

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Narrativization of Gender Trauma in Nasrin's *Sodh*

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Letter of Recommendation

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled "Narrativization of Gender Trauma in Nasrin's *Sodh*" submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Mr. Binod Lamichhane has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

Taslima Nasrin's novel *Sodh* projects the main character Jhummur's traumatic torture which is caused by her husband's extreme doubt and suspicious nature. She is pregnant. But her husband is not ready to believe that the infant she carried in her womb is his own. When his doubt reached the limit, he forcibly took her to a local clinic and got her aborted against her will. Actually she is innocent and flawless. She is loyal to her husband. Despite her innocence and fidelity, she is subjected to the traumatic torture brought forth by untimely abortion. She takes revenge on her husband by sleeping with a painter and convincing her husband that she is carrying his child in her womb. Just being a subordinate lady in tyranny of Islamic patriarchy Jhummur is traumatized. The rigid Islamic culture and oppressive web of patriarchy generated cultural trauma in which she is trapped. By using the notion of historic-cultural trauma, the researcher has analytically dwelt upon the issue of gendered trauma in this research.

Contents

Letter of Recommendation

Letter of Approval

Acknowledgements

Abstract

I. Representation of Gender Trauma in Nasrin's <i>Sodh</i>	1
II. Gender Trauma as a Critique on Islamic Society in Nasrin's <i>Sodh</i>	16
III. Gender Trauma and Crisis of Woman Identity in Nasrin's <i>Sodh</i>	43

Works Cited

I. Representation of Gender Trauma in Nasrin's *Sodh*

This research entitled probes into the degrading psychic condition of a married woman named Jhummur who falls prey to the excessive doubt of her husband regarding her fidelity. Jhummur got pregnant a few weeks after her marriage. She conceived her husband's child in her womb. But her husband became restless. He doubted that his wife was already pregnant before he married her. This doubt brought deep trouble in their marriage. Jhummur gave evidence to prove that she is impregnated by him. But heady and headstrong Haroon remained unconvinced. He forcibly took her to "the local clinic and got her aborted. As a consequence, she had to undergo traumatic nightmare" (77). She is haunted and tormented by the bitter experience of expelling the fetus. She was thoroughly sincere in her marital bond with Haroon. She got the traumatic blow as a reward of her utmost and unflinching loyalty to her husband.

Prior to her husband forced her to expel the fetus, she is submissive and docile. She did what he told her to do. Now she feels profoundly betrayed. She is frightened that it is not good and sensible to expect a lot from life. Fed and exhausted with her own life, she arrives at the conclusion that without revenging on her husband, she could not bring back the lost pride of her life. This is what she is compelled to do. She sleeps with "a painter conceives his child in her womb and then impresses her husband that she is pregnant due to him. After having revenge on her husband, she realizes that she has put herself on the equal footing with her husband" (126). A traumatic mind goes to the extent of committing adultery for the sake of bringing back solace to the bruised and brutalized heart.

Jhummur is psychologically traumatized. She is constantly restless. Her husband doubts her marital fidelity. As a consequence, she begins to doubt her own

self. Entire existence of Jhummur is shaken by the traumatic jolt and shock. She is reduced to the level of a puppet. After marriage, she is frequently hassled by household chores, gender boundary and social restriction. What brings pain and pang to her is the bossy and self-centric nature of her husband. Gender role set up by Islamic community, Islamic patriarchy, and subordination of women in a patriarchal society and chauvinistic aggression of her husband are some of the factors that contribute to her traumatic plight.

The researcher probes into the traumatic memories of Jhummur from the vantage point of trauma in general and historic-cultural trauma in particular. In addition, certain ideas about the psychological trauma will be cited to conduct the research. The aggressive assault of Haroon and Jhummur's failure to convince him led to the traumatic condition of her. This sort of plight of Jhummur should be brought to the critical focus by using the methodology of psychological trauma. Historico-cultural traumas What Lacapra says "the result of extraordinarily stressful events and the cultural constraints. Repeated sense of alienation, fear of being dissolved in the mass, lack of adaptation to the new environment and strong patriarchal bias against women are accountable to the inception of traumatic quandary"(78). Traumatic experiences often involve a threat to life or safety. It's not the objective facts that determine whether an event is traumatic.

Not all potentially traumatic events lead to lasting emotional and psychological damage. Some people rebound quickly from even the most tragic and shocking experiences. Others are devastated by experiences that, on the surface, appear to be less upsetting. A number of risk factors make people susceptible to emotional and psychological trauma. People are more likely to be traumatized by a stressful experience if they're already under a heavy stress load or have recently suffered a

series of losses. People are also more likely to be traumatized by a new situation if they've been traumatized before – especially if the earlier trauma occurred in childhood.

In this novel, Jhumur herself narrates the story of her marriage with Engineer Haroon-Ur-Rashid in Dhanmudi, Dhaka. It gives “the details of humiliation suffered by her, due to Haroon’s doubts about her fidelity, the revenge taken by her on her husband and the connected events” (64). The novel opens with the scenario of her having symptoms of initial pregnancy like morning sickness, after six weeks of her marriage. After examination, the Doctor confirms that “Jhumur is expecting a child. But Haroon is unhappy and disturbed and goes without food. He wants to take his wife to a Doctor to abort the child, because he thinks that he is not the father of this child” (27). Without telling the family and against the wishes of his wife, he takes her to Dhanmudi clinic, where the abortion is done and the womb is cleaned up. When she returns to the house, she is cared by everybody, but no one in the family knows that the child has been murdered.

But, now onwards, Haroon mentions about their having a child. In the meantime, a young couple Dr. Sebati and her husband Anwar have come as their tenant. Sebati and Jhumur become friends and exchange sweets. One day Jhumur sees Sebati’s brother-in-law Afzal and they get attracted to each other. According to Jhumur, “Haroon had been suspicious, unfair and cruel to her and had destroyed trust and faith. One day she goes to Sebati’s house and meets Afzal. She sees a nude painting done by Afzal. There are some more such visits and contacts” (85). After the accident of Haroon’s brother Hasan, Sebati has been very helpful. One day when most of the people were not in house, Jhumur goes to Sebati’s house, knowing well that she is not there. She meets Afzal, the two are drawn to each other and they make love.

Jhumursleeps with Afzal for seven consecutive days in one month, without allowing Haroon to touch her during this period. Though she feels inner happiness in avoiding and not allowing Haroon to touch her body, still she does not want to leave Haroon.

Nasrin is the controversial author of Islamic country. Her works have provoked countless numbers of controversies and contentions. Her stand on gender issue is formidably startling. Readers with moderate mentality are not in a position welcome her views which are the bone of contention. It is she who wrote “vehemently condemning the stronghold of Islamic biases against women. What has shocked her a lot is the way Islam treats women. Actually she fights for the emancipation of women, chiefly Islamic women from the tyranny of Islamic patriarchy”(81). Patriarchy in general and Islamic patriarchy in particular is the twin target of Nasrin’s literary endeavors. Though Nasrin’s female characters appear to be mean, petulant and restless in their battle against the aridity of Islamic patriarchy, there is an “undying spirit for the liberation of women enmeshed in the grinding mill of Islamic patriarchy”(86). Nasrin’s style of expression is straightforward. She is direct in her condemnation of Islamic cultural constraints.

Nasrin’s writings express her thoughts on religion, feminism, and sexuality—issues that are often controversial in the traditional Muslim society of Bangladesh. Hindu and Muslim fundamentalist groups quickly took public stances about Nasrin’s work: Hindu fundamentalists adopted her as their new ally, distributing copies of her book. On the contrary, Muslim fundamentalists burned hundreds of copies of her work, *Lajja (Shame)*, and demanded her execution. Jayanta Benerji argues that “Based on stories of Hindu-Muslim violence and the destruction of the Babri Masjid mosque in India, the novella tells the tale of a fictional Hindu family in Bangladesh made to suffer atrocities at the hands of Muslim fundamentalists following the mosque’s

destruction”(89). Taslima Nasrin became “both a creation of and a vehicle for religious extremists across the Indian subcontinent.

