pronouns “I” and “we.” This confirms the poet’s traumatic obsession with war fright.

In his first two volumes, it is evident, Lowell represents traumatic war experiences which he does not directly experience, but which obviously concern him. According to Metres, Lowell plays the role of “secondary witness” (2007, 133). A secondary witness, as Metres defines him is “a person (who) is removed from the scene but still witness to it” (2007, 133). Lowell’s position as secondary or indirect witness is manifested in the detailed descriptions of scenes of violence as well as historical allusions to war events. Lowell’s war poetry, in this account, acquires a new dimension by giving testimony to the trauma of World War II. His poems, however, reflect his traumatic war experiences not explicitly through confessing a personal experience, and not directly through a testimonial confession. On the contrary, Lowell, in his situation as witness, shows himself to be deeply affected by the trauma of others. Part of his role as indirect witness is his identification with the war sufferers. Lowell becomes so much connected with the others and so much imbued with their trauma that he himself starts to experience “a secondary trauma” as LaCapra (2014, 102) puts it. According to LaCapra’s view of secondary trauma, Lowell is regarded as a victim since he is directly involved in war-related experiences which immediately become the focus of his poetic concerns.

Lowell’s Strategies for Healing his War Trauma

Although Lowell falls a victim to the trauma of World War II, the way he represents it in his war poetry conforms to Pierre Janet’s “substitution” technique of helping his traumatic patients to recover (Van Der Hart et al. 1995, 208). Janet’s technique refers to the idea that the traumatized subject should develop his own alternative attitude towards his traumatic experience in order to survive its distressing

The Prophetic Voice of a War-traumatized Poet: Representation of
Trauma in the Early Poetry of Robert Lowell

effect. In other words, the subject should put his traumatic experience into a new context of meaning through which he can interpret it from a new perspective.

Similarly, Lowell endeavors to redeem his traumatic feelings of horror and powerlessness by adopting the attitude of spiritual resignation and by appealing to Christian belief in a new life after the end of this apocalyptic war as expressed in "To Peter Taylor On the Feast of the Epiphany." This represents Lowell's attempt to escape into wish-fulfilment. In other words, Lowell tries to find a means of surviving his trauma by seeking God's salvation to put an end to his suffering. Religion here serves as Lowell's initial strategy in the process of his trauma healing. However, it remains inadequate in resisting the traumatic stress of war. Lowell realizes the failure of religion as he always keeps returning in his poems to the Biblical story of Cain's murder of Abel which, for him, is the origin of traumatic war experiences. Jonathan Hart (2015, 116) is of the same view. He regards the first murder in the history of humanity as a Biblical symbol of the trauma of war. The focus of Lowell's early poetry, in consequence, marks a shift from the failure of finding an adequate language to convey his trauma to the failure of religion to mitigate the effects of trauma.

Moreover, Lowell's representation of war trauma in his early poetry is in harmony with Freud's technique of healing his patients through symbolic reenactment or, to borrow Freud's term, "re-experiencing" the traumatic event (1961, 30). Freud (1961, 30) allows the patient to re-experience a part of his traumatic experience instead of repressing it with the aim of having full control of it. Meanwhile, Freud (1961, 30) stresses the necessity of making the patient realize that what he re-enacts is just part of an early repressed past. Along similar lines, Lowell persists in providing a detailed, historical description of the traumatic scenes of World War II in such poems as "On the Eve of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, 1942," and "The Exile's Return." He also confesses his fear of war, instead of repressing it, as in "To Peter Taylor on the Feast of the Epiphany." Lowell's description of war scenes in such poems is an attempt to get rid of his traumatic obsession by reassuring himself that these war scenes are only a matter of the past.

Lowell's early poetry, therefore, testifies to the application of both Janet's and Freud's techniques in the process of trauma recovery. Lowell's reenactment of his trauma, somehow, proves more effective than resorting to religion as a substitute narrative. This is evinced by the fact that Lowell makes a slight change of attitude in the representation of his war trauma. More specifically, in *Lord Weary's Castle*, his attitude tends to be more moralistic, more didactic and more sympathetic than his earlier attitude in the first volume which is merely prophetic and protesting.

