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THE CIRCLE OF PAIN: REPETITION AND REDEMPTION IN ALICE WALKER'S *POSSESSING THE SECRET OF JOY*

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Abstract: Alice Walker's *Possessing the Secret of Joy* shows trauma not as a historical wound that can be fixed, but as a repeating force that shapes and redefines a person. This study looks at the novel through Freud's idea of repetition compulsion and Jung's theory of individuation. It suggests that Tashi's choice to undergo Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) as an adult and her later killing of the tsunga, M'lissa, represent a psychological loop between pain and reclaiming the self. Based on trauma theory (Caruth, 1996; van der Kolk, 2015) and recent findings in embodied cognition (Luckhurst, 2021; Lanius & Frewen, 2021), this paper examines how Walker turns cultural violence into a psychological process of fragmentation and partial integration.

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The novel's nonlinear structure and changing voices reflect the breakdown of traumatic memory and the divided self. Rather than seeing Tashi's actions as feminist resistance, this interpretation places them within the need to repeat unresolved trauma as a desperate attempt at mental wholeness. In the end, *Possessing the Secret of Joy* shows that redemption does not come from transcending trauma, but from facing it. The cycle of pain, then, becomes both a prison and a way out, which is a confusing path where suffering turns into self-awareness, and silence opens up the chance for meaning.

Keywords: Trauma, Repetition compulsion, Individuation, Somatic memory, Dissociation, Alice Walker, Jungian psychology.

ACI ÇEMBERİ: ALICE WALKER'IN POSSESSING THE SECRET OF JOY ROMANINDA TEKRARLAMA VE KEFARET

Öz Alice Walker'ın *Possessing the Secret of Joy* adlı romanı, travmayı düzeltilebilecek tarihsel bir yara olarak değil, kişiyi şekillendiren ve yeniden tanımlayan tekrar eden bir güç olarak gösterir. Bu çalışma, romana Freud'un tekrarlama dürtüsü fikri ve Jung'un bireyleşme teorisi üzerinden bakmaktadır. Tashi'nin bir yetişkin olarak Kadın Sünneti (FGM) geçirmeyi seçmesinin ve daha sonra tsunga M'lissa'yı öldürmesinin, acı ve benliği geri kazanma arasındaki psikolojik bir döngüyü temsil ettiğini öne sürmektedir. Travma teorisine (Caruth, 1996; van der Kolk, 2015) ve bedenlenmiş biliş alanındaki son bulgulara (Luckhurst, 2021; Lanius & Frewen, 2021) dayanan bu makale, Walker'ın kültürel şiddeti nasıl psikolojik bir parçalanma ve kısmi bütünleşme sürecine dönüştürdüğünü incelemektedir. Romanın doğrusal olmayan yapısı ve değişen sesler, travmatik hafızanın ve bölünmüş benliğin parçalanmasını yansıtmaktadır. Bu yorum, Tashi'nin eylemlerini feminist direniş olarak görmek yerine, zihinsel bütünlük için umutsuz bir girişim olarak çözülmemiş travmayı tekrarlama ihtiyacına yerleştirir. Sonunda, *Possessing the Secret of Joy*, kurtuluşun travmayı aşmaktan değil, onunla yüzleşmekten geçtiğini gösteriyor. Bu sebeple acı döngüsü hem bir hapsedane hem de bir çıkış yolu hâline gelir; bu, acının öz farkındalığa dönüştüğü ve sessizliğin anlam şansını açtığı kafa karıştırıcı bir yoldur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Travma, Yinemele saplantısı, Bireyleşme, Bedensel bellek, Dissosiyasyon, Alice Walker, Jungcu psikoloji.

Introduction

In Alice Walker's *Possessing the Secret of Joy* (1992), trauma is not just a backdrop to Tashi's story; it drives her psychological development. The novel focuses on Tashi, an Olinkan woman who experiences Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) as an adult, even though she witnessed her sister die from the same ritual in childhood. This contradictory choice raises an essential question: Why would a trauma survivor willingly go through the same experience that broke her?

Since its publication, *Possessing the Secret of Joy* has generated diverse critical responses. Many scholars have interpreted the novel primarily through feminist and postcolonial frameworks, emphasizing themes of cultural resistance and female empowerment. For instance, Henry Louis Gates, Jr. identifies the novel's engagement with "double consciousness," "divided loyalties," and what he terms "a tortured indictment of clitoridectomy that centers on the interplay between modern and traditional identities" (Gates, 1993, p. xi). Elisabeth Bekers (2010), in her comprehensive study *Rising Anthills: African and African American Writing on Female Genital Excision, 1960-2000*, examines how Walker's attention to "the physical and psychological devastation" of FGM evolved within broader contexts of ethnicity, nationalism, colonialism, and human rights discourse. M. Giulia Fabi's analysis places the novel within the continuum of sexual violence against Black women, connecting FGM in Africa with the systematic rape of enslaved women in America, thus situating Walker's work within Black Atlantic literary traditions.

While these readings illuminate the novel's sociopolitical dimensions and its critique of harmful traditional practices, they often emphasize cultural resistance and feminist agency, interpreting Tashi's actions primarily through a lens of empowerment or political defiance. However, such approaches risk overlooking what this study identifies as the novel's central psychological dimension: the compulsive repetition of unresolved childhood trauma. This article departs from resistance-based interpretations by foregrounding psychoanalytic and Jungian frameworks. Rather than viewing Tashi's journey as an

act of cultural reclamation or feminist resistance, this reading positions her choice to undergo FGM and her eventual killing of the tsunga, M'lissa, as manifestations of what Sigmund Freud termed "repetition compulsion", the unconscious drive to reenact traumatic experiences in a futile attempt to gain mastery over them.

This study integrates two theoretical frameworks to analyze Tashi's psychological journey. First, Freud's concept of repetition compulsion, introduced in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), explains why trauma survivors often unconsciously reenact painful experiences. Freud argued that individuals compulsively return to traumatic situations not to resolve them, but because the psyche attempts to retrospectively gain control over overwhelming experiences that once rendered them helpless. This compulsion operates beyond the pleasure principle; it is driven not by the desire for satisfaction but by an unconscious need to revisit and rework unprocessed trauma. In Tashi's case, her adult decision to undergo the same ritual that killed her sister represents this compulsion in its most literal form, a return to the site of original wounding in an attempt to achieve symbolic mastery.