Lajja depicts the environment of communal riots with the help of the four members of the Dutta family in the book. Each of the characters has his / her reaction towards the events taking place around them. *Lajja* talks about the impact any religion has on minds of people irrespective of their countries or geographical boundaries. A Hindu in a country relates with a Hindu in any other country. A Muslim in a country relates with a Muslim in any other country. But the same cannot be said about a Hindu and a Muslim in the same country.

My Girlhood: An Autobiography written in Bengali by Taslima Nasrin, evoked a wild reaction and the writer had to flee from the country. This autobiography offers forbidden glimpses of the veiled life of the Muslim women. The autobiography begins at a time when war is about to break between East and West Pakistan and people begin to leave cities and go to villages. In her village city bred little Nasrin finds that girls are not allowed to visit a shop, fly kites, climb trees, go fishing or even play hop-scotch.

Compared to *Lajja (Shame)*, *French Lover* is written several notches better. But it's a disappointment in three aspects — the characters lack imagination, they are steeped in gender biases and the story is cliché-ridden. All the men in the book are scoundrels; the women victims of a patriarchal society, so much so that the protagonist Nila is moved to conclude at the end. In her two poems “Happy Marriage” and “Border” from the collection *The Game in Reverse*, Nasrin describes two different instances of male domination over women with two very different resolutions. In the poem “Happy Marriage,” a woman speaks of “how her husband has taken control of her entire life, desiring to hold absolute power over her body. She

describes her husband as a monster who physically, emotionally and sexually abuses her”(187). In the first half of the poem, Nasrin writes about the male’s fantasies of control in visceral terms. In the second stanza, Nasrin’s speaker explains to the reader “why her husband did the things he did. She illustrates a vivid picture of a woman mad with love, literally going crazy and committing suicide as a testament to her ecstasy at his hands”(18). Nasrin creates a very melodramatic, overly romantic image, building it up further and further in order to convey her sarcasm and cynicism in her regards to the husband’s wishes. She is mocking him outright in her over-dramatization of the ideal situation he has decided in his head, and she culminates the vision in the wife’s killing herself out of love: the supreme way of demonstrating her love for her husband. However, Nasrin’s mention of “suicide also can be interpreted as perhaps a foreshadowing of the wife’s future” (53); her only possible escape from her husband’s oppressive control over her.

The poem “Border” differs significantly from “Happy Marriage” in the means by which the wife comes to terms with her husband’s dominion over her. In “Border,” the speaker is restrained by her husband forbidding her to escape. She realizes that escape will not be easy. She sees it as being quite an obstacle, but she has confidence in her ability to survive and make it on her own. In the first stanza she compares “the hardships she must conquer to a river that must be crossed. In the second, third, and fourth stanzas, the speaker discusses the freedoms that await her on the other side of the river. She revels in the notions of being able to do things she has not done in years”(80). The ending of the poem gives the reader a great sense of hope for the speaker. However, through the poem “Border,” Nasrin reaffirms the woman as a human being who has duties and responsibilities to her family.

ShubhaTiwari is the leading critic of Nasrin. He evaluates the novel *Sodh* from the broader perspective. Tiwari is touched by the gravity of the content of this novel. The overall thematic content of this novel is highly praiseworthy. As to this novel, he makes the following observation:

Shodh presents a micro world of a woman where husband, ma-in-law, neighbors etc. hold a paramount position. Analyzing *Shodh* was not easy for me. It is a very flat piece of writing. Thought content of a novel is its main strength. It does not mean that a novelist should philosophize unnecessarily. Actions as they are depicted and characters as they behave must evoke ideas. The words must be pregnant with something indecipherable, something beyond. Something should be left unsaid. Something must hang in the air of a novel. (10)

According to Tiwari the content of this novel should be viewed from the perspective of women's micro world. The empathetic approach to the suffering of women is essential to deal with the core content of this novel. Though Tiwari goes to the extent of calling *Sodh* a flat piece of writing he does not hesitate to admire and appreciate the main strength of the text.

Another equally important critic Madhu Singh has viewed the novel *Sodh* from its defective and unfair side. He is of the opinion that this novel has feet of clay. Despite its strong sense of vindictive jolt to the stronghold of Islamic patriarchy, the novel is filled with plenty of demerits and disadvantages. His view regarding to the novel is listed below:

Paradigmatically the novel enforces the traditional, conservative, and quite unfair view of women. It depicts a woman as secretive, cunning, revengeful, and incapable of open and bold revolt, incapable of

anything except carrying on a hidden relationship with another man in order to avenge the husband's cruelty. The novel revolves around cynical sayings like 'Don't trust a servant, and a husband' or 'men go for physical relationships without love' and all such absurd stuff. The novel does not elevate. (17)

Only the vindictive voice and valor is affirmed. Other aspects of this novel are discouraging. He points out that the excess of vindictive rage and fury hamper the artistic integrity of this novel. Such an excess spoils the text. It reduces. It zeroes down possibilities of companionship, love and sharing. It cuts off trust, the very basis of life. The cover page shows a pair of scissors and it rightly suggests that the novel tries to tear apart faith in human goodness. Whether it does it effectively or not is a different question. But it certainly tries to do that.

Priyambada Gopal compares Nasrin's *Sodh* with Amrita Pritam's short story. Most of the stories of Amrita deal with the tough issues like the possibility of converting feminism as a passion. She is increasingly aware of the danger of taking feminism as a passion. He delivers the following remarks about this novel in the light of Amrita's short stories:

The story reminded me of one of Amrita Pritam's short stories where the maid sleeps with the groom to avenge all insults. The maid and the daughter of the house are of the same age. They grow together but the daughter never forgets to remind the maid of her lower status. On the wedding night amidst all hustle bustles the maid slips into the groom's room. All her life she has been eating the leftover of the daughter of the house. Now it is the daughter's turn to taste the leftover husband. (72)

In *Sodh* what is the striking thing is the ignorance of Haroon. He does not know that his wife has cheated him. So long as he is in the veil of illusion, the question of revenge does not arise. Jhummur's revenge would be an act of the accomplishment of revenge only if her husband comes to know this sort of bitter and filthy thing. Since he does not know that he is cuckolded by his wife, he would not feel furious. Apart from this, Jhummur's revenge would have relevance if she had dared to abandon her husband. Since she wants to cling to her husband even after cuckolding him, her vindictive act does hardly have significance.

Atish Gupto concludes that women are bound to invent male view of them in order to cope with the drudgeries of household. In the conventional society where male supremacy is sovereign, women are bound to rely on so many guiles and wiles. Atish gives the example of Beauvoir to strengthen his view. Atish argues thus:

A woman in her isolation in a house develops the tools to survive, to live, breathe, create and recreate. The passage to her dreams goes through the men in her family. There is no direct access to life. Ethics or no ethics, religion or no religion, she has to withstand life. Also, the women unconsciously accept the male view of themselves. It is interesting to watch how women through centuries of practice develop a male view of themselves. Simon de Beauvoir says, 'It follows that woman sees herself and makes her choices not in accordance with her true nature in itself, but as man defines her. (169)

The patriarchal household is always hostile and horrendous to women. With their independent mind set they can hardly survive. Hence, it is imperative for them to invent different sorts of survival mechanism. Else it would be quiet tough and

challenging to them. When a person acknowledges this sort of compulsive urge, he would automatically understand why Jhummur does what she does.