Conclusion

Exploring Lowell's poetic representation of his traumatic experience of World War II, as illustrated in the poems analyzed, renders the discussion of trauma theory from the perspective of Freud and Caruth more enriching and its basic tenets more accessible. The selected war poems in Lowell's *Land of Unlikeness* and *Lord Weary's Castle* explicitly reflect the symptoms of traumatic experience, as explained by Freud and Caruth, including an obsession with war fright, depression, anxiety, wishful thinking and

flashbacks. These symptoms are represented by using specific techniques and literary devices such as allusions, symbols, images and irony.

Lowell's early war poetry, for instance, reveals his obsession with Biblical symbols including sheep, light and lily which are associated with holiness, innocence and purity. Lowell's war poetry is also replete with various types of allusions. There are historical allusions to specific events during World War II as the allusion to the United States' participation in the war on the 8th of December 1942 and Germany's surrender in 1945. There are also historical allusions to political and military figures like the American military commander General Eisenhower as well as the German and Italian leaders, Hitler and Mussolini. Biblical allusions are also used in Lowell's poems. He alludes to specific Christian feasts like Mary's Conception and the Epiphany. In addition, he makes Biblical allusions to Christ's sacrifice, the Biblical story of Cain's murder of Abel, Christ's Parable of the unjust Steward and Paul's sermon in the church at Ephesus. Moreover, Lowell uses literary allusions to an Irish folk ballad entitled "Lambkin," and Dante's *Inferno*. He also uses classical allusions as he makes frequent references to Greek and Roman gods. For instance, he alludes to Mars and Bellona, the Roman god and goddess of war. All such allusions reveal Lowell's traumatic obsession with war.

Warlike imagery is used to represent Lowell's traumatic experience. There is, for example, an image describing soldiers fighting and another image depicting soldiers returning home as refugees. Images of violence, chaos, mass murder, and destruction are also palpable in Lowell's poems. As for Lowell's use of motifs, there are two motifs which appear so frequently in his poems that they become obsessive hallucination for the poet. These are the motif of the quest for redemption and the motif of helplessness and impotence.

Lowell's ironic tone is also distinctive throughout his early poetry. For instance, the poet's reference to the commemoration of Mary's Conception as being on the same day of the United States' participation in World War II is ironic indeed. The poet ironically discloses his early Puritan ancestors' religious corruption and hypocrisy, and he describes the American invaders during World War II as liberators. Moreover, the poet ironically refers to the American warmongers as rulers who deserve appreciation and he regards the American people who are hungry for power as heroes. All such ironic insinuations most likely deepen Lowell's traumatic wound.

Eventually, Lowell's use of fragmentary language and repetition serve to reflect his inability to communicate his overwhelming traumatic experience appropriately. There are, for instance, examples of elliptically juxtaposed sentences, and interrupted syntactic structures in "The Exile's Return" and "On the Eve of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, 1942." There is also the frequent use of obsessive invocations to Christ and Mary throughout the poems of the first two volumes. By using all such techniques, Lowell, therefore, manages to bring to the fore his trauma of war which is well-articulated through the vatic voice of a desperately frustrated poet.