Second, Carl Jung's theory of individuation and the shadow archetype provides a framework for understanding Tashi's violent but ultimately transformative confrontation with M'lissa. Jung conceived of the shadow as the repository of repressed, denied, or unacknowledged aspects of the self, those elements that the conscious ego refuses to recognize but which nevertheless exert powerful influence over behavior and emotional life. According to Jung (1959), psychological wholeness, or individuation, can only be achieved through the difficult process of acknowledging and integrating the shadow. For Tashi, M'lissa represents not merely an external oppressor but an internalized figure embodying the cultural violence, submission, and complicity that Tashi has long repressed. By killing M'lissa, Tashi symbolically confronts her own shadow—the part of herself that once accepted tradition's cruel demands. This act, though violent, represents a desperate attempt at psychic integration and the reclamation of selfhood that trauma had fragmented.

Based on trauma theory (Caruth, 1996; van der Kolk, 2015) and recent findings in embodied cognition (Luckhurst, 2021; Lanius & Frewen, 2021), this paper examines how Walker turns cultural violence into a psychological process of fragmentation and partial integration. Scholars like Bessel van der Kolk (2015) and Cathy Caruth (1996) explain that trauma often bypasses language and settles in the body. Similarly, Culbertson (1995) introduces the idea of "embodied memory," where trauma is not just recalled but also experienced physically and emotionally. Systematic reviews of FGM survivors show higher risks of depression, anxiety, and PTSD, often tied to cultural silencing and bodily memory (Berg & Denison, 2012). This framework is useful for interpreting Walker's depiction of FGM, which she portrays as both a cultural ritual and a deep psychological injury. Recent developments in trauma theory have expanded this perspective, highlighting the importance of embodied feelings and biological memory in how trauma is represented in literature (Luckhurst, 2008; Lanius et al., 2011).

The novel's nonlinear structure and changing voices reflect the breakdown of traumatic memory and the divided self. Walker's fragmented narrative technique mirrors the psychological fragmentation experienced by trauma survivors, whose memories exist not as coherent narratives but as sensory fragments, intrusive images, and dissociated experiences. This formal innovation aligns with what recent postcolonial trauma scholars have identified as the need to move beyond Eurocentric trauma paradigms. As Visser (2011) argues, postcolonial trauma theory must account for culturally specific forms of psychological wounding that occur within contexts of colonial disruption and cultural violence. Walker's novel operates precisely at this intersection: Tashi's trauma is simultaneously personal (the death of her sister) and collective (the perpetuation of FGM as a cultural practice shaped by colonial and precolonial power dynamics).

It is important to note that this psychoanalytic reading does not dismiss the novel's postcolonial context. Tashi's experience unfolds within a world shaped by colonial disruption, cultural dislocation, and the complex negotiations between traditional and modern identities. The practice of FGM itself exists at

the contested intersection of cultural preservation and patriarchal violence, further complicated by Western intervention and the politics of representation. As postcolonial trauma scholars have argued, trauma theory must account for the specific historical conditions under which colonialism fractures both cultural and individual psyches (Craps & Buelens, 2008; Visser, 2011). In Tashi's case, her psychological fragmentation cannot be separated from the broader disruptions of colonialism that have destabilized traditional structures while simultaneously reinforcing patriarchal control over women's bodies. The Olinkan practice of FGM, as Walker presents it, operates within this double bind: it is simultaneously a pre-colonial tradition and a practice that gains new meaning in the context of cultural resistance to colonial erasure. By centering the psychological dimension of trauma repetition and individuation, this study reveals how cultural violence becomes internalized, transforming external oppression into internal fragmentation. The postcolonial and the psychological are not separate spheres but deeply intertwined; Tashi's psychic wounds bear the imprint of both personal loss and collective historical trauma.

The analysis is divided into four parts. The first section looks at the death of Tashi's sister, Dura, and how the Olinkan community silences grief. This sets the stage for understanding repressed trauma. The second part discusses how Tashi's decision as an adult to undergo FGM represents a way to repeat that trauma. The third section examines the psychological fragmentation that follows, using ideas like dissociation and PTSD. The final section interprets Tashi's act of killing M'lissa as a symbolic rebirth, connected to Jung's theory of individuation. This article ultimately reframes Tashi's story not as one of feminist resistance but as a study of the lasting and often cyclical nature of psychological trauma. It shifts the focus from cultural critique to psychic recovery, providing a deeper understanding of Walker's complex novel.

1. The Primal Wound: Dura's Death and The Birth Of Silence

At the center of Tashi's lifelong emotional breakdown is a deep trauma: the violent, senseless death of her sister Dura during a female circumcision ritual. This wound serves as the emotional and symbolic core of *Possessing the Secret of Joy*. As a child, Tashi is not merely a bystander to her sister's

death; she becomes a victim of its emotional fallout. The moment Dura starts to bleed, which the community refers to as a tragic accident, marks the start of Tashi's journey into silence, fragmentation, and disconnection.

Walker presents this moment with chilling simplicity. Tashi recalls the memory through a haze of dissociation: "I did not realize for a long time that I was dead" (Walker, 1992, p. 3). This metaphorical death, felt while she is still alive, indicates the first psychological break. Tashi's struggle to express her pain stems not from personal weakness but from a culture that silences her. When she hears, "You mustn't cry," after Dura's death (Walker, 1992, p. 15), this simple instruction becomes a way to suppress her emotions. It's not just her grief that is pushed down; it is her memory as well.

According to trauma theorists like Cathy Caruth (1996), trauma is defined not just by the event itself, but by how the event is not fully understood or processed at the time. It reappears later, often as nightmares, compulsions, and a sense of fragmentation. Similarly, van der Kolk (2015) explains that traumatic experiences are stored not in narrative memory, but in the body as physical sensations, dysregulations, and automatic responses. Tashi's fragmented memories, her dissociative states, and her recurring nightmares show this psychophysical storage.

In this way, Dura is more than just a lost sister. She becomes a shadow figure in Jungian terms; an internal representation of unrecognized pain and guilt. Jung describes the shadow as the unconscious part of the psyche that holds repressed, rejected, or unacceptable parts of the self (Jung, 1959). For Tashi, Dura is both a literal and symbolic figure: her physical death is real, but her mental presence remains. Tashi's refusal to mourn signifies a refusal to confront the shadow, and therefore, a refusal to heal. The Olinkan community deepens this trauma through collective denial. They regard Dura's death as an unfortunate outcome rather than a systemic issue. Their comments, "We understand your sister is dead, but..." (Walker, 1992, p. 15), show that they care more about keeping traditions than addressing the consequences of those traditions. Ngundu and Mazibuko (2025) point out that many FGM survivors suffer long-term psychological harm because their trauma is ignored or

downplayed by the community. This silencing connects to broader ideas that frame FGM's effects as a comprehensive psychosocial injury. It includes feelings of shame, dissociation, and the passing down of distress across generations (Glover et al., 2017).