Mahasweta Devi is dissatisfied with the way Nasrin imitates the western concept of identity. While abetting Islamic women to carve a concern for identity, she is not sensitive to the oriental notion of Islamic culture. Islamic culture too has positive points. But Nasrin writes as though Islam is the bane and curse in the history of religion. Devi discloses the following remarks about Rusdie's admiration of Nasrin:

If Salman Rudie calls Taslima an advocate of free love, I will call her an outright hedonist. It is shocking to see this woman's vision not progressing beyond burly bodies and hairy chests. The body image as reflected in *Shodh* calls for an urgent sorting out of the concept Body as a means of celebrating life has been an old Eastern view. The traditional Western view, on the contrary has not been that complementary to the body. Not only that the body is considered a dirty container, it is also isolated and separated from other things. Western concept of identity formation begins when the child views her/himself as a distinct creature. (87)

Mahasweta's judgment of Taslima as a hedonist sounds somewhat apt and appropriate. Taslima parrots the Western concept of identity when she says that she woke up with a start. Taslima hardly talks or hints at mental liberation, thinking and understanding. In fact, this brand of feminism is discarding all mental cushions available to a woman in moments of crisis. Family, relatives, neighbors, and society need not necessarily be perceived as enemies. Her writings have incurred dread and danger.

Kamala Das moves back and forth when the question of choosing feminism either as a passion or profession comes. She is acutely conscious of the dread and

drabness of choosing feminism as a profession she analyzes Taslima's immersion in the doctrine of feminism which is hard-hitting. She reveals the following arguments:

Feminism for some is passion; for others it is a profession. I am skeptical about the feminism of those who take it as a profession. It seems our society is being torn apart by unthinking extreme attitudes. Feminism becomes women's reservation bill and abolishment of caste system becomes quota system. Things get distorted beyond limits. Issues are hardly recognized in their original form. *Shodh* is said to be having autobiographical elements. In fact, bitter experiences produce bitter feminists. But then a thinking mind has to decide how far it can allow the negative side of life to dictate thinking. Jhumur turns all her qualifications, her education, her exposure against her happiness, against her own self. (44)

Das warns the disciples of feminism not to take feminism as professions. If it is taken as a profession, facts and truths about the plights of women come out hardly.

Professionalism in any movement puts restrictions on those who advocate for freedom. For the accomplishment of gender equality and individuality, collective efforts should be made to treat and take feminism as a passion. Only the passionate commitment can work out progressive plans for the liberation of women at large. In the patriarchal society, feminism fails to generate intended reform if it is taken as a profession. If it becomes profession, patriarchy can modify it so that it could be used to derail the feminist mission.

ZafarManmay contends that Taslima's novels set the stage for the emergence of new womanhood. New womanhood transcends extant boundaries and limitations of patriarchy. New womanhood is subversive. She is dissatisfied with the idea of living in

the cocoon of comforts and luxuries. Zafar asserts that *Sodhis* the cradle of new womanhood. He opines that:

When we look at the revenge of Jhumur, a new face of womanhood is exposed. Jhumur cheats her husband so calculatingly. It is absolutely freezing. At the end, the same cruel husband who got her aborted starts looking like a buffoon. She reduces him to be a puppet in the hands of her cunning ploys. Taslima writes, 'I made up my mind to be pregnant with Afzal. I didn't want to offer Haroon a body ready to receive his sperm. I wanted him to sow his seed in fallow land and wait foolishly, a day after day, to see it sprout. I didn't have any sense of guilt about it. I wasn't a loose woman. I wasn't deceiving him. I was merely paying him back. (147)

On the one hand, Zafar praises for the projection of new woman hood. On the other, he neglects to expose the frailty of this new womanhood. This new womanhood which Zafar extols is tainted with stigma. She lowers herself to the bottom line of infidelity. There are other ways of taking revenge on her husband. But Jhumur chose the path of infidelity. This act of revenge via infidelity belittles the so-called luminosity of new womanhood.

William Cote Roger Simpson describes trauma as "a bodily injury or shock. It is an emotional shock, often having a lasting psyche effect" (22). The definition recognizes two types of trauma- physical wounds that an emergency room might treat after an accident, and emotional wounds. Emotional wounds may afflict a person long after to the single shock that comes with an assault. Some people suffer trauma is not confined to the suffer trauma from continuing attacks on their emotional stability of course, physical and emotional wounds may be products of the same experience.

Psychological trauma is commonly known as an emotional injury. This psychic injury is caused by plenty of unprecedented factors. In patriarchal, society the rigid sense of gender can pose threat to the psychic integrity of the character. This is what has happened in the novel *Miss New India*. Trauma may be caused by natural events or they may be human- caused. Natural disasters emotionally traumatize even those who survive them without physical injury. Internal migration and continental immigration also can incur psychic disorder which, if not addressed at a right time, can lead to the traumatic psyche. Therefore, psychological trauma is a type of damage to the psyche that occurs as a result of a traumatic event. When that trauma leads to post-traumatic stress disorder, damage may involve physical changes inside the brain chemistry, which changes the person's response to future stress.

Psychological trauma is the result of extraordinarily stressful events. Repeated sense of alienation, fear of being dissolved in the mass, lack of adaptation to the new environment and strong patriarchal bias against women are accountable to the inception of traumatic quandary. Traumatic experiences often involve a threat to life or safety. It's not the objective facts that determine whether an event is traumatic. Not all potentially traumatic events lead to lasting emotional and psychological damage. Some people rebound quickly from even the most tragic and shocking experiences. Others are devastated by experiences that, on the surface, appear to be less upsetting. A number of risk factors make people susceptible to emotional and psychological trauma. People are more likely to be traumatized by a stressful experience if they're already under a heavy stress load or have recently suffered a series of losses. People are also more likely to be traumatized by a new situation if they've been traumatized before – especially if the earlier trauma occurred in childhood.

The concept of trauma in relation to gender is the vital part of the methodological framework of this research. The notion of cultural trauma is applicable to describing the predicament of a woman who is compelled to live in a critical situation. Cultural trauma is defined by Merton as “shock to the cultural tissue of a society, and presents a model of the traumatic sequence, describing typical conditions under which cultural trauma emerges and evolves” (31). He suggests a number of typical strategies by which societies cope with cultural traumas. Cultural trauma is treated as a link in the ongoing chain of social changes. It depends on the number of concrete circumstances. Cultural trauma may be a phase in the constructive “morphogenesis of culture or in the destructive cycle of cultural decay” (84). The patriarchal culture paves the way for the emergence of trauma which is tantamount to cultural trauma.

Although all these critics have raised different issues in their analysis and interpretation, none of them have focused upon the traumatic psyche of the main character Jhummur. Jhummur was mistreated and mishandled by her husband who is extremely doubtful about her fidelity. This sort of assault lacerated the coherence and the integrity of her psyche. She is forced to abort the child of her own husband. She does her best to convince him that she is carrying his child. But Haroon is too obstinate to heed her last words of plea and pleading. As a consequence, she declined to project herself as the capable confident and qualified female being bent upon exploring individuality self-esteem and independence.

Jhummur’s deteriorating psychological makeup will enable the researcher to produce an account of psychological trauma. Her marital life in Islamic family offers significant clues to conclude that she is psychologically traumatized. The outward show of cooperation and assistance is just a mask behind which the selfishness of males lurks. By using Judith Herman's notion of psychological trauma, and that of Kali Tal, the researcher will explore the relevant elements of traumatic memories in the text *Sodh*.

II. Gender Trauma as a Critique on Islamic Society in Nasrin's *Sodh*

Taslina Nasrin's controversial novel *Sodh* exhibits the traumatic memories of an Islamic female character, Jhummur. She is married to an Islamic man named Haroon. He is bossy and peremptory. Since Jhummur has become his wife after marriage, he thinks that he has the absolute right over her life, body and mind. Jhummur is the loyal wife of Haroon. If there is an idea which is uppermost in her mind, that is loyalty to her husband. Her marriage life with Haroon is simply driven by the idea of fidelity to her husband. But her husband is constantly suspicious. His mind is haunted by the fear that his wife can betray him. Some months after her marriage, she conceived an infant in her womb. In point of fact, she carried a child of Haroon in her womb.

