

**Wounds to Words: Trauma and Transformation in Salman  
Rushdie's *Knife***

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**Abstract**

**Background:** Salman Rushdie's memoir *Knife: Meditations After an Attempted Murder* explores how writing serves as a therapeutic tool for the author following a physical attack by "A" in New York while he was preparing to provide a public speech.

**Methodology:** This study employs a qualitative analysis of the memoir, primarily drawing on Cathy Caruth's trauma theory, with supporting details from other theorists. Applying the theory, this study reconnoiters the function of writing to heal the person who has bodily and mental illness.

**Findings:** The textual analysis that applies trauma theory suggests that reading and writing can help erase corporeal and psychological trauma for individuals. The narrator, who is also the speaker, reconciles mental trauma by using memoir writing as a therapeutic tool. This is why writing serves to maximize joy and happiness while minimizing suffering.

**Conclusion:** Thus, this study deduces that writing functions as a source of solace for traumatic mindset. The longing for life intensifies as the writer begins to write and elaborate on the shared imaginary conversation with the attacker.

**Novelty:** Narrative and conversational words are the key elements that help people feel psychologically refreshed, allowing them to forget the terror of physical assaults or emotional underestimations. The imaginative dialogue erases the speaker's hatred towards the attacker, which in turn mentally heals him. Therefore, memoir writing is a form of therapy that energizes materially and heals spiritually.

**Keywords:** Narrative healing, trauma, wound, writing therapy

## **Introduction**

Salman Rushdie's memoir *Knife* is divided into two parts: The Angel of Death and The Angel of Life, which discuss the physical assault on Rushdie, its consequences, and the healing process achieved through narration and writing. This study argues that words function as a healing mediator for the bodily, inner, and emotional well-being of physically and psychologically wounded people. Salman Rushdie's life indicates the epitome of trauma recovery through writing that encompasses the real and imaginary dialogues to console psychological matters in his life.

Salman Rushdie's *Knife* describes the incident in which he was nearly killed by a young man, exploring the resulting trauma through the lens of the author's own lived experience. The incident that took place in New York had a pervasive impact on his surroundings at the time. He was attacked on August 12, 2022, at the amphitheater in Chautauqua. He is taken to the hospital immediately, and fortunately, he is saved. So, the book encompasses the stories of these incidents during the attack, the moment in the hospital, and after he came back from it. His entire experience is considered an account of both the trauma he endured and the process of healing from it. The book was published in 2024 as a memoir that articulates the traumatic events of a stabbing that left him with severe injuries and marked the culmination of a decades-long fatwa (assassination) by Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, an Iranian leader, after the publication of *The Satanic Verses* by Salman.

The unexpected violent attack for the murder "on August 22, 2022, on a sunny Friday" (Rushdie, 2024, p. 3) hospitalized Rushdie for a long time. After his long stay, which began on a ventilator and continued in the intensive care unit, he was shocked to discover the damage to his right eye upon gaining consciousness during his partial recovery. The first part of the memoir digs into the way the attacker planned to take the life of Rushdie, stabbing him multiple times in the body. As a result, he has to go for multiple surgeries for partial recovery. He receives care from his wife, Rachel Eliza Griffiths, hereafter Rachel. The second part of the memoir hints at the process of recovery, resistance, and a return to the normal phase of life. To revisit the normal phase of life, writing a memoir acts as a therapy for inner healing.

## **Review of Literature**

Rushdie's *Knife* presents the significance of writing as a mechanism for healing physical and psychological trauma. Current studies on the memoir assert the value of the novel from diverse perspectives, ranging from autobiography to physical assault. Trauma is not only a deeply destructive force rather once can be reframed and endured through the act of narratives. Nadim and Hussain mention that "Rushdie demonstrates not only the devastating impact of trauma but also the ways in which stories themselves—with all their complexities and imperfections—serve as vehicles for understanding and coping with suffering" (p.2). Rushdie's narrative is the account of the trauma that shares his attacked incident. Within that, the layered structures, contradictions, and even flaws, mirror the fragmented experience of trauma itself. By weaving personal pain into narrative form, Rushdie both acknowledges the devastation of violence and transform it into a medium of survival and meaning making.