Rebecca Culbertson's (1995) idea of "embodied memory" sheds light on this issue. She states that trauma is "not known in words, but felt in the body" (p. 170). Tashi's struggle to talk about Dura's death, even with her therapist, shows this blockage in her body. Her memories are sensory; she hears the screams, smells the blood, and feels the nausea. These are not memories she tells; they are sensations she experiences. They surface in dreams, psychosomatic illnesses, and emotional paralysis. The breakdown starts here, in a childhood that was neither safe nor easy to explain. This connects with modern neuroscientific research indicating that recalling trauma activates sensorimotor areas of the brain instead of linguistic regions (Lanius et al., 2011). This supports the idea that such experiences are felt in the body before they can be expressed in words.

This early trauma also sets the stage for what Freud calls repetition compulsion. This is the unconscious urge to reenact a traumatic event in an effort to gain control over it. However, control is hard to achieve. Instead of finding resolution, this repetition often leads to a deeper involvement in pain. As the next section will discuss, Tashi's choice to return to Olinka and undergo FGM as an adult is not a sign of empowerment. It is a symptom of unresolved trauma, a real and symbolic return to the site of her trauma.

Tashi's fragmented identity, guilt about surviving, and the cultural silence after her sister's death come together to create a psychological state where repetition feels unavoidable. Without a clear resolution or emotional healing, trauma grows. Dura's death, hidden and unrecognized, becomes the ghost that influences every choice Tashi makes. She carries her sister in memory, in body, in nightmares, in silence, and in blood. To understand her later actions, including her self-submission to FGM, this wound must be revisited. Therefore, Dura's death is not just a trigger in Tashi's story; it is the starting point of the story. It is the unhealed break from which all future trauma emerges, and the silent presence that must eventually be faced. In Walker's novel, child

hood trauma is not something left behind; it is carried, hidden, and ultimately repeated. The mental impact of that burden will be the focus of the next section.

2. Repetition Compulsion: Choosing Trauma To Feel Whole

In "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," Sigmund Freud introduces the idea of "repetition compulsion." This psychological phenomenon occurs when people unconsciously repeat past traumatic experiences. They do this not to find relief but to regain control over events that once made them feel powerless. Instead of resolving the trauma, this repetition often intensifies it, causing further emotional fragmentation. Tashi's choice as an adult to return to Olinka and undergo Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), the same ritual that killed her sister and shattered her childhood, is a clear example of this compulsion. This repetitive action can be seen as a non-verbal attempt to connect the gaps in memory and meaning. Roth (1996) supports this view, suggesting that trauma stories often resist a linear timeline and instead appear as symbolic reenactments of the original injury. Modern trauma research also backs Freud's idea, showing that repetition is not a symbolic act of mastery but a neurocognitive loop caused by unresolved emotional responses (Boyer et al., 2022). In this way, Tashi's reenactment shows the automatic reactivation of trauma circuits rather than a deliberate cultural decision.

At first, Tashi's choice seems confusing. She has left Olinka, married Adam, started a life in America, and seemingly escaped the strict structures of her native culture. Yet, years later, she voluntarily returns to be cut. This decision is not based on logic or conscious choice but on the strong, unresolved pull of repressed trauma. She states, "I wanted to be one with my people" (Walker, 1992, p. 121), but what she truly desires is not cultural assimilation; it is emotional closure. In Jungian terms, this wish reflects a longing for integration of the shadow self, which are the parts of her psyche that she cannot identify, but which still control her. What Tashi is seeking, perhaps unknowingly, is control. Trauma survivors often experience helplessness as their core memory. The act of choosing trauma can create the illusion of agency,

even as it deepens the wound. Bessel van der Kolk (2015) notes that trauma “compels survivors to re-enact the original situation over and over again” (p. 62), particularly in environments that resemble the original site of pain. Tashi’s return to Olinka is both geographical and psychological. She returns to the site of her original fragmentation, not to heal but to relive the conditions of loss.

The ritual of FGM becomes a way for Tashi to reconnect with the sister she lost and the identity she buried. Freud pointed out that repetition in trauma does not follow rational logic; it is driven by what he called the “compulsion to repeat.” This force is stronger than the pleasure principle. Tashi is not looking for joy; she wants coherence in her fractured mind. Dura died in blood and silence. Subconsciously, Tashi feels the need to mirror that suffering as a way to connect, grieve, and perhaps cope with guilt.

This guilt is especially important. Survivors of trauma, particularly in connection with a loved one’s death, often experience what psychoanalyst Pauline Boss (1999) calls “ambiguous loss.” This refers to the feeling of losing someone without closure, mourning, or understanding. Tashi did not scream, run, or resist. She watched and obeyed. The cost of her obedience was her sister’s death. By undergoing the same ritual, she tries to eliminate the imbalance between them. Her mutilation becomes a twisted form of equality. As van der Kolk (1989) explains in his acknowledged work on trauma repetition, these re-enactments often appear as compulsive behaviors that prolong suffering instead of resolving it, trapping survivors in cycles of revictimization.

Walker highlights the dissociative nature of this act through her narrative structure. During the events surrounding her circumcision, Tashi is referred to not only by her given name but also as Evelyn, representing her Western identity. This duality shows how trauma has split her sense of self. In her Western life, Evelyn appears rational, independent, and distant from Olinkan rituals. Yet, Evelyn is also incomplete. Choosing to become Tashi again and embrace her ancestral identity is not a homecoming; it represents a psychological step back to an unhealed wound. Here, Jung’s theory of individuation is particularly relevant. Individuation is the process through which a person becomes whole by integrating all parts of the self, including those that are hidden or

rejected. For Tashi, individuation can only start when she confronts her internalized shadow, symbolized by her grief, guilt, and the violence she connects to Olinka. The FGM ceremony serves as a grotesque form of symbolic reintegration; to reclaim her past, she must relive its horrors.