Haroon thinks that she has carried another man's child in her womb. He doubts her trust and loyalty. He suspects that she might have committed fornication. Haroon unnecessarily harbors doubts and fear. Despite the virtuosity and chastity of his wife, he arrives at a conclusion that she had had premarital sex with someone else. Otherwise how could she become pregnant a few weeks after marriage? He takes her to the local clinic under the pretext of regular checkup. But in the clinic, he gets her abort her child which he assumes the child of Jhummur's illicit affair and the sin of premarital sin of fornication. Jhummur had expected that she would be the mother in time to come. She had the zeal and passion for motherhood. But her husband deprived her of this opportunity. She took it as crime against her self-esteem and natural rights to motherhood. In addition she is devastated by her husband's callousness. Agony of untimely abortion is the reward she received for her full-fledged trust in her husband. She had believed him completely. But ironically enough she received such mental agony and pang of aborting her infant. Due to the impact of this disaster, Jhummur is

traumatized psychically. Her mental make is injured and lacerated. Haroon's suspicious temperament and his chronic intervention in Jhummur's integrity of marital faith left traumatic laceration in her. The following lines cited from *Sodh* justify this point:

Can one conceive in six weeks time eh? Haroon spoke out,
 disentangling himself from my arms. What do you mean? What I say?
 I don't understand you. You do. But the doctor said I was with the
 child, she had not suggested anything abnormal. Don't you believe in
 the doctor? I believe in the doctor. Then why are you suspicious? It is
 not possible to become pregnant that soon. Do you think she might
 have made a mistake? No she has diagnosed correctly. Then what? Do
 I have to abort? Why? (73)

Haroon is extremely suspicious of his wife's fidelity. There is no ground to harbor such doubts and suspense. But he is too headstrong when the question of his wife's loyalty comes. His constant doubt regarding Jhummur's loyalty traumatizes her. Jhummur is loyal to her husband. She is impregnated by her husband. Despite her chaste manner, she is being victimized by his chronic doubts and headstrong temperament. Jhummur comes to know that she believed him wholeheartedly. She gives every impression of being loyal to him. But she is rewarded with the sequence of doubts and jealousy. All these heady and headstrong disposition of Haroon makes her shocked traumatically.

Focusing on literature from survivors of the Holocaust, the Vietnam War, and sexual abuse, Kali Tal examines the need of survivors of these traumas to relate their stories to the collective cultural memory of the community at large. Tal Kali is the popular trauma theorist. He is interested in examining the traumatic agony from the

perspective of women. According to Tal Kali, "trauma is an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled, repetitive appearance of hallucinations"(215).

Anjali Bose also moves through similar kinds of situations. She is increasingly hopeful that she is going to married to a cultured man. But when the same man rapes her a few days before her marriage, she loses the normal level of rational thinking.

The widening gap between her expectation as a female being and the sporadic and unprecedented sexual assault renders her psyche entirely traumatic. Her bold decision to quit house without informing her parents and without taking money from them is strong evidence of how much audacious and autonomous she is. Trauma is physical as well as psychological injury. These injuries are caused by different kinds of events. Traumatic experience damages the healthy and normal psychological framework of the victim. The victim of trauma, especially of psychological trauma, is prone to anxiety, social isolation, anger or emotional numbing, sudden mood shifts, irritability and grief.

When Jhummur ponders upon how she is distrusted by Haroon, she feels enervated psychically. Had she been punished and brutalized corporeally, she might not have felt so much pang and shock. Haroon was of the opinion that she pushed him to marriage since she was pregnant prior to her marriage. With devotion and loyalty she had been living with him. But such a sporadic outburst of Haroon's distrust paralyzed her psychologically. In the following lines the depth of her psychic shock can easily be realized:

My body went limp hearing these words and I stumbled onto the floor;
the Kancheepuram sari had already slipped from my shoulders and was
rolling on the floor. I was in a state of shock. Haroon did not trust me.

He thought I had pushed him into marriage because I had become pregnant. He had smelled a rat! My arms hung heavily down my sides and I felt horribly weak. A storm was brewing within me turning my heart into a veritable dust-bowl, bereft of any feelings. Everything had turned upside down- my home, my structured existence in the family. A gale had come and swept all away. (74)

When Jhummur knows that Haroon is suspecting her, she feels completely shocked. In the above-quoted citation, it is written that she felt horribly weak. Nasrin uses the metaphor storm to describe the condition of Jhummur. She says that she is hit by the inner storm of shock and devastation. She is jolted to a stormy condition when Haroon openly confesses that he doubts that the child in her womb is not his. It is the product of her illicit premarital sex. She is so shocked by the direct expression of her husband's blasphemy of her marital loyalty.

The victims of trauma whether psychological or politico-cultural are miserably haunted by depressive inclination, identity problem, guilt and shame and the feeling of fear and the fear of being overwhelmed. Kathleen Miriam argues about the traumatic disaster:

A traumatic event is an event which threatens injury, death, or the physical body of a child or adolescent while also causing shock, terror or helplessness. Trauma refers to both the experience of being harmed by an external agent as well as the response to that experience. Youth who experience trauma may also experience emotional harm or psychic trauma which, if left untreated, can have a significant impact. Trauma typically exists along a spectrum which ranges from global,

when an event may affect many individuals, to individual, when the trauma impacts only that individual. (13)

The depthless trauma involves repeated traumatic events occurring over a period of time, usually beginning in childhood. Conversely, simple trauma usually refers to a single event, such as a rape or a shooting. Simple trauma is more likely to lead to posttraumatic stress disorder. Post traumatic stress disorder refers to the sporadic outburst of hidden traumatic trace even after victims of trauma cope with their problems for the short time. Complex trauma leads to a deeper and more pervasive set of changes involving emotional deregulation, distorted thinking, behavioral dysfunction and patterns of dysfunctional interpersonal relationships. Early researchers noted that exposure to trauma may lead to feelings of anxiety, helplessness, dissociation and behavior. These symptoms are now included within the broad category of traumatic disorder. While these symptoms may be consequences of trauma, they do not always occur following trauma. Additionally, risk events can moderate the influence of exposure to trauma and the development of psychopathology.

Haroon calls into question the fidelity of Jhummur. Amidst total devotion and utmost marital loyalty, Haroon's doubt comes out. Along with shock and psychic enervation, so many questions flood in her mind. One after the other countless numbers of questions comes to her mind. She can't easily seek the answer of all these questions. Her mind is tight with queries and curiosities. What are the grounds and bases on which her husband doubts her? This is the question that has robbed the stability and tranquility of her mind. The flood of questions and convictions makes her traumatically restless. At one time she suffers from insomnia also. Her search for

the grounds on which Haroon doubts her adds more torture and trauma to her stable psychological makeup. In the following citation, this point can be clear:

Perhaps Haroon was in a self-congratulatory mood. He had shown such magnanimity in agreeing to marry me, in carrying on as my husband. He was successful in turning my own beliefs about myself upside down. I began to accept I had been guilty of premarital relationships that I had conducted a secret game of love with a person other than my husband. Frightened out of my wits, I locked myself inside the bathroom. I was terrified I had slept with Subhas, or was seen in the altogether by Arzu. Have I kept all those secrets from Haroon? I panicked lest he found me out. I was the low despicable creature, who had double-crossed him and had sat on the wedding piri already in the family way. (76)

Jhummur is lost in the cycle of doubt and self-doubt. Haroon doubts her honesty in marital bond. It appears that his doubts are indelible. When she sees that her husband is firm in his doubt about her fidelity she too begins to doubt herself. Self doubt becomes her main problem. She has had the sinister premonition that she no longer exists. She doubts herself if she mistakenly sleeps with other males. As Haroon goes on doubt her without any concrete evidence, she falls prey to her own irrational logics of self doubts. The feeling of being inferior and worthless creature overwhelms her. This process continues till she is forced to abort her infant to the satisfaction of her husband.

With the help of disastrous events which befall her and her deteriorating conditions of mind, the researcher quotes some of the ideas of trauma theorist. Kali Tal argues that "traumatic experience can be expressed effectively in narrative. Studies of the cognitive, physiological, psychological, and behavioral implications of

expressive writing corroborate what readers of literature have long suspected"(54).

Writers often turn intuitively to writing as a way of confronting and surviving trauma suffered in their own lives. Hypersensitivity to physical contact is the recurrent component of Jhummur. She lacks the power of coordination and balance. Despite her compliant attitude to her parents she is compelled to quit Islamic village. Traumatic stress is stress resulting from exposure to, or witnessing of, events that are severe and/or life threatening. Most of the time, Jhummur suffers from stress. The fear of being helpless in the big city is the major trouble in her life.