Rahaman (2013) talks about the influences of Rushdie's life events, including the fatal accidents and memory. These affected his writing career. Rahaman (2013) further emphasizes that Rushdie is "anti-fundamentalist, anti-terrorist, opposed to societal norms regarding body image, and a one-man army fighting against all institutions that promote anti-secularism and undermine humanism." Being anti-fundamentalist Rushdie faced the consequences and attacked in the New York. Which becomes the fatal memories as well as the captures of the trauma. In that way Rahman details the literary and critical writing career of Rushdie. Banerjee (2020) asserts the value of Salman Rushdie for the evolution of Indian literature in English, along with other writers who contributed to the evolution of a new genre of study that is science fiction. Writing these books on Indian literature in English helped popularize the genre due to the importance of original English writing over translation. His contribution in non-fiction such as *MidNight's Children* and *The Satanic Verses* shows the significance of Indian Writer in the English language as non-fiction. The *Satanic Verses* deconstruct the idea and theme of the traditional pattern of theme where mythical or the character from the Islam is characterize in innovative way. And such creative adaptation is not accepted by the Islamic society. As a result, he was asked to killed. After such order, he was in the exile and that exile was also the memoir where he was isolated as well as his isolation as boost into the healing process through his writing.

Basu (2024) analyzes the memoir *Knife*, focusing on its autobiographical elements and stating that it recounts the writer's harrowing experience of being attacked with multiple stabs while preparing to deliver a public speech. The *Knife* is the memoir that reflects the story of the writer and his experience. So, he has presented it as the autobiographical notion. That autobiographical account deliver his incident of the pre-condition, on the spot of the incident and post-condition after the attack. At one point, Rushdie express his traumatic experiences in the hospital as well as in the trauma center where he was not able to accept to the incident.

In the same way, critics have asserted the power of nature to support the curing of the traumatic mindset of the people. Pokharel (2024) says that nature heals traumatic psychology: "Natural beings have healing power for the displaced minds of modern people. Therefore, people should

either visit natural settings or transform urban areas into green spaces to heal their traumatic psychology (p.42). The bond between nature and human beings generates solace.

Along with the value of nature, Vedic mantras are the sources of psychic healing for the common people. Pokharel (2024) elaborates on the importance of the Vedic mantras: “The Vedas emphasize a symbiotic bond between nature and humanity, creating a synergistic world. A peaceful mind, as suggested by the Vedic mantras, can be achieved by valuing and integrating natural beings and objects into everyday life” (p.72). The Vedic mantras act as the catalyst to generate a symbiotic relationship between the two and heal trauma.

Subedi and Saxena (2024) highlight the thematic aspects of the writing. The memoir *Knife* (2024) “explores the psychological and thematic dimensions of trauma and resilience” (p. 3693). The wound and affected eye from the incident recalls trauma. The injuries and scars in the body are the witnessed of the trauma which has bodily as well as psychological long-term impact. As a result, Rushdie hunted with the incident. However, the long-term treatment of the hospital begins his physical wound as well as emotional. Moreover, the account of the incident begins to heal once he starts to write and jotted down incident. They further point out that “themes such as personal identity, cultural heritage, and the impact of historical events intertwine with the characters’ journeys of trauma and resilience” (p. 3693). Soni and Nadkarni (2025) analyze narrative aspects of the two sections of the memoir, saying that the first section deals with the immediate situations after the physical assault, and the second section captures the process of healing and adopting the life process. They prioritize the thematic and chronological narrative aspect of the novel.

Researchers have begun to explore the memoir in terms of its autobiographical elements, themes of violence, ideological marginalization, narrative evolution, and the responses to the attack as well as the subsequent healing process. Moreover, recent critical assertions value the memoir as a depiction of physical trauma, violence, and ideological consequences. However, this study asserts that the memoir is significant because it highlights the value of writing, as it has a therapeutic quality. However, the significance of this memoir rests on the power that the writing shows to heal the person bodily, mentally, and emotionally.