And yet, this act does not bring her healing. Instead, it leaves her physically disabled and emotionally empty. "Now, it took her a quarter of an hour to pee. Her monthly menstrual period took 10 days. She had cramps that disabled her almost half of each month" (Walker, 1992, p. 65). These are not just side effects; they show the trauma she carries, a tangible reflection of the emotional wounds she wanted to heal. The body remembers what the mind cannot face (van der Kolk, 2015, p. 105). This ongoing physical response appears in somatic trauma therapies. These therapies highlight how unprocessed memories show up as disjointed bodily sensations, needing physical actions to bring back a clear narrative (Levine, 2015).

Furthermore, her pain affects her relationships. Adam, her husband, feels emotionally distant and eventually looks for closeness elsewhere. Tashi becomes emotionally unavailable, trapped between cultures, identities, and timelines. Her marriage, once a source of support, reflects her fractured mental state. She struggles to connect with her body, her marriage, or her present because her mind remains stuck in a past moment of blood and silence from years before.

What makes Tashi's case particularly tragic is that her act of repetition, which aims to resolve the past, only strengthens it. She becomes both a victim and a perpetrator: of herself, of her marriage, and of the memories that haunt her. The reasoning behind repetition compulsion does not lead to healing unless it includes conscious confrontation, mourning, and narrative change. Tashi's actions lack these elements. Her trauma is not integrated; it is ritualized.

This analysis complicates any view of her circumcision as a way to resist. She is not pushing back against patriarchy. She is not reclaiming her culture. Instead, she is reenacting a loss so deep that it has defined her entire existence. Her trauma is not just in the past; it shapes her present. Only through further

psychological work, which starts with therapy and ends with her confrontation with M'lissa, can Tashi begin to change this pattern.

In the next section, how Tashi's trauma, once ritualized through FGM, shows up as psychological fragmentation will be analyzed. This includes dissociation, splitting of identity, and physical symptoms that reveal the ongoing impact of unprocessed pain.

3. Dissociation And Fragmentation:

The Split Self in the Aftermath Of Trauma

The aftermath of Tashi's self-inflicted injury is not one of clarity or peace; it is marked by deep psychological turmoil. The choice that was supposed to make her feel "whole" does not bring her fractured identity together; instead, it breaks her even more. After undergoing FGM, Tashi becomes more detached from herself, her body, and her relationships. The divide between "Tashi" and "Evelyn," her African self and her Western self, becomes not just symbolic but also pathological. This divide shows a deep dissociation, a psychological defense mechanism often seen in trauma survivors.

Dissociation, as defined by the DSM-5, is the disruption in the normal integration of consciousness, identity, memory, and perception. Tashi's life after FGM illustrates this disruption. She moves through the world but feels fundamentally absent from it. She experiences vivid nightmares, emotional numbness, intrusive memories, and intense guilt. These are common signs of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), a condition, as trauma experts like Judith Herman (1992) and van der Kolk (2015) claim, especially persistent when trauma is ongoing, silenced, and reinforced by culture.

Tashi's two names, Tashi and Evelyn, are not just simple symbols of her bicultural identity; they represent a deep split within her. Evelyn, her Western identity, reflects a persona created for survival in a different environment. However, this identity never fully connects with her internal Olinkan self, which is rooted in loss and ritual pain. The chapters in *Possessing the Secret of Joy* alternate between "Tashi" and "Evelyn," highlighting the unstable nature of her identity. This narrative choice reflects what trauma psychologist

Onno van der Hart calls structural dissociation. This term describes the division of personality into seemingly separate parts, each holding different memories and emotions. Recent psychological models build on van der Hart's ideas. They stress the shifting between fragmented identity states in trauma survivors (Boyer et al., 2022). This alternation shows up as textual dissociation, which is the splitting of voice and time (Balaev, 2014).

Even Tashi's interaction with her therapist, referred to as the Old Man, is influenced by this fragmentation. She finds it hard to express her experiences. Language often lets her down. Instead, she creates images that are grotesque, symbolic, and violent to convey her inner world. One recurring image is a rooster, inspired by Olinkan rituals, which she obsessively paints on her wall. This visual representation echoes Culbertson's (1995) idea that trauma "erupts in fragments, in body memory, and in art" (p. 169). When narrative fails, the body and imagination take over.

These expressions do not heal by themselves. They are signs of a self-trying to understand pain that exists outside of linear time. As Caruth (1996) suggests, trauma is an "unclaimed experience," a break in time where the past is never fully gone but it keeps reappearing in the present. Tashi shows this state clearly. Her marriage falls apart. Her sense of sexual identity disappears. She is haunted not only by memories but also by a fractured relationship with time, space, and herself. In stories about trauma, this disconnection often acts as a way to show gaps in memory, where unspoken trauma disrupts a smooth narrative (Staniloiu & Markowitsch, 2012).

One of the most noticeable signs of this mental break is how she experiences her body. After going through FGM, Tashi finds her body is no longer a source of pleasure or normalcy but a place of constant disturbance. She says it takes her fifteen minutes to urinate, her periods last ten days, and cramps leave her unable to function for half of each month (Walker, 1992, p. 65). These physical issues are more than just medical; they are signs of trauma etched into her body. As van der Kolk (2015) states, "the body keeps the score." Tashi's pain is ongoing because it is not only physical; it is psychological pain expressed through her body.

This trauma goes beyond the individual and becomes intergenerational. Tashi's son, Benny, is born with severe cognitive disabilities. Walker uses this to show the ripple effect of trauma, illustrating how unhealed wounds manifest across generations. Jung also highlighted this idea in his theory of collective unconscious. He suggested that unprocessed trauma can echo through family and cultural lines. Benny is not just a result of Tashi's suffering; he is a symbol of its haunting legacy. The trauma she couldn't resolve is now present in the child she must raise.

Additionally, the community around Tashi keeps pushing for conformity, further silencing her voice. M'lissa, the tsunga who performed Tashi's circumcision, remains a respected person in Olinkan society, despite her role in the act of mutilation. This cultural conflict deepens Tashi's psychological struggle. In her community's view, she is both a victim and a betrayer who followed tradition but now questions it. Her body shows marks of compliance, while her mind suffers from the pain of dissent.

Thus, Tashi's life after FGM is not one of reconciliation. It is marked by dissociation, psychic numbing, and deep fragmentation. She has not reintegrated herself; she has split even further. Her voice is broken. Her body is broken. Her mind is at war with itself. As long as the shadow remains unintegrated, and as long as the trauma remains unspoken, the possibility of healing slips away from her.