Despite Haroons' doubt, she continues to affirm her love for him. On the one hand she is mentally devastated by her husband's recurrent doubts. On the other she is in a vulnerable position to control her. She remembers how she had hastened to marry Haroon after knowing his deserving qualities. Out of love for him, she along with her parents had hastened to get her married to him. But now Haroon happens to develop different sort of impression about her. Both adamant love and increasing pain coexist in her even after she is surrounded by plenty of traumatic shocks. She brings one kind of memory to counterbalance the unbearable reality of the present. That is why she suffers traumatically. In the following lines this kind of situation can be found in a crystal clear:

Then I found myself in love with Haroon, a business. I did not intend to fall in love with someone in business, someone with money, nor did I know what Haroon did. I had certainly fallen in love with his voice and the way he talked. It moved me even now. Perhaps, that was not his normal, habitual voice and he had put on an act. Because Haroon did not talk like that anymore, with a voice wet with feeling.

Everything was topsy-turvy. My head throbbbed with scattered

thoughts. Was my life being drawn into an epicenter, sucked into the vortex of a gathering storm? I thought I had sorted out my life pretty successfully and was not in the least expecting this! (81)

Jhummur reels under the burden of traumatic shock. She has no option other than getting staggered by the traumatic blow. She says that she is finical in the choice of life partner. Nobility and altruism are two traits that mark the disposition of Jhummur. According to her judgment, she is not interested in the wealth of a tycoon or business man. Out of sheer love and devotion to Haroon, she chose him. Her love for him continues in an uninterrupted way. Suddenly clouds of doubts fall on domain of marital residence. She is at pains to know how and why it happened. Without any solid evidence how her husband doubts her fidelity. She is traumatically in low spirit. Bitterness and self hatred well up in her.

Kali Tal's concept of trauma is wholly applicable in the text. The adverse living conditions of Anjali Bose are the dominant cause of her traumatic downfall. He passes the following views about traumatic symptom which is purely psychological in orientation:

Psychological trauma is direct personal experience of an event that involves actual or threatened death or serious injury, or other threat to one's physical integrity; or witnessing an event that involves death, injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of another person; or learning about unexpected or violent death, serious harm, or threat of death or injury experienced by a family member or other close associate. The person's response to the event must involve intense fear, helplessness, or horror. (87)

Sexual encounter, unprecedented happening, adversity of unexpected kinds cause psychological trauma. The factors that cause trauma are man-made as well as natural disaster. The sudden occurrences and happenings in an individual's life shock him or her. Moreover, such events implant stress, agony and pang which render psychology irreparably lost and damaged. That is why those who are traumatically susceptible can hardly maintain the normal framework and integrity. Hence, concrete enumeration of underlying factors helps us to examine and analyze the reality regarding trauma.

Forcibly Haroon takes Jhummur to the local clinic for abortion. She pleads him not to take such a callous decision. Time and again she requests him to protect the child in the womb. But he is too headstrong. He does not reverse his decision. She does her best to convince that she is loyal to him and the infant in the womb is his own. But he remains unconvinced. She makes a loud hue and cry. At the last moment also she entreats him not to compel her for abortion. But he turns a deaf ear to her pleading and entreaties. He neglects her requests to the extent of inhumanity and cruelty. He continues to impose his heady nature on her. Such a brutish insensitivity unleashes a traumatic blow on her. The following citation from the text illustrates the situation:

Haroon took me to the Dhanmundi clinic for the abortion. We had not told the family anything and they thought we were visiting friends. All along I tried hard to put some sense into Haroon's head. Look, it is our first baby; we can't do this to it. How can you be wrong about your own flesh and blood? You are mistaken, and you are humiliating me by entertaining such thoughts. I had pleaded with him holding his hands but he jerked them away and threw me off; pushed me towards the wardrobe and told me to dress fast. I cried a lot, hanging onto the

door of the dresser. Haroon pulled off my clothes, and said harshly, change into fresh ones, quick now. I grabbed one of his hands and placed it in on my belly. It is your baby, I swear. You are killing your own child. (83)

The above-cited part shows different aspects of Haroon. He is none other than a male pig chauvinist. His heart is made up of stone. She convinces him to an utmost extent. She does her best to dispel his doubt. But these doubts are deeply entrenched in his mind. In no way she can remove his doubts. She swears several times that she is carrying his baby in her womb. But the heady man remains untouched. He subjected her to the heinous practice of aborting her child. She wants to give birth to the baby. The child she conceived in her womb is the effect of Immaculate Conception. But he is callously insensitive towards the miserable plight of Jhummur. All these events and eventualities left her in the lurch.

Caruth proposes "that trauma compels us to imagine that traumatic events do not simply occur in time. Rather they fracture the very experience of time for the person to whom they happen. She states, the pathology cannot be defined either by the event itself"(121).Caruth makes the following point about trauma:

Trauma is generally understood as wound or external bodily injury in general. It is also defined as a "mental condition caused by severe shock, especially when the harmful effects last for a long time. In its later uses, particularly in the psychiatric literature, the term 'trauma' is understood as a wound inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind. (124)

This researcher emphasizes its transfer of meaning from physical to the psychical. A psychical trauma is something that enters the psyche that is so overwhelming that it

cannot be assimilated by usual mental processes. For those who suffer violence trauma is what Herman Judith calls "devastating and often long-lasting wound"(37). The definition recognizes two types of trauma-- physical wounds that an emergency room might treat after an accident, and emotional or psychic wounds. The other aspect is emotional trauma is not confined to the single shock that comes with an assault. The form of trauma that this researcher addresses is emotional injury, sometimes sudden and unexpected, sometimes taking place during a prolonged time.

The scene of abortion in clinic is really traumatic. It is a heart-rending experience. So much torture occurred to her. She manages to endure pang of undergoing abortion. Without putting her under anesthesia, she is subjected to abortive experience. She appeared helpless in the grip of her own husband. The helplessness and horror of undergoing abortion is clear in the following lines:

I was not put under anesthesia. The doctor manages to scoop up from my insides all the gore which would have, in time, given way to a child's silhouette. I stared, dazed at the spilling of clotted blood-vital fluid. If someone had burrowed into my heart then he would have discovered a sticky lump of blood there too. Happy at the success of the operation the doctor declared, the womb has been thoroughly cleaned out. We have left nothing inside. Haroon smiled, paid the doctor and came to me. He was full of affection. A couple of hours later he drove me home. He announced to everybody I had been ill, I had to be given hot milk, fruit juices. (85)

After compelling Jhummur to the terrifying experience of abortion, he revealed affection to her. She herself tells that Haroon reveals affection to her only after she expelled the fetus. To Jhummur, Haroon is a daredevil. He is beyond the compass of

her understanding. Outwardly she did not react. She decided to remain taciturn. She is helpless to react. In a patriarchal society in which her freedom is curtailed, she is not able to assert and affirm her opinion. Without resisting his aggressive move, she does what she is told to do. Inwardly she feels traumatic and tormented. Abortion brought trauma and torment. Without any fault of her own she is punished to such an extent. She contemplates on the tragic lot. Immediately she does not think about responding his chauvinistic terror.

Countering all the erstwhile theories of trauma, Caruth propounds the theory which deals with the practical sides of the traumatic problems. As Cathy Caruth stresses in her *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*, “Trauma is not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual’s past, but rather in the way that it’s much unassimilated nature- the way it was precisely not known in the first instance- returns to haunt the survivor later on” (4). Trauma is not fully known and is therefore not available to consciousness until it imposes itself again. It can be manifested repeatedly in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor. Caruth systematizes the concept of trauma as discussed by Sigmund Freud in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* in which, repetitiveness of trauma weakens Anjali Bose.