## **Research Methodology**

### **Research Design**

This research employs a qualitative approach to apply trauma theory in analyzing Salman Rushdie's text, *Knife*. Trauma theory is the tool, and the memoir is the basis for the analysis. The textual evidences are the proofs to justify the argument that writing works for the physical, psychological, and emotional well-being.

### **Theoretical Framework: Trauma Theory**

Trauma theory investigates and interprets the psychological impact of the events that trigger the human mind and thinking. Traumatic memories trigger the human mindset, repeatedly haunting individuals and making them spiritually weak. Trauma theory asserts the ways of the ordeal and the possibilities of healing the trauma.

Caruth is one of the precursors to trauma theory, which addresses the impact of the wound on the mind. In the same line of thought, Caruth (1996) elaborates, “the concept of trauma [is] that

the term ‘trauma is understood as a wound inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind’ (p.3). Trauma is more psychological than physical since a physical wound can be healed. The scars can be developed into new skin and later on it recovers in the body, whereas the wound that is in the mind is too difficult to heal, or even if it is healed, then it occurs time to time. In the case of Rushdie as well, the incident is recalled time to time again, which made him write his experience.

She further points out that “It is always the story of a wound that cries out to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available” (p. 4). The marks in the body are a witness to reality and narrate the story of an accident or incident. Some of the wounds may heal by the time, and some of the scars do not disappear. The scars which not disappeared haunt time to time about the incident, which is the recalling of the traumatic state. In the case of the writer, he lost one eye in the incident, which is unbearable pain as well and it cannot be healed over time. It is not a repairable wound. So, such stories are the testimony of the incident.

Human life encounters certain intense events that cause shock and heighten trauma. Berger (1997) references Freud to discuss the significance of trauma: “Freud held that an overpowering event, unacceptable to consciousness, returns in the form of somatic symptoms” (p. 570). The effect of trauma is the visibility of bodily changes in human beings.

The victims of trauma fail to recover because the impact is less physical and more emotional, and it is indiscernible. Willis (2002) references Shakespeare and expands on the theory, stating, “Trauma theorists have called attention to the disturbing ways in which victims can become perpetrators as they attempt to cope with profound threats to self-concept and with overwhelming emotions” (p. 25). In the same way, Arruti (2007) explains, drawing the evidence from Cathy Caruth: “Temporality is one of the cornerstones of trauma theory as established by Cathy Caruth” (p.3). A on-the-spot incident creates shock in the victim at the moment, and it creates blurred pictures or memories of the incident within the victim. It leads them to a situation half-consciousness and half-unconsciousness. As a result, the victim is not sure about their experience, observation, or even their testimony. So, in that sense, temporality is one of the cornerstones of trauma theory. Events and their consequences are the focus of the study of trauma theory.

Trauma disconnects a person from social connectivity. Balaev (2008) particularizes the function of trauma writing: “The trauma novel demonstrates how a traumatic event disrupts attachments between self and others by challenging fundamental assumptions about moral laws and social relationships that are themselves connected to specific environments” (pp. 149-150). Social and moral parameters disrupt the connectivity, and that in turn creates trauma.

Suleiman (2008) articulates that extreme stress generates multiple personal reactions due to the extreme pressure on the brain: “A more neurologically based definition would be that a traumatic event—or traumatic stressor—produces an excess of external stimuli and a corresponding excess of excitation to the brain” (p.276). Trauma studies the impact on the brain due to certain events.

Eyerman (2013) deals with “the origin of the word trauma—that the word trauma stems from the ancient Greek word” (p. 42). Trauma is more psychological and less physical for him. Therefore, trauma shoots from the shock.