Only in the next stage of her journey, when she confronts M'lissa and symbolically reclaims her story and moral authority, does Tashi begin the long, painful process of reintegration. That act, as the next section will argue, is not just revenge. It is a symbolic confrontation with the shadow and an attempt to restore balance to her mind through a ritual of death and psychic rebirth.

4. Confronting The Shadow:

Death, Rebirth, And The Jungian Arc Of Integration

Tashi's journey reaches its psychological and symbolic peak when she kills M'lissa, the tsunga who performed her circumcision. While this act might seem like revenge or justice at first glance, a Jungian perspective uncovers a deeper pattern; one of death and rebirth, confrontation with the shadow, and

the chance for psychic integration. This is not just a plot twist; it represents the end of a long struggle between silence and voice, repression and awareness, submission and individuality.

Carl Jung defined the “shadow” as the repressed part of our minds. It includes instincts, traumas, desires, and truths we refuse to face. In Jung’s theory, the process of becoming whole requires us to confront and integrate this shadow. If ignored, it can show up in others, often leading to violent outcomes. For Tashi, M’lissa is not just a community elder or cutter. She reflects everything Tashi has pushed down: complicity, submission, guilt, tradition, and the internalized cruelty of patriarchy that she has never been allowed to acknowledge.

M’lissa has her own psychological complexity. At one point, she reflects, “What are we but torturers of children?” (Walker, 1992, p. 226). This admission shows that she is not just a tool of patriarchy; she is also a tragic figure. She has normalized violence because it has been normalized for her. Jung pointed out that the shadow isn’t inherently evil; it’s simply unintegrated. M’lissa is both a villain and a victim, an oppressor and the oppressed. She fully represents the paradox Walker creates between personal responsibility and cultural influence.

When Tashi kills M’lissa, she isn’t just seeking revenge; she performs a psychic ritual. This moment highlights the confrontation with the shadow in its rawest form. It acts out what Jung called a symbolic death, the destruction of an internalized archetype to make room for rebirth. The woman who once accepted cultural violence now takes back her power, not by healing, but by destroying the symbol of her submission. This act reflects what Alister and Hauke (2013) describe as the posthuman individuation process, a confrontation with both personal shadows and the cultural influences that shape identity. Similarly, Singer (2020) argues that individuation requires a conversation between individual trauma and collective psychic inheritance.

However, this act has consequences. Tashi is imprisoned and sentenced to death. In mythological terms, this completes the cycle of death and rebirth. As Joseph Campbell (1949) notes in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, the hero

often must “descend into the underworld” before coming back transformed. Tashi’s prison becomes this underworld, a space where she reflects, paints, writes, and tries to reconnect with the self she abandoned long ago. Her statement, “I am beginning, entirely, to reinhabit the body that I left long ago” (Walker, 1992, p. 110), marks the first conscious step toward integration.

From a trauma studies viewpoint, this return to embodiment is essential. Van der Kolk (2015) argues that recovering from trauma means reclaiming the body and re-establishing ownership over one’s physical and emotional self. Tashi’s act of naming, killing, and re-narrating her trauma through art and reflection fits this process. Her act is violent, but it is also expressive, symbolic, and transformative. It is not a perfect solution, but trauma rarely provides that. Instead, it offers what Cathy Caruth (1996) describes as “the possibility of speaking beyond the wound,” a narrative that arises not despite trauma but through it.

The price of this rebirth is high. Tashi becomes a martyr, not for a cause, but due to a psychological need. Her death sentence represents the cost of emotional wholeness in a world that demands silence. As Gifford (1994) points out, Walker does not let the reader settle for a simple divide between good and evil, or between resistance and complicity. Tashi’s last act is not redemptive in the usual way. It is unclear, painful, and deeply human.

Walker’s choice to give narrative space to both Tashi and M’lissa adds to the complexity of this resolution. By allowing M’lissa to speak, Walker avoids portraying her as completely evil. This reinforces the idea that systems of violence are supported not by monsters, but by people who are flawed, damaged, and desperate for acceptance. The clash is not between a hero and a villain, but between two women shaped and scarred by the same oppressive system. This duality strengthens the Jungian perspective: the shadow is not the Other, but the Self.

In killing M’lissa, Tashi symbolically kills the part of herself that agreed, that stayed quiet, and that thought pain was the cost of belonging. What remains is not joy but understanding. The novel’s title, *Possessing the Secret of Joy*, thus highlights a tragic irony. The “joy” mentioned is not sexual, cultural,

or relational. It is the hard-won realization that to have joy, one must first face one's trauma. Tashi's final act is not one of salvation, but of confrontation.

In the next and final section, this analysis will reflect on the broader implications of Tashi's journey, particularly how trauma, when told through literature, provides not only personal insight but also collective resonance. The literature of trauma, as Walker shows, becomes a means through which unspeakable pain can finally be voiced, if not healed.

Conclusion

Alice Walker's *Possessing the Secret of Joy* is a story that defies simplicity. It does not give its main character, Tashi, a typical redemptive journey. She is not healed, saved, or victorious as resistance stories often suggest. Instead, she is broken, damaged, and ultimately executed. Yet within this destruction is a deep psychological truth: trauma cannot be undone, but it can be faced.

This article has argued that Tashi's choice to undergo Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) as an adult is not an act of feminist defiance or cultural reclamation, but a psychological compulsion rooted in unresolved childhood trauma. Through systematic analysis of the novel's four-part psychological progression, from Dura's death and the birth of silence, through Tashi's compulsive reenactment of trauma, to her subsequent dissociation and fragmentation, and finally to her confrontation with the shadow in the figure of M'lissa, this study has demonstrated how Walker transforms cultural violence into a narrative of psychic wounding and partial recovery.

The findings of this analysis can be summarized as follows: First, Tashi's witnessing of her sister Dura's death during the FGM ritual constitutes a primal wound that is immediately silenced by communal and cultural pressures. This enforced silence prevents mourning and initiates what trauma theory identifies as dissociation, the splitting off of unbearable experience from conscious awareness. Second, Tashi's adult decision to undergo FGM represents a classic instance of Freudian repetition compulsion. Unable to process or integrate her childhood trauma, she unconsciously returns to the scene of wounding in a desperate attempt to gain retrospective mastery. However, as

van der Kolk (1989) demonstrates, such repetitions rarely lead to resolution; instead, they deepen the wound, embedding trauma more firmly in both psyche and soma. Third, the aftermath of Tashi's self-inflicted mutilation manifests as severe psychological fragmentation, evidenced by her split identity (Tashi/Evelyn), psychosomatic symptoms, dissociative states, and recurring nightmares, all hallmarks of complex PTSD as described by contemporary trauma theorists (Herman, 1992; van der Kolk, 2015). Finally, Tashi's killing of M'lissa represents a symbolic confrontation with the shadow in Jungian terms—an attempt to destroy the internalized figure of cultural violence and complicity that has haunted her since childhood.