Consequent upon the abortion, Jhummur feels increasingly hopeless and lonely. She longs to meet her parents. But family circumstances restrict her. She has to live by hiding so many things. Just being a woman, she is circumscribed by so many factors over which she hardly has control. She is a woman with university degree. But the domestic constrains rendering her degree utterly useless. Whatever she feels should be suppressed. Silence and isolation became the trademark of her identity. But she tolerates. The way she is compelled by her husband to abort is the most humiliating experience. She would never forgive her husband. Rather she is bent

upon avenging her past. But her style of avenging her husband is typical to her. It is going to be what a traumatized woman can do to restore her lost individuality and self-esteem. The following lines depict this sort of plight:

You can go to the cinema, listen to music or else why not go and spend a few days in Wari, at your parents? I laughed. It was the only way left to hide my feeling of hopelessness. I was beginning to feel rather uncomfortable and came running away. Anis did not try to stop me. I wondered whether Anis had a good idea about the drab life I led. The fetus in my womb I had destroyed would have filled up my life with so many dreams. There was no rainbow in my sky now. I had become a two-legged creature meant to keep Haroon physically satisfied. I was nothing more. I tried to conceal my pain, did not want anyone to have a part in it, and not even Haroon. Nowadays, whenever, undoing my sari, Haroon exclaimed, we want a baby, do not we? (96)

Certain elements of gender Trauma can be found in the helpless life of Jhummur. She feels as though she is reduced to the mere object to satisfy her husband's lust. Her heat is full of bruises, wounds, agony and sufferings. Arrow of suffering pierced her. She is languishing in the lap of dependence and subordination. But she is bound to hide all these things. Outwardly she maintains an appearance which shows that nothing has happened to her. But inwardly she is another name for suffering. The fate of being crushed in the hand of an insensitive husband is the root cause of her trauma and tension. Whenever any kind of fresh longing for love comes, she hesitates because she is not free to act what her inner longing tells her.

Caruth writes about the impact of trauma not only on narrative, but on history as well. In her emphasis on time gone berserk- on the effects of a witness's failure to

claim a traumatic experience as it is happening- Caruth reveals a significant debt to Sigmund Freud in interpreting the idea of “unclaimed experience” that Freud introduces in his 1920 book, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Anjali Bose comes across failures despite her painstaking diligence. Through Freud, she articulates the endless repetition signaling a traumatic event in the minds and lives of the witness, as well as the uncanny sense that this moment necessarily affects all other moments in time. Caruth’s book opens with the revelation that:

Freud wonders at the peculiar and sometimes uncanny way in which catastrophic events seem to repeat themselves for those who have passed through them. In some cases, as Freud points out, these repetitions are particularly striking because they seem not to be initiated by the individual’s own acts but rather appear as the possession of some people by a sort of fate, a series of painful events to which they are subjected, which seem to be entirely outside of their wish or control. (1-2)

According to Caruth, traumatic events produce a kind of relentless horror. Anjali feels inwardly horrified by the complexities and amorphous features of this mega city. The victim is horrified and constantly assaulted by reminiscences and memories. In the traumatic memory the vicious effects of past and future coexist and exert agony and resentment in victims. For her, it is as if the future is as much at stake as the present time. Trauma, in other words, lives in the present as well as in the future, as much as the past that carries with it the original event. The victim himself or herself tries to manage his or her traumatic agony through certain agency. But existing circumstances make the problems more complicated.

With the traumatized mind Jhummur tries to understand the situation. She is horrified to know that Haroon is slowly going away from her. at the same time he seems to be tactful enough to shower affection on her. But she is no longer moved by the demonstrative affection of Haroon. Nor does she strive to bring him back to the same mould of a doting husband who becomes callously adamant in dire days. Rather she is eager to befriend a man Anis who is the brother in law of one of the guests of Haroon. She is seeking a chance to woo him so that she conceives his child and plans to avenge her past. In the following lines this sort of attitude of Jhummur is displayed:

I recognized that Haroon was unknowingly moving away from me. In his pride and his complacency each day he was taking one more step away. I watched with trepidation and with my eyes wide open the distance growing between us. Now another man waved out to me, a handsome male, who could make me go into raptures. My shoulders had been hurting for sometimes. I mumbled feebly to Ma-in-Law to allow Sebati to examine them. Let her come up. Ma-in-law suggests in a weak voice. Who is there to call her up? Rosuni is grinding the spices. Let me go down. (112)

Intentionally, Jhummur is planning to commit adultery. She is an enfeebled and helpless woman. She is trapped in the circumscribed aura of family. She longs to taste the beauty and freedom of the external world. But she is prevented from doing so due to so many pros and cons. Hence, she finds herself utterly helpless and hopeless. Her husband hardly tries to understand her plight. He simply uses her as an object to get his sexual passion fulfilled. With the traumatized mind and painful heart she tries to take revenge on her husband. Adultery becomes the means to take revenge on Haroon.

Drawing on her extensive clinical experience and the latest research, Laura S. Brown shows therapists how to become more sensitive to individual identity when working with clients who have suffered trauma:

Few of the excellent models that have been developed for working with trauma survivors take into account the complexity of an individual's unique background and experience. Even treatment for members of special groups often ignores the individual's multilayered identities--which may include age, social class, ethnicity, religious faith, sexual orientation, and immigrant status--in favor of a one-size-fits all approach. Of particular interest is the role of systems of faith and meaning-making in trauma therapy. Given the ubiquity of trauma in its various forms, all therapists, from trainees to seasoned professionals will find this volume educative and thought-provoking.

(107)

S. Brown explains how culturally sensitive therapists draw upon multiple strategies for treating patients and are aware of both dominant group privilege and of their own identity and culture. The deep seated tradition and the emerging modernity are in clash. The clash between antiquity and modernity hinders the delicate minds of people. So they are prone to the haunting experiences and episodes of trauma. The external and internal realities are put together through the common reference to a traumatic state or situation which is their nexus. Traumatic events create a multifaceted complex of reactions, which may even be contradictory at times.

Jhummur is so traumatized by the forcible abortion imposed by her husband that she is detached from her natural self. When she develops close acquaintance with a painter Afzal, she feels infected by his sense of humor. She longs to fall into the

tight embrace of him. She envisions the moment how delightful it would be to fall into the embrace of an artist whose sense of humor and convulsive laughter transform him. Such a fantastic process of imagining vicarious pleasure helps her to regain her lost self. This kind of redemptive and recovery oriented process is highlighted in the following lines:

Afzal roared with laughter infecting me with his sense of humor. I felt that all of a sudden I was back to my old self; the self that went to college, enjoyed being alive, had an enormous sense of fun. My friends and I had talked and laughed about nature, about art, about people, had felt deeply about all these. My revisited me one evening in Sebati's small room. Afzal was like an old friend. Afzal admired Rembrandt and Van Gogh, the two Dutch artists, but he confessed to being profoundly influenced by Claude Monet although he preferred to paint women instead of flowers and tendrils. (119)

To take revenge on her husband's bossy and tyrannical nature, she develops an affair with the painter, Afzal. Out of love she is not being close to him. Just with the vindictive desire she befriends Afzal. She wants to sleep with Afzal and conceive a child. Then she would show her husband that now she is pregnant with Haroon's own child. This is how she takes revenge on her husband. A healthy and sane mind can hardly take revenge in this way. She wants to take revenge on him by keeping him in the fog. This is an example of how a traumatized female mind takes a course of revenge.