Schoenfelder (2013) asserts that trauma ranges from psychological aspects to cultural points: “Any attempt to define and theorize trauma involves a struggle to make sense of the confusing array of current conceptualizations of trauma, ranging from PTSD to cultural trauma” (p.27). He attempts to erase the confusion about trauma theory, elaborating on the wide-ranging meaning of trauma. Pederson (2014) elaborates on the way trauma damages the function of the brain: “In trauma, the horrific moment arrives with such world-shattering force that it scrambles the brain’s function” (p.335). Trauma that shatters brain function distorts the cohesion of human mindset.

Thus, trauma theory connects memory, the brain, and the impact of events on human psychology. This impact, in turn, contributes to sociopsychological issues that unknowingly damage brain nerves and create a life filled with tension. There are several ways to settle down the trauma: nature walks and exposure to the Vedic texts. However, this study claims that trauma healing is possible through narrative reading and narrative writing.

## **Analysis and Interpretation**

### **Physical Assault and Narrative Healing in Rushdie’s Knife**

Narrative techniques, recalling the traumatic physical attack and the haunted memory of a panicked physical situation, are evidence of the trauma in Salman Rushdie’s memoir, *Knife*. To eliminate the imprinted psychological pain, he uses writing as a healing negotiator. The uneven narratives are signs of trauma for the writer. Due to the physical assault and emotional trauma, his narrative does not move in chronological order. He frequently experiences hallucinatory flashbacks of the events he encountered. To help him cope with the events, he uses the flashback technique as a focal point. The most significant aspect of his experience is the loss of his right eye and the nerve damage he sustained during the assault. During the medication process, he faced multiple physical surgeries. As a result of this, he has nightmares, fear, and emotional flashbacks to reexperience the same event.

The physical attack left Salman in an unconscious state of life. In *The Knife*, Salman was initially shocked when he was attacked because it happened suddenly and unexpectedly. He was caught between understanding and misunderstanding the situation. The reality is in front of him, but he is unable to recognize or believe it. Rushdie (2024) describes, “I never saw the knife, or at least I have no memory of it” (p.7). Rushdie faced a moment of shock when he failed to recognize the knife as a weapon. The word “never” means that reality doesn’t exist, and if it did, it was erased. Then he reflects on his memory, stating, “Not the future. The past recurs, attempting to pull me back into the past (p. 11). The haunting of the mind by past events through imaginative language is an important aspect of trauma. Furthermore, Rushdie used the term ‘invisible weapon’ to describe a weapon that exists in reality; however, when the body and mind experience shock, what is visible becomes invisible. It indicates the state of being unconscious and, at the same time, a bit conscious. The new and uncertain force that the body encounters causes it to be divided into two different levels: physical pain and hallucinations.



Either it provides protection or goes into shock. When the body encounters any new circumstance—whether physical, emotional, or mental—it first tries to protect itself, and if it cannot, it then enters the stage of shock. Shock is a stage that results from either the reality of the situation or the incident itself. It encompasses both conscious and unconscious experiences at that moment. Reality becomes unclear because the individual cannot recall the event or its details.

The power of imagination dissolves human cognitive order, as Rushdie (2024) asserts, “Reality dissolves and is replaced by the incomprehensible” (p.12). The knife reveals the body as a site where trauma is confronted and recovery is facilitated. Physically, he was sustained with more than ten stab wounds and severed injuries in his arm that affected his shoulder and certain body parts, and, eventually, he was left with one eye. His optic nerve is damaged. The various effects on his body serve as metaphors for both the bodily and deeper psychological wounds that cause trauma. The memory of the incident indicates that he was affected both physically and psychologically. Rushdie (2024) explains, “I remember lying on the floor watching the pool of my blood spreading outward from my body. That’s a lot of blood, I thought” (p.15). Caruth (1996) elaborates on the consequences of bodily assault, stating that while violent events have a certain nature, trauma itself resists simple comprehension (p. 6). Trauma reaches the depths of the implications of such violent activities. His testimony indicates that when he was attacked, he was able to recognize his context, which actually appeared in front of his eyes. Later on, he represents the incident and its associated images as traumatic ones. He recalls the images of the blood, the pool of blood, and the image of his lying body on the floor.