By framing Tashi's journey through the combined lenses of Freudian repetition compulsion and Jungian individuation, this analysis reveals a more complex psychological portrait than readings focused primarily on cultural resistance or feminist agency. Tashi's actions are neither simply heroic nor simply self-destructive; they represent the desperate strategies of a fragmented psyche attempting to achieve wholeness through the only means available to it. Her division into Tashi and Evelyn, her psychosomatic symptoms, and her eventual killing of M'lissa all indicate a complicated and painful individuation process. Instead of resisting culture, Tashi reenacts it, absorbs it, and ultimately turns against it in an act that is more personal and psychological than political.

This psychological reading, however, does not exist in isolation from the novel's postcolonial context. As Visser (2011) and other postcolonial trauma theorists have argued, trauma theory must be "postcolonialized" to account for culturally specific forms of wounding that occur within histories of colonialism, cultural disruption, and power imbalances. Tashi's trauma unfolds in a world where traditional practices intersect with colonial legacies, where cultural identity becomes a site of contestation, and where the female body serves as the battleground for competing ideologies. The practice of FGM itself cannot be understood outside this postcolonial context, it exists simultaneously as a pre-colonial tradition, a marker of cultural identity in the face of colonial erasure, and a patriarchal practice that predates but is reinforced by colonial

gender hierarchies. Walker's novel thus operates at the intersection of the psychological and the postcolonial, demonstrating how collective historical trauma becomes internalized as individual psychic wounding.

Moreover, Walker's narrative technique itself enacts this intersection. The novel's fragmented, polyvocal structure, shifting between Tashi, her therapists, her husband Adam, and other characters, mirrors both the breakdown of traumatic memory and the postcolonial condition of multiple, competing narratives. As Bekers (2010) notes in her analysis of FGM in African and African American literature, Walker's extensive attention to "physical and psychological devastation" represents a significant shift in how this practice has been literarily represented, moving from euphemistic language to direct confrontation with bodily and psychic violence. The novel's refusal of linear narrative progression parallels the non-linear temporality of trauma, where past wounds continually intrude into the present, disrupting any possibility of straightforward healing or resolution.

According to Dori Laub (1992), trauma survivors often need someone to listen to them as they process their experiences. They need a witness who can understand and help put their stories into words. Literature, particularly trauma fiction, becomes that witness. It keeps what cannot be voiced. It changes memory into meaning, pain into pattern, and silence into structure. Walker's novel performs this witnessing function not only for Tashi but for the millions of women and girls who have undergone FGM. By giving literary form to experiences that are often culturally silenced or dismissed, Walker creates what Caruth (1996) calls a "speaking beyond the wound", a narrative that emerges not despite trauma but through it.

The tragic irony of *Possessing the Secret of Joy* is that the "secret" is not joy itself; it is the understanding that joy requires facing what destroys it. For Tashi, that confrontation costs her everything—her body, her sanity, her freedom, and ultimately her life. However, in telling her story, Walker preserves what Tashi cannot: the language of suffering, the truth of trauma, and the delicate possibility of healing. The novel's final image, Tashi's supporters holding up the banner "RESISTANCE IS THE SECRET OF JOY!" as she faces

execution, encapsulates this paradox. Resistance, in this context, is not triumphant or liberatory in any conventional sense. It is the painful, costly act of refusing silence, of bearing witness to one's own suffering, and of confronting the shadow even when that confrontation leads to death rather than redemption.

In a world where many cultural practices still hide violence behind tradition, Walker's novel provides a clear look at the mental toll of that violence. Through Tashi, she demonstrates that trauma, when left unspoken, festers, and that its repetition is not a mystery but a consequence of unresolved psychic wounding. The process of healing, as literature like this shows, starts not with resolution but with recognition. Sometimes, sharing the story is the only resistance people have. As Luckhurst (2021) and Balaev (2014) point out, trauma literature is always changing, serving as a living record of emotional and social memory. Its goal is not to heal but to make pain understandable.

Walker's novel is not just about Tashi. It speaks for every survivor who has carried pain in silence, every person whose body remembers what the mind tried to forget. It explores how trauma becomes woven into the fabric of identity, relationships, rituals, and generations. Importantly, it addresses the possibility, difficult but real, of facing that trauma and giving it form, even if such confrontation does not lead to conventional healing or happy endings. By integrating psychoanalytic trauma theory, Jungian psychology, and postcolonial awareness, this study has sought to honor the complexity of Walker's achievement: a novel that refuses easy answers, that presents trauma as both psychological wound and cultural legacy, and that insists on the necessity of speaking the unspeakable even when speech offers no salvation.

Ultimately, *Possessing the Secret of Joy* reveals that the circle of pain, the compulsion to repeat, the fragmentation of self, the desperate confrontation with internalized violence, becomes both prison and path. It is a confusing and painful journey where suffering transforms into self-awareness, where silence opens up the chance for meaning, and where facing the shadow, however imperfectly, represents the only available form of psychic integration. In this sense, Walker's novel makes a significant contribution to both trauma studies

and postcolonial literary criticism, demonstrating how individual psychological processes and collective cultural histories intersect in the wounded body and fragmented psyche of the traumatized subject.

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Extended Abstract

Alice Walker's *Possessing the Secret of Joy* (1992) is one of the most complex studies of trauma, silence, and memory in postcolonial women's writing. Instead of providing a redemptive or straightforward story of empowerment, the novel presents trauma as a recurring and physical experience that shapes the protagonist's entire sense of identity. This extended abstract outlines the main argument and theoretical framework of the paper titled "The Circle of Pain: Repetition and Redemption in Alice Walker's *Possessing the Secret of Joy*." The study examines Walker's novel through the combined viewpoints of trauma theory, psychoanalysis, and Jungian psychology. It argues that the protagonist's self-destructive cycle of violence is not an act of empowerment but a psychological way of coping and making sense of her experiences.