Victim of psychological trauma can't adjust himself or herself to the new circumstances. Due to the lingering vestiges of trauma, it is really challenging for the victim of psychological trauma to change oneself as per the need and requirement of

the new environment. One of the setbacks of psychologically traumatized victim is his or her aberration from the normal promptness to change oneself so that one can adjust to the fundamental requirement of the new world. Stephen E. Brock has offered his ideas about this aspect. Brock's idea and insight are useful to examine how traumatic memories lead to the impairment of the sensitive organs of the body. She contends as follows:

Symptoms may include a wide variety of impairments in social or occupational functioning, as well as maladaptive extremes of anxiety and depression, and impulse control problems. Individual predisposition or vulnerability seems to play an important role in the risk of occurrence and manifestation although systematic research is still lacking. (15)

One victimized by trauma can't easily sustain the instinctive capacity to survive in the world having distinct surrounding. Anjali Bose has made a journey to Bangalore from her village Gauripur. She has expected a lot from her journey to Bangalore. She hopes to get a job of call center agent as soon as possible once she reaches there. But she had already been traumatized by sexual assault, shame, and guilt. So it is pretty challenging for her to get survived comfortably in Bangalore. This theoretical insight is very helpful to understand Anjali's efforts towards adjustment. Dominick Lacapra views the notion of trauma from the historico-structural perspective. The victims of Trauma have no control over the unpredictable way in which the content of trauma gets manifest. Lacapra's view is expressed as follows:

Trauma we are told is a perpetual present, resilient in its persistence and timeless occupation of a subject who does not and cannot know it. It happened but I donot know it – that it happened or what it was that

happened. Yet this happening is not past since it knows no release from its present because it is not yet known: never known, never forgotten, not yet remembered. (10)

Dominic LaCapra, in a widely supported argument, has proffered that traumatic events numb the senses to the moment of impact and therefore they cannot be registered at the time of their occurrence. It is only after a period of latency that the impact of the event is felt. There is no objective viewing of the incident in the moment of its happening, it is only afterwards in its endless impact on a life that we come to understand the original moment as the beginning of the trauma.

Finally Jhummur surrenders to Afzal sexually. It is an act of accomplishment. Judged by the Islamic code it is an act of adultery. But Jhummur is not ready to agree with this sort of orthodox criteria of judging the activities of woman who is crippled and paralyzed by Islamic orthodoxy and patriarchy. Her heart is so embittered and lacerated that without taking revenge on her husband her soul would not take rest. Getting impregnated by a man other than her husband and convincing her husband that she is conceiving her husband's child is the tactful trick which she played on her loutish husband. In the following lines this sort of issue becomes obviously clear:

I have slept with Afzal for seven consecutive days that month, giving Haroon Hundreds of excuses for not allowing him even to touch me. After the week was over I submitted myself to his sexual onslaughts. He had me as many times as he wanted in the night while I lay inert, near-dead on the bed. Haroon would not allow me; all wet inside, to even go to the toilet to wash. He was dead serious about making me pregnant. Stay as you are. He said anxious that his liquid sperm would get washed away if I douched myself with water. Okay, I will stay as I

am. We will have exciting news to give to each other, sometime this month, won't we? And Haroon gave me one of his gentlest smiles, hugged me and kissed me all over. (155)

It is an ironical situation. It is typically feminine way of answering a person who ruined the self esteem and inner pride of one's own dear one. In addition, Jhummur's act of adultery is an attempt to restore the lost self. Without taking revenge she would not be able to bring back her lost self, esteem and dignity. Hence her act of revenge is apt and appropriate. But such a way of taking revenge sounds puzzling to those who are prone to judge activities from the vantage point of sanity and rationality. To judge the perspective a woman who is subjected to the callous practice like abortion contrary to her will, this is an essential way. Yet this sort of vindictive act is tainted with traumatic trace.

The form of trauma this research addresses is emotional injury, sometimes sudden and unexpected, sometimes taking place during a prolonged assault. Trauma may be caused by natural events or they may be human-caused. Natural disasters do emotionally traumatize even those who survive them without physical injury.

According to psychiatrist Sandra Bloom, "emotions serve as radar for both our bodies and the confusing world around us, and they are central to our survival" (qtd. in Cote and Simpson 26). Emotions register on our faces and in our body language as we experience fear or pleasure.

Emotional responsiveness still can lose its balance and spin us out of control. Judith Herman writes that some experiences "overwhelm the ordinary human adaptations to life. They threaten life or the body. They confront human beings with the extremities of helplessness and terror, and evoke the responses of catastrophe" (qtd. in Cote and Simpson 33). Emotions tell us when and how to act, but they

sometimes convey the stunning message that we cannot act. We are captive of horrible circumstances where fighting back is impossible. Then the emotional system itself may be torn apart or fragmented.

Trauma injures its victims in several ways. In bouts of trauma, victims often seek to find respite in such defensive measures as distractions, or dissociation. Dissociation is a mechanism of the brain that forces us surrender choices to others. Forgetting, a form of dissociation enables a person to maneuver through all the upsetting reminders of an earlier traumatic experience. The numbing aspect includes forgetting with a vengeance, as well as memories that cannot be suppressed. It is also called psychogenic amnesia.

Geoffrey Hartman is the leading writer regarding trauma. He has exposed the inner pattern in which the repressed traumatic traces come out in a sporadic way. Hartman dwells upon the notion of the fallout of trauma within the broader context of cultural phenomena. Hartman's viewpoint regarding cultural trauma is manifest in the following lines:

Trauma theory within literary studies does shift attention, in any case, to the medium of words, their forcefulness as well as impotence. It is a shift with both an intriguing and a more dubious consequence. When we speak of the nightmare sufferings of war, or of the Holocaust's break with civilized values these extra-ordinary determinants of trauma differ from such ordinary ones as an unguarded word or a deliberate insult, or more violent but still random excitations that inflict psychic pain. (2)

Hartman is acutely aware of the pattern in which the consequences of trauma happen to get manifest. Some of consequences of cultural trauma are questionable, according

to Hartman. The questionable consequence of this focus is that it establishes an equivalence between disparate though at times overlapping determinants. Given the existence of the phenomenon called trauma, the variability of human sensitiveness, and the diversity of cultural contexts influencing what is traumatic, it has so far been easier to describe the symptoms or general structure of trauma than to determine in an assured way trauma's etiology.

Jhummur's judgment of the situation is mixed with traumatic trace. Yet there is certain degree of reason. Her action is not entirely wrong. A bruised and humiliated heart does not know the codes of marital honesty. The ethical concern became a matter of less significance. What matters a lot to her is the urgency to revenge. This sort of conviction on the part of Jhummur becomes clear from the following lines:

Our sweet telephonic tete-a tete ended thus with Haroon sending me a resounding kiss from the other end. Putting the receiver down I smiled to myself. Yes, Haroon flood me with your ultimate sap. Let your sperm run riot in my womb in its mad search for my empty, fertile ovum. It won't find them, Haroon, and you will not know about it, you will never find out. I did not know how much money Haroon had been spending on Hasan's illness. I had seen him giving his parents household money every few days. Haroon never discussed money matters with me. Even Sebati paid the downstairs rent straight to Ma-in-law. (158)

She laughs at Haroon's docility. She laughs at him in the same way he laughed at her after she underwent the throes of abortion. At this moment she comes to realize that she is ultimately victorious over the cruel and encroaching moves of her husband. She feels profound sense of inner contentment. It is an example of tit for tat. By so doing she

wants to manage her traumatic torture. At least she counterbalances the callous nature of her husband.

Stephanie Covington has written a lot about how can women free themselves from repeated experience and exposure to violence and trauma. Within the patriarchal structure of society, women are exposed to different forms of violence. Their passions for freedom and autonomy can bring further complications in their lives. They seek techniques of escaping from unexpected disasters made by men or by the system or the weaknesses of feminism. If they become victims of traumatic disorder, they surely seek panacea. When female victims of trauma and stigma strive to identify suitable way to overcome traumatic torture, they seek solace, encouragement and sound counseling. In this way, they try to soothe and manage the ultimate terror and torture of life. Stephanie Covington has pointed out some of the methods to improve the traumatically deteriorating conditions of women who fall victims to several kinds of violence. He has pointed out his views as follows:

True connections are mutual, empathic, creative, energy-releasing, and empowering for all participants. Such connections are so crucial for women that women's psychological problems can be traced to disconnections or violations within relationships—whether in families, with personal acquaintances, or in society at large. Mutuality means that each person in a relationship can represent her feelings, thoughts, and perceptions, and can both move with and be moved by the feelings, thoughts, and perceptions of the other person. Each person, as well as the relationship, can change and move forward because there is mutual influence and mutual responsiveness. Empathy is a complex, highly developed ability to join with another at a cognitive and

affective level without losing connection with one's own experience.