Denial is the safety net for the first reaction when trauma occurs. A person’s memory is pushed to the denial stage due to a traumatic incident they have faced in their life. Since denial is the phase of acceptance of one’s own created truth rather than the acceptance of reality. In such a situation, a person either refuses to accept what happened or becomes caught in a struggle between remembering and forgetting. Rushdie (2024) mentions, “In my memory, strangely, there’s no record of pain. Maybe shock and bewilderment overpower the mind’s agony” (p.17). In the same line of thought, Caruth (1996) asserts that “such events leave endless impact on life” (p. 7). When the incident occurred, the sense of shock was overwhelming, leading Rushdie to initially deny what had happened. Therefore, even he forgets the testimonies. At some point after the attack, the writer was unable to remember what happened. His body becomes numb, and he has no pain. The absence of pain in the body indicates a lack of awareness of the present state, which signifies trauma affecting both physical and psychological aspects. Consequently, this shock intensified the experience of agony.

Knife reveals the temporal disjunction that expresses the way traumatic experiences disrupt linear narrative time and create a lag or delay in the event. The shifts of the immediate present of his incident, his recovery, and reflection on those memories create an everlasting effect where past and present traumas illuminate each other. Rushdie (2024) recalls and asserts the function of imagination: “The imagination sometimes works in ways that even the imagining mind can fail to understand” (p. 22). The statement ‘imagining mind can fail to understand’ refers to the conflict of the past and present affecting the thinking capacity of the mind. Most

of the time, the imagination lingers between the past and present, shifting into both linear and non-linear thought processes. It blocks the conventional narrative method of storytelling.

The sense of loss and missing bodily parts of one's body can lead a person to a state of instability. Such a moment creates the notion of unbearable pain and numbness on both emotional and psychological levels. Rushdie (2024) states, "The eye was lost. The optic nerve had been damaged, and that was that. He didn't take me, the A., but he got my eye" (p.68). This is the point of trauma; Eyerman (2013) asserts the impact of the wounds: "The wounds that incur are collective and social as much as they are individual" (p.43). During the recovery process, he came to know that his eye was lost due to damage to the optic nerve. He indicates that he was nearly killed by the assailant, but fortunately, only his eye was lost. This story illustrates the contrast between his condition before and after the incident: he was completely sound, safe, and healthy prior to the accident, but afterward, his physical and psychological health deteriorated. It has a certain change. Furthermore, Rushdie (2024) adds, "I still haven't come to terms with the loss. It's difficult physically; to be unable to see a whole quadrant of one's normal field of vision is difficult to handle" (p.68). The incident takes time to process. During that time, it is difficult to find the right words or to clearly define the context of the loss. It is as if the victim is aware of the loss but is unable to articulate it clearly. The materially unbearable loss causes an unbearable effect on the mind and soul as well.

The treatment itself is a recovery from the trauma, but in the case of Rushdie, the love and affection in literary society symbolize the notion of healing that supports him in shaping his life by activating his creative faculty. Rushdie (2024) mentions that love tied with the imaginative faculty cures him: "I thought again that love was a real force, a healing force" (p.71). He believes that the love he has received during the moment of crisis from his loved ones, close ones, and known and unknown people will support him in coming out of the pain. Ultimately, compassion, care, and love positively influence human psychology and emotions, particularly when a person is experiencing pain. It serves as a healing tool during times of suffering.

Rehab serves as a source of peace and normalization for physical ailments while also addressing psychological aspects. This process restores life to a normal situation, which in turn fosters his love for words. Rehab centers help restore life to its pre-incident state after addiction or change. Simply put, rehab centers serve as a platform to heal the physical and psychological wounds, as well as the stress and trauma caused by any incident. Rushdie (2024) mentions, "There is the rehab of the body, but there is also the rehab of the mind and spirit" (p.88). When there are changes to the regular schedule or physical state of the body, both the body and mind may feel trapped, as if they are in a cage. The cage captures the senses and controls reality, creating a state of confusion. In the novel, the writer experienced rehab in both literal and metaphorical ways. The literal sense refers to A's attack, which wounds, scars, and causes pain and agony; this experience represents the rehab that confines the body for a certain period. Even that moment was more controlling and suffocating to the writer. Later on, to heal the physical wound and its mental imprint, the writer stays at the rehab center. His treatment goes



on in the usual way. These two steps represent the rehabilitation process and illustrate the binary relationship between its two concepts.