الصوت التنبؤي لشاعر أصابته صدمة الحرب: تصوير الصدمة في باكورة أشعار روبرت لوويل

محمد سعد راتب

قسم اللغة الإنجليزية وآدابها، جامعة الفيوم، مصر

قسم اللغة الإنجليزية وآدابها، جامعة شقراء، المملكة العربية السعودية

الملخص

يهدف هذا البحث إلى دراسة باكورة أشعار روبرت لوويل المتمثلة في ديوانيه "أرض الاختلاف" و "قلعة السيد ويرلي" باعتبارهما تجسيدا واضحا لأعراض الصدمة كما تناولها فرويد وكاثير كاروث، ويحاول البحث توضيح أسلوب الشاعر في تجسيد تجربته الصادمة للحرب العالمية الثانية، وهو أسلوب يعتمد فيه على توثيق الأحداث التاريخية للحرب ووصفها في قصائده وصفاً دقيقاً، ويهدف الشاعر من وراء ذلك إيجاد طريقة للتخلص من صدمته التي يمكن تصنيفها على أنها صدمة غير مباشرة أو صدمة ثانوية أصيب بها من خلال تعاطفه مع ضحايا الحرب ومعايشته لصدمتهم، غير أن الشاعر لم يستسلم لتلك الصدمة، بل حاول التخلص منها من خلال التضرع إلى الله تارة وتمسكه بعقيدة الخلاص الإلهي التي يرى فيها النجاة من هذه المعاناة، ومن خلال التركيز على وصف المشاهد الصادمة للحرب في أشعاره تارة أخرى، وهو في ذلك يحاول أن يثبت لذاته أن تلك المشاهد ما هي إلا ضرب من ضروب الماضي ولا وجود لها في الحاضر.

الكلمات المفتاحية: روبرت لوويل، شعر الحرب، ديوان "أرض الاختلاف"، ديوان "قلعة السيد ويرلي"، نظرية الصدمة، فرويد، كاثير كاروث.

References

- Armstrong, Andrew. 2000. Speaking through the Wound: Irruption and Memory in the Writing of Ben Okri and Festus Iyayi. *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 13: 173-83. <https://doi.org/10.1080/713674312>.
- Axelrod, Steven Gould. 1978. *Robert Lowell: Life and Art*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Braybrooke, Neville. 1964. Robert Lowell and Unjust Steward: A Study of his Poetry. *The Dalhousie Review* 44 (1): 28-34. https://dalspace.library.dal.ca/bitstream/handle/10222/64040/dalrev_vol44_iss1_pp28_34.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.
- Capon, Robert Farrar. 2002. *Kingdom, Grace, Judgment, Paradox, Outrage, and Vindication in the Parables of Jesus*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing.
- Caruth, Cathy. 1995. *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Caruth, Cathy. 1996. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Caruth, Cathy. 2001. Parting words: Trauma, Silence and Survival. *Cultural Values* 5 (1): 7-26. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/14797580109367218?needAccess=true>
- Crosthwaite, Paul. 2009. *Trauma, Postmodernism and the Aftermath of World War II*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Custers, Lynn, and Yves T'Sjoen. 2013. A Trauma-Theoretical Reading of Hugues C. Pernath's War Poetry. *Journal of Literary Studies* 29 (2): 117-32. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02564718.2013.777147>.
- Falco, Raphael. 2003. The Weary Nihilism of *Lord Weary's Castle*. *Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 86 (1/2) 149-69. <http://www.Jstor.Org/stable/41179089>
- Fein, Richard J. 1970. *Robert Lowell*. Woodbridge: Twayne Publishers.
- Freud, Sigmund. 1959. "Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety." In *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, vol. 20, 1925-1926*, translated by James Strachey in collaboration with Anna Freud, assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson, 75-175. London: Hogarth.
- Freud, Sigmund. 1961. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, translated and edited by James Strachey. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Freud, Sigmund. 1991. *The Penguin Freud Library, vol. 1*, translated by James Strachey and edited by James Strachey and Angela Richards. London: Penguin.
- Hamilton, Ian. 1982. *Robert Lowell: A Biography*. London: Faber and Faber.
- Hart, Henry. 1991. Robert Lowell and the Religious Sublime. *New England Review* 14 (1): 27-47. <http://www.nereview.com/files/2014/08/RobertLowellandtheReligiousSublime.pdf>.
- Hart, Henry. 1995. *Robert Lowell and the Sublime*. New York: Syracuse University Press.
- Hart, Jonathan. 2015. *The Poetics of Otherness: War, Trauma, and Literature*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. <http://doi.org/10.1057/9781137477453>.
- Hayes, Paula. 2013. *Robert Lowell and the Confessional Voice*. New York: Peter Lang.