The analysis starts with Sigmund Freud's idea of repetition compulsion, first introduced in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920). This concept suggests that people are unconsciously driven to reenact traumatic experiences as a way to gain control over what once made them feel powerless. In Walker's novel, Tashi chooses to undergo Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) as an adult after seeing her sister die during the same ritual in childhood. This choice is a powerful example of that compulsion. Rather than showing cultural loyalty or feminist strength, her decision arises from the lingering effects of unresolved trauma. By reliving her sister's pain, Tashi seeks to regain a sense of control and stability over an event that has deeply fractured her identity. However, as trauma theorists like Caruth (1996) and van der Kolk (2015) have pointed out, repetition seldom leads to mastery. Instead, it deepens the wound, embedding it further into both mind and body.

To shed light on the psychological aspects of this repetition, the study uses C.G. Jung's theory of individuation and the shadow archetype. In Jung's view, the shadow includes the repressed and denied parts of the mind that individuals must face to achieve psychic wholeness. This paper argues that Tashi's violent encounter with M'lissa, the tsunga who performed her circumcision, serves as a symbolic confrontation with her own shadow. M'lissa represents the internalized cruelty of tradition and the guilt that Tashi has hidden for a long time. Therefore, killing her becomes a

ritualized effort at self-integration, not just revenge. Through this act, Tashi brings to the surface her inner struggle, briefly uniting the parts of herself that have been split between silence and speech, submission and rebellion, life and death.

The paper also places Walker's narrative structure within the wider context of literary trauma theory, highlighting how form and psychology reflect each other. The novel's fragmented, multi-voiced structure that switches among Tashi, her therapist, and other secondary characters reflects the uneven time and disconnection common in traumatic memory. Drawing on Balaev's (2023) rethinking of trauma fiction and Luckhurst's (2021) study of embodied narrative, the paper suggests that Walker's narrative does not just show trauma; it performs it. Through its movement between voices, time periods, and memory types, the text captures the instability of a traumatized mind trying to express what resists language.

Recent findings in trauma research support this interpretation. Lanius and Frewen (2021) show that recalling trauma is mainly a sensory and bodily experience, not just a verbal one. This idea helps explain why Tashi's silence is not only cultural but also rooted in neurobiology: her inability to speak reflects her body's effort to handle overwhelming emotions. The ongoing physical pain that follows her circumcision such as long-lasting menstruation, difficulties urinating, and chronic cramps represents the body's response to trauma, illustrating what van der Kolk (2015) refers to as "the body keeping the score."

From a structural and thematic angle, the novel fits into what this paper calls a "circle of pain." Each time Tashi tries to move past her trauma, she ends up back where she started. This shows the complex relationship between suffering and self-awareness. The cycle of pain becomes both her prison and her only way to navigate her mind. In this circle, Walker denies the idea of complete redemption: the protagonist neither heals nor finds freedom but gains a painful understanding of what it means to bear her suffering. In this way, *Possessing the Secret of Joy* turns trauma into a spiritual and psychological process of facing reality rather than fleeing from it.

The conclusion of the study shows how the novel contributes to trauma studies and psychoanalytic literary criticism. By combining Freudian repetition with Jungian individuation, Walker's narrative reveals that trauma cannot be fixed through suppression, silence, or revenge. It must be witnessed and integrated. The story's tragic arc, ending with Tashi's imprisonment and death sentence, highlights the cost of facing one's shadow in societies that value conformity and silence. Yet, in a twist, Tashi's final act of self-awareness marks the start of her psychic integration. Her

statement, "I am beginning to reinhabit the body I left long ago," captures Walker's main point: redemption comes not from denying pain but from acknowledging it as part of oneself.

This paper ultimately views *Possessing the Secret of Joy* as a literary exploration of trauma, showing how bodily suffering, silence, and repetition connect in the long journey of psychological change. Walker's novel blurs the lines between the personal and the collective, the body and the soul, turning individual trauma into a reflection of cultural and intergenerational wounds. By examining Tashi's journey through trauma theory and Jungian psychology, this study redefines redemption not as a way to rise above, but as the difficult ability to face one's shadow and to express, even in broken ways, the pain that won't go away.

Keywords: Trauma, Repetition Compulsion, Individuation, Shadow Archetype, Somatic Memory, Alice Walker, Dissociation, Jungian Psychology.

Genişletilmiş Özet

Alice Walker'ın *Possessing the Secret of Joy* (1992) adlı romanı postkolonyal kadın yazınındaki en karmaşık travma, sessizlik ve hafıza çalışmalarından biridir. Roman, kurtarıcı ya da doğrudan bir güçlenme hikâyesi sunmak yerine, travmayı kahramanın tüm kimlik duygusunu şekillendiren, tekrar eden ve fiziksel bir deneyim olarak sunar. Bu genişletilmiş özet, "Acı Çemberi" başlıklı makalenin ana argümanını ve teorik çerçevesini özetlemektedir: Alice Walker'ın *Possessing the Secret of Joy* Romanında Tekrar ve Kefaret" başlıklı makalenin ana argümanını ve teorik çerçevesini özetlemektedir. Çalışma, Walker'ın romanını travma teorisi, psikanaliz ve Jung psikolojisinin birleşik bakış açılarıyla incelemektedir. Kahramanın kendine zarar veren şiddet döngüsünün bir güçlenme eylemi değil, başa çıkmanın ve deneyimlerini anlamlandırmanın psikolojik bir yolu olduğunu savunuyor.

Analiz, Sigmund Freud'un ilk kez *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920) kitabında ortaya koyduğu tekrarlama dürtüsü fikriyle başlar. Bu kavram, insanların bir zamanlar kendilerini güçsüz hissetmelerine neden olan şey üzerinde kontrol sahibi olmanın bir yolu olarak travmatik deneyimleri bilinçsizce yeniden canlandırmaya yönlendirildiklerini öne sürmektedir. Walker'ın romanında Tashi, çocukluğunda kız kardeşinin aynı ritüel sırasında öldüğünü gördükten sonra bir yetişkin olarak Kadın Sünneti (K sünneti) yaptırmayı seçiyor. Bu seçim, bu zorlamanın güçlü bir örneğidir. Bu karar, kültürel sadakat ya da feminist güç gösterisinden ziyade, çözülmemiş travmanın kalıcı etkilerinden kaynaklanıyor. Tashi, kız kardeşinin acısını yeniden yaşayarak, kimliğini derinden parçalayan bir olay üzerinde kontrol ve istikrar duygusunu yeniden

kazanmaya çalışıyor. Ancak Caruth (1996) ve van der Kolk (2015) gibi travma teorisyenlerinin de belirttiği gibi, tekrarlama nadiren ustalaşmaya yol açar. Bunun yerine, yarayı derinleştirerek hem zihne hem de bedene daha fazla gömülmesine neden olur.