(7)

Mutuality and empathy empower women not with power *over* others, but rather power *with* others. Mutuality and empathy are the saving graces. These virtues can redeem victims from repeated experience of violence. Moreover, good interpersonal relation and inspirations from others can create conducive atmosphere where victims find panacea and sound treatment. The cheerful and buoyant atmosphere is essential to boost victims' confidence. Asthahad gone through this sort of traumatic situation. She had contemplated on suicide also. She feels darkened by hopelessness, despair, pessimism, and loneliness. To overcome the crisis, victims adopt different measures and initiatives. In making the victims recover from deviant shock and traumatic torture, the sympathizers and well-wishers play paramount role. In the harrowing atmosphere, they can feel more oppressed and tormented.

Jhummur gets constant encouragement from her friends and well wishers in traumatic entrapment. She feels encouraged and inspired to think positively about her future. She is slowly struggling to overcome the traumatic conditions. She has found positive glimmer of new future. Even she feels secure in front of him. In other words, it can be confidently said that she is struggling to cope with the traumatic traces of her life. She is optimistic in her life to some extent. Yet, she has to wait and work a lot in order to make tremendous breakthrough in her individual quest. When Jhummur discovers profound truth about her life, she is surprised by things both acceptable and unacceptable. Her radical decision to revenge and the aftermath of her revenge closed the door of traumatic nightmare. She has only one option in her life. When she discovers this sort of truth, she begins to cape the tragedy and trauma of her life. Prior to this sort of realization, she had been running away from reality of trauma. This sort

of realization created an awakening and affirmation. Out of her defeated and demoralized self and subjectivity, she is required to rebuild a beautiful future. The following lines suggest this kind of truth pertaining to her life which is hovering in-between trauma and discovery:

She imagined herself scrambling up the stony sides of an alien people's monuments. Every death made possible a new beginning. And then she thought, with suddenness and finality that shocked her, i doesn't want evidence. My new beginning is here, but different from Baba's and Ma'a generation. Theirs was a struggle- lost, in Baba' case- against communalism and caste -ism and poverty and superstition and too much religion. They were lucky. Their fights were not easy, but simpler and cleaner than mine with MR. G. G. Poverty terrified Baba. But I am terrified, tempted, and corrupted by the infusion of vast sums of new capital. Truth revealed in an imaginary viewfinder. (304)

She admits that she is terrified by the mystery of the new modern world. This new world of Islamic community took her innocence, her naiveté and innocuous belief. Her docility scattered. She is denuded of prelapsarian aura. Slowly and gradually, she begins to accept the dark sides of life. Although her life is increasingly haunted by the defeated sense of being backward and ruined, she has been building and boosting her confidence. The rosy and bright sides of her life are recognized by her. Though she is alienated and damaged by the unpredictable phenomenon, a new self is slowly being born in her. To put the matter distinctly, she is recovering from the legacy of traumatic disorder. Finally, the symptoms of reform and discovery are seen in her personality. That is why it is said she may not be as radical and arrogant as she was in the early days of her youths.

Of all the factors that traumatize an individual's psyche, violence culture, failure to adapt and adopt modernity, gender bias, sexual harassment and sexual assault are the dominating factors. Victims also suffer from the same kinds of shattering and heart-rending events. The following extract cited below justifies the point:

The growing crime of rape is directly related to female vulnerability. However, modernized society, organized violence against women is rampant. Rape and sexual assault rates for males are less clear, due in part to only recent social awareness that men can be sexually victimized, but are estimated to range between two and four percent. Peer sexual assault against adolescent women is, sadly, quite common as well. (29)

Because of the shame and secrecy associated with being a victim of rape or sexual assault in many cultures, it is likely that some victims do not identify themselves as such in research studies. Sexual assault and rape can be particularly devastating and traumatizing events, and are substantial risk factors. Guilt and excruciatingly painful sense of shame corrode the innermost conscience of the main character those who died in the society oppressed by Islamic orthodoxy and fanaticism.

Harshness and aggression practiced by male pig chauvinist are no less traumatic to women than injurious events of the outside world. She has the inherent vulnerability of being adversely affected by any unpleasant experience and disaster. Of course, she is attracted towards the seamy side of life of terror. But she basically lacks strength and stamina to endure any kind of challenges in violence. She is surrounded by many things at the same time. That is why it is necessary to dwell upon the psychological aspects of trauma to which she is prone. Feelings of repentance and shock resulting from her seduction unleashed a disorder in the innermost core of her psyche. Trauma produces repeated, uncontrollable and incalculable effects that last long after its precipitating cause.

III. Gender Trauma and Crisis of Woman Identity in Nasrin's *Sodh*

The core finding of this research is that when patriarchal domination and encroachment go to the limit, women are bound to suffer. Limitless domination of women by men in the Islamic society set the stage for the inception of traumatic condition. Excess of doubt on the part of husband can ensure a traumatic path to woman. This is the core finding of this research. Traumatic shock and jolt enabled woman to take different course of actions which cannot easily be judged by applying the masculine criteria of judgment. In Taslima Nasrin's *Sodh*, a female character Jhummur is forced to live a traumatic life. She is married to Haroon, a successful Islamic man. She conceived his child. She is loyal to her husband. She did not have any kind of sexual affair and indulgence in premarital life. But her husband is obstinate and headstrong. He thinks that the child she is carrying in her womb is not his own. Rather it is the effect of her premarital sex. So he forced her to abort. She does her level best to convince that she is carrying his child.

The pressures of patriarchy exerted traumatic shock in Jhummmur. The condition of being a subordinate woman compelled her to live in a pathetic condition. She feels that she is an adulterous now. But she tries to transform her guilty conscience to the vindictive act. She makes up her mind to carry Afzal's child. She does not want to offer her body to Haroon to receive his sperm, but wants him to wait foolishly, as if the child is his own. It was her way of expressing anger, protesting about baseless suspicion and paying him back in the same coin. She even refuses to go to her sister Nupur's son's birth day party. Sebati's husband Anwar is impotent and even Sebati thinks of sleeping with Afzal. At one stage Afzal asks her as to why she was coming to him, if she loves Haroon. Jhumur says that he won't understand it.

But now she does not want to see Afzal and surrender ever again. She is cunning enough to use an act of adultery as the vindictive act. That is why she is so energetic while launching revenge from a different vantage point. Then he allows Haroon to get satisfied, who is not aware of her affair with Afzal. Jhumur's bosom bears marks of love bites of Afzal, but Haroon wants to make them smooth. She says to herself that Haroon's sperm cannot now find her ovum in her womb, and Haroon will never come to know. In fifteen days Jhumkur starts having morning sickness. Haroon shows his extreme love for Jhumkur, but she does not forgive Haroon for the agonies, mistrust, insult and humiliation suffered in abortion. She is not happy and not peaceful, even though carrying a child. This was her way of registering a protest in retaliation. Jhumkur's parents and sister visit her at her house. Haroon admits her to hospital for delivery, looks after her well and showers affection, but Jhumkur considers these as superfluous. She wants to tell but does not tell Haroon that this child is not his, and that he has destroyed his own child earlier. The new born child is held by Haroon, but she remembers the mutilated parts of her earlier child after abortion. All compare child's features with Haroon's. Child is named Ananda and brought home.

Three years having passed, changes take place in the lives of near relatives. Change and adaptive sense makes her manage the shock of trauma easier. Jhumkur's father-in-law has died. She makes Haroon aware of importance of life with friends. She announces that she has got a school teacher's job on her own efforts and capabilities, which she tried without the knowledge of her husband, for earning own money. But this makes Haroon unhappy. She feels that she is someone, standing on own feet. Having avenged the indignity suffered by bringing someone else's child in the hands of Haroon, she feels internal joy and happiness. The novel exhorts women to break the chains of bondage of marriage, and stand on their own terms and conditions. Though society is male biased and there are traditions and women may suffer emotional and physical hardships, but the women can still have their own life. The women should think beyond fate, and redefine their relationships.

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