Thus, partial body damage due to the multiple stabs on his body caused right eye blindness for Salman Rushdie. He did, however, have physical challenges, including nerve damage and hand malfunctions. This physical malfunction becomes a source of inspiration to plunge into creative writing. He remained silent for a long time while he worked through his imagination. The silence activated his imagination, which in turn generated a way for transformation. The physical wounds motivated him to heal them through words. Therefore, writing influences psychological transformation.

### **Words Heal Wounds in Rushdie's *Knife***

Rushdie uses writing to cure people suffering from traumatic life experiences. The writer is the typical example of the recovery of trauma through creative writing and imagination. When writing helps a person process their thoughts, it serves as a form of therapy that allows the writer to engage in an imaginative confrontation with the attacker in his memoir. He revisits the traumatic experiences psychologically, asserting the significance of his writing.

The traumatic incidents haunt us in the phase of recovery, but writing heals the trauma. Whenever a person recalls the event or fails to recall it, the memory often haunts them. On the one hand, such memory is difficult to grasp. On the other hand, it is difficult to forget. Therefore, it lingers somewhere in between memories. Rushdie (2024) narrates the shift to psychological happiness through healing: "I came in here on a stretcher, and I am leaving on my own two feet" (pp. 107-108). Furthermore, his three words, "I'm free, I'm alive, and I'm free" (p. 108), indicate the transformation from sadness to joy. The happiness has been geared by the concept, "The blood was gone from the wound; the long scar had softened and was no longer impeding the movement of the thumb" (p.111). And when it is recalled, it changes the person's situation and context.

Although Rushdie distinguishes between writing and therapy, he finds healing in words, and recalling past stories brings him happiness. Words are the medium of healing the trauma. Rushdie (2024) says, "I don't like to think of writing as therapy" (p.129). However, he confesses that "there was a good chance that telling the story as I saw it might make me feel better" (p.129). This is the power of words to heal trauma. Rushdie (2024) shares, "The most upsetting thing about the attack is that it has transformed me back into a person I have worked very hard to avoid being." (pp. 131-132) The word 'somebody' in the sentence refers to the unimaginable transformation of Rushdie mentally and physically, which is not acceptable. Change is hard, and it takes time to adjust to it. In his case, it is also difficult to process it. The people who experience the incident may be in a state of confusion, either due to the immediate effects of the incident or from hearing about its long-term consequences. Moreover, Rushdie reflects upon the courage and strength to live during the incident from his side as well as from his surrounding people. Rushdie (2024) recalls, "Live. Live" (p.72). This recalling is a process for healing because imagination acts as a token for transformation. He first heard these words while lying bleeding on the floor of Chautauqua, and he recalls the same words again when he was in the trauma center of the hospital. The eighteen long days were not easy for him in the

trauma center. It was exhausted, depressed, and sick. However, in that phase as well, his inner psyche pushes him to feel and project these words. Those words are both the essence of trauma and a portion of healing.

Sharing and telling the story or incident to others heals pain or suffering. The writer's narrative of the incident in *Knife* is one of the healing mechanisms. The book entails a detailed description of the incident pre- and post-scenario, which expresses the writer's experience as well as the trauma. However, the writer previously believed that there was no connection between writing and therapy. In addition to that, [Rushdie \(2024\)](#) adds, "The event on the library steps gave me a big energy boost, better than any medicine" (p.71). He follows in the footsteps of Caruth (1996), who says that textbooks are "a profound story of traumatic experience" (p. 4). In solidarity with the incident, there was an event organized in the New York Public Library on the seventh day of the incident. There were a number of writers and activists who took part in it and showed their solidarity. The act of empathy and shared understanding provides the writer with the strength and support needed to heal his wound.