Bu tekrarın psikolojik yönlerine ışık tutmak için çalışmada C.G. Jung'un bireyleşme teorisi ve gölge arketipi kullanılmıştır. Jung'a göre gölge, bireylerin psişik bütünlüğe ulaşmak için yüzleşmeleri gereken, zihnin bastırılmış ve inkâr edilmiş kısımlarını içerir. Bu makale, Tashi'nin sünnetini gerçekleştiren tsunga M'lissa ile şiddetli karşılaşmasının, kendi gölgesiyle sembolik bir yüzleşme işlevi gördüğünü savunmaktadır. M'lissa, geleneğin içselleştirilmiş acımasızlığını ve Tashi'nin uzun süredir sakladığı suçluluk duygusunu temsil etmektedir. Bu nedenle, onu öldürmek sadece intikam değil, ritüelleştirilmiş bir kendini bütünlleştirme çabası hâline gelir. Tashi bu eylemle içsel mücadelesini yüzeye çıkarır, sessizlik ve konuşma, boyun eğme ve isyan, yaşam ve ölüm arasında bölünmüş parçalarını kısaca birleştirir.

Makale ayrıca Walker'ın anlatı yapısını edebî travma teorisinin daha geniş bağlamına yerleştirerek biçim ve psikolojinin birbirini nasıl yansıttığını vurguluyor. Romanın Tashi, terapisti ve diğer ikincil karakterler arasında geçiş yapan parçalı, çok sesli yapısı, travmatik hafızada yaygın olan eşitsiz zaman ve kopukluğu yansıtmaktadır. Balaev'in (2023) travma kurgusunu yeniden düşünmesinden ve Luckhurst'ün (2021) bedenlenmiş anlatı çalışmasından yola çıkan bu makale, Walker'ın anlatısının travmayı sadece göstermediğini, onu icra ettiğini öne sürüyor. Metin, sesler, zaman dilimleri ve hafıza türleri arasındaki hareketiyle, dile direnen şeyleri ifade etmeye çalışan travmatize bir zihnin istikrarsızlığını yakalıyor.

Travma araştırmalarındaki son bulgular bu yorumu desteklemektedir. Lanius ve Frewen (2021) travmayı hatırlamanın sadece sözel değil, esas olarak duygusal ve bedensel bir deneyim olduğunu göstermektedir. Bu fikir, Tashi'nin sessizliğinin neden sadece kültürel değil, aynı zamanda nörobiyolojiye de dayandığını açıklamaya yardımcı oluyor: Konuşamaması, bedeninin bunaltıcı duygularla başa çıkma çabasını yansıtır. Sünnetinin ardından uzun süren regl kanamaları, idrar yapma güçlükleri ve kronik kramplar gibi devam eden fiziksel acılar, van der Kolk'un (2015) "bedenin skoru tutması" olarak adlandırdığı durumu göstererek bedenin travmaya verdiği tepkiyi temsil ediyor.

Yapısal ve tematik açıdan roman, bu makalenin "acı çemberi" olarak adlandırdığı şeye uyuyor. Tashi travmasını aşmaya çalıştığı her seferinde, başladığı yere geri dönüyor. Bu, acı çekme ve öz farkındalık arasındaki karmaşık ilişkiyi göstermektedir. Acı döngüsü Tashi'nin hem hapishanesi hem de zihnini yönlendirmek için tek yolu

hâline gelir. Bu döngüde Walker, tam bir kurtuluş fikrini reddeder: kahraman ne iyileşir ne de özgürlüğe kavuşur, ancak acılarına katlanmanın ne anlama geldiğine dair acı verici bir anlayış kazanır. Bu şekilde, *Possessing the Secret of Joy*, travmayı gerçeklikten kaçmak yerine onunla yüzleşmenin ruhsal ve psikolojik bir sürecine dönüştürüyor.

Çalışmanın sonuç bölümü, romanın travma çalışmalarına ve psikanalitik edebiyat eleştirisine nasıl katkıda bulunduğunu göstermektedir. Freudyen tekrarı Jungcu bireyleşme ile birleştiren Walker'ın anlatısı, travmanın bastırma, sessizlik veya intikam yoluyla düzeltilemeyeceğini ortaya koyuyor. Travmaya tanık olunmalı ve onunla bütünleşmelidir. Tashi'nin hapsedilmesi ve ölüm cezasına çarptırılmasıyla sona eren hikâyenin trajik akışı, uyum ve sessizliğe değer veren toplumlarda kişinin gölgesiyle yüzleşmesinin bedelini vurguluyor. Yine de Tashi'nin son öz farkındalık eylemi, psikik bütünleşmesinin başlangıcına işaret ediyor. "Uzun zaman önce terk ettiğim bedeni yeniden yaşamaya başlıyorum" ifadesi Walker'ın ana fikrini ortaya koyuyor: Kurtuluş acıyı inkâr etmekten değil, onu kendi parçası olarak kabul etmekten geçiyor.

Bu makale nihayetinde *Possessing the Secret of Joy* eserini travmanın edebî bir keşfi olarak görmekte ve bedensel acı, sessizlik ve tekrarın psikolojik değişimin uzun yolculuğunda nasıl birleştiğini göstermektedir. Walker'ın romanı kişisel ve kolektif olan, beden ve ruh arasındaki çizgileri bulanıklaştırarak bireysel travmayı kültürel ve nesiller arası yaraların bir yansımasına dönüştürüyor. Tashi'nin yolculuğunu travma teorisi ve Jung psikolojisi üzerinden inceleyen bu çalışma, kurtuluşu yükselmenin bir yolu olarak değil, kişinin gölgesiyle yüzleşmesi ve kırık dökük yollarla da olsa geçmeyen acısını ifade edebilmesi olarak yeniden tanımlıyor.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Travma, Yinemele saplantısı, Bireyleşme, Bedensel bellek, Dissosiyasyon, Alice Walker, Jungcu psikoloji.

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