The Prophetic Voice of a War-traumatized Poet: Representation of
Trauma in the Early Poetry of Robert Lowell

- Husti, Anca, and Maria Cantor. 2015. Sacred Connection of Ornamental Flowers with Religious Symbols. *ProEnvironment* 8: 73-9. <http://journals.usamvcluj.ro/index.php/promediu>.
- Jamison, Kay Redfield. 2017. *Robert Lowell, Setting the River on fire: A Study of Genius, Mania, and Character*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Kirsch, Adam. 2005. *The Wounded Surgeon: Confession and Transformation in Six American Poets*. New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Krockel, Carl. 2011. *War Trauma and English Modernism: T. S. Eliot and D. H. Lawrence*. Basingstoke, Houndmills Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Labrie, Ross. 1997. *The Catholic Imagination in American Literature*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press.
- LaCapra, Dominick. 2014. *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Lowell, Robert. 1974. *Lord Weary's Castle; The Mills of the Kavanaughs*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World.
- Lowell, Robert. 1987. *The Collected Prose*. Edited by Robert Giroux. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Lowell, Robert. 2003. *Robert Lowell: Collected poems*. Edited by Frank Bidart and David Gewanter. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- McKinney, Kelly. 2007. "Breaking the Conspiracy of Silence": Testimony, Traumatic Memory, and Psychotherapy with Survivors of Political Violence. *Ethos* 35 (3): 265-99. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4497914>.
- Metres, Philip. 2007. *Behind the Lines: War Resistance Poetry on the American Homefront Since 1941*. Iowa: University of Iowa Press.
- Neller, Daniel J., Robert L. Denney, Christina A. Pietz, and R. Paul Thomlinson. 2005. Testing the Trauma Model of Violence. *Journal of Family Violence* 20: 151-59. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-005-3651-z>.
- Pivodori, Cristina. 2010. "Eros and Thanatos Revisited: The Poetics of Trauma in Rebecca West's "The Return of the Soldier" / Eros y Tánatos revisitados: La poética del trauma en El retorno del soldado de Rebecca West." *Atlantis* 32 (2): 89-104. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41055401>.
- Ricks, Christopher. 2010. *True Friendship: Geoffrey Hill, Anthony Hecht, and Robert Lowell Under the Sign of Eliot and Pound*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press.
- Sarwar, Selim. 2001. Robert Lowell: Scripting the Mid-Century Eschatology. *Journal of Modern Literature* 25 (2): 114-130. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3831639>.
- Schalkwyk, Simon Van. 2014. "Translation and the Transatlantic Frontier: Robert Lowell's *Land of Unlikeness* (1944) and *Lord Weary's Castle* (1946)." *English Studies in Africa* 57: 79-97. <http://doi.org/10.1080/00138398.2014.963286>.
- Spivack, Kathleen. 2012. *With Robert Lowell and His Circle: Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton, Elizabeth Bishop, Stanley Kunitz, and Others*. Boston: Northeastern University Press.

- Torgovnick, Marianna. 2005. *The War Complex: World War II in Our Time*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Van Der Kolk, Bessel A. 1989. The Compulsion to Repeat the Trauma. Re-enactment, Revictimization, and Masochism. *The Psychiatric Clinics of North America* 12 (2): 389–411.
- Van Der Hart, Onno, Paul Brown, and Bessel A. Van Der Kolk. 1995. “Pierre Janet’s Treatment of Post-Traumatic Stress.” In *Psychotraumatology: Key Papers and Core Concepts in Post-Traumatic Stress*, edited by George S. Everly and Jeffrey M. Lating, 195-210. New York: Springer Science & Business Media. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4899-1034-9>.