[Rushdie \(2024\)](#) tries to disconnect writing with therapy, but writing acts as therapy for him: "I don't like to think of writing as therapy—writing is writing, and therapy is therapy" (p.129). Before the attack, he had a clear distinction between writing and therapy. It is true that writing and therapy each have distinct natures and characteristics. However, the incident has altered his perspective, leading him to believe that writing serves as a therapeutic tool. It helps express the agony, and more than that, without the audience or listener, anyone can express their feelings. They should be dependent on someone to share it, as well as be able to do so freely without any hesitation. Although he distinguishes between words and therapy, he admits that words have the power to heal. [Rushdie \(2024\)](#) states, "But there was a good chance that telling the story I saw it might make me feel better" (p.129). The statement bears a resemblance to a witnessed and experienced story, one that enhances human emotions and promotes a relaxed atmosphere. Rushdie's ideas are in the same line of thought as [Schoenfelder \(2013\)](#), "The literary imagination, with its ability to fictionalize and symbolize, can create a space in which experiences that appear to defy understanding and verbalization" (p.29). Narrating as a story is letting out repressed values or feelings that one has experienced. Additionally, this line indicates that after the incident, the writer's perception of writing changed; he felt pleasant when he wrote, and writing became an expression of his pain. Ultimately, writing stands for the healing mechanism in his context.

The imaginary conversation of Rushdie with "A" in four sessions deals with multiple subjects that soften his trauma because he repeatedly makes reference to books and their functions. The writer borrows the references of God, religion, family, gym visits, and Mr. A's plan for taking the lives of the people. However, the discussion regarding the significance of books is crucial. [Rushdie \(2024\)](#) presents an imaginative conversation, asking, "Written where?" The answer lies within the book itself. I would like to talk about books" (p.147). This conversation leads to the point that books are the source of happiness. The conversation explores how various subjects have been used to discuss the importance of imaginary dialogue in healing trauma. [Rushdie \(2024\)](#) highlights the significance of verbal art, asserting that it pits the artist's

passionate personal vision against the prevailing ideas of its era” (p.168). The synthesis of received ideas with the artist’s vision generates art. He further elaborates, “Without art, our ability to think, to see freshly, and to renew our world would wither and die” (p.168). Giving life to the cliché is the power of words. Once again, [Rushdie \(2024\)](#) confesses about the power of writing: “The big news—for me—was that the writing juices had started to flow again” (p. 173). Writing enlivens his power and spirit, which in turn transforms him. [Rushdie \(2024\)](#) confidently speaks of the value of stories: “Above all, we must understand that stories are at the heart of what’s happening” simply because they are “stories within which people want to live” (181). This is the power of narrative to take people away from stress. [Rushdie \(2024\)](#) openly confesses that three things healed him: “The first was the passage of time, the second was therapy, and the third was the writing of this book” (p.194). The book itself is the major source for psychological transformation. Thus, writing is the source of transformation in the life of Rushdie.

Writing, then, is the source of energy, and words can heal psychological scars. Rushdie feels psychologically revitalized and rejuvenated because of his long-standing passion for telling, retelling, and writing stories. The imaginative discourse with the attacker helps him distance himself from the dreadful moments. Writing the memoir serves as evidence to support his claims.

## **Conclusion**

The physical damages the speaker suffered after the attack include bodily deformity, uneven narratives, loss of an eye, nerve damage, and partial blindness. These bodily damages left an imprint of unhealing psychological wounds. During the process of physical recovery, he receives the support of family, friends, medical institutions, and his wife. However, a psychological wound is more lasting than a physical one. To heal the wounds, the writer uses storytelling, engaging in imaginative conversation with the attacker. Ultimately, he prepares to write a memoir that supports the healing of mental scars. He feels that he gets healed through writing. The words in the memoir act as a therapeutic means for healing the emotional and psychological wounds. Therefore, writing energizes individuals and helps them overcome traumatic psychological experiences, similar to what it does for Salman Rushdie.

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