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Poetics of Torture: Trauma in Sylvia Plath's Poems

A Thesis

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Letter of Approval

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “Poetics of Torture: Trauma in Sylvia Plath’s poems,” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Kula Chandra Sharma, has been approved by the research committee.

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Abstract

The research entitled “Poetics of torture: Trauma in Sylvia Plath’s poems” deals with the traumatic issue in Plath’s poems. Through her poetry Plath expresses her personal anguishments, fragmented mentality, pain and suffering, and she universalize them to make representable of the whole female race. She tries to prove that the patriarchy was the cause of trauma in females lives, female are psychologically wounded by the patriarchy. To make her trauma more sensational Plath identifies herself with different traumatic events such as holocaust, delivery case, circumcision, death of someone loved and so on. Plath did so to expose the atrocity of patriarchy upon female. She writes poetry to relieve from the traumatic life memory. So her motif seems to be thrauptic but the result is opposite because she becomes sadomachocistic. So she cannot work through her trauma but she is acting out on her trauma, which leads her to death. So in her poems Plath glorifies the death because she thinks that death is better then living in this hellish world, where women are burned alive. But another aspect is her persona is hysterical: to attack on male by performing unacceptable behavior and by pretending of being mad, so her hidden motif is also doing politics.

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I. Introducing Sylvia Plath Vis-à-vis Trauma

A very prolific and versatile writer, Sylvia Plath uses her poetry to express her mental, emotional, social and physical torture produced or given by patriarchal society and its ideology, basically represented by her father and her husband. Her main aim of creating literature is to express her unbearable pain or torture. Plath was a “victim of the sexist society; her suicide a response to the oppression of women, and her poetry a choreography of female wounds” (Martin 191). To release from the pain, she plays with verbal art. Plath’s most of the poems are clearly reflective of the paralysis brought about by male suppression, tyranny, hegemony, infidelity and her self depression, which is the result of patriarchy and loss of her love object. And also in her poems we can find her hysterical expression, as a result of unnecessary suppression by patriarchy.

By creating a fictional persona of ‘I’, ‘Me’ and ‘My’, she tries to expose her desire to detach from the world of patriarchy. Through the use of fictional persona of varying levels, she talks about her frustration, guilt, pain, hurt, hatred and depression affect. But, some of her poems this persona deals with revolutionary, horrified and terrifying images, full of anger.

She sketches domestic life as torture because it is the desire of the patriarchs to see the women at home, so the woman responds by fearing to go out. The public wants to see the women thin, so the woman starves herself. It is a systematic oppression of contemporary women. By presenting shattered subjects and life she tries to liberate herself from the traumatic experience and psychic pain. Control or domination by her parental figure and her husband is noteworthy here to talk about torture on her. Suffering of the contemporary American women and suffering of the Nazi victims strikes horror into her heart and she vicariously identifies herself with these atrocities. Plath makes use of holocaust metaphors to illuminate the traumatic life experience in her own life. The codified trauma of the holocaust may echo Plath’s pain in language that is close to representing her reality.

Her poems are exploring and exposing the evils and corruption of patriarchy, which tries to limit women within the boundaries of house, that create physical, psychic and emotional torture for her. Her poems, journals and letters express a complex voice of suffering and murderous desires as well as rage at her relationship with society and her contemporary literary world. She describes her poems as “self destruction and murderous feelings as an exhilarating act of contempt” (Park 467).

What is striking about Plath’s biography is that she was an accomplished writer, wife and mother and even she described herself as a “triple threat women” (192 Martin). Her friends “used to describe her as energetic, efficient, and cheerful, and often express surprise at or are shocked by the isolation, confusion, searing pain and anger (192 Martin). Savage anger, bitterness, pain and suffering are frequently emerged themes of Plath’s poems: Lady Lazarus, The Applicant, Daddy, Ariel, Purdah, Cut, The Munich Mannequins, Mauldin, Edge, Elm, Morning Song and Fever 103. Expression of anger, sorrow, defiance and grotesque humor through women poet’s persona is understood as an unconventional prediction before 1960s but Plath establishes this tradition in her poem. Basically after her divorce from Ted Hughes consists the poems of intense suffering in which the pain of her life is translated to the page. Much of her poetry tries to capture the society of the 1950s with its rigidity defined gender and sex roles that allow little flexibility for women like Plath, to whom the approved female roles seemed nothing more than death.

She has attempted to turn personal pain and suffering into intellectual abstraction through poetry without any formal structure. Plath’s work was not popularly known until after her suicide, so some critics take her death as a literary act. Before her death her poetry used to take as a confessional turn which are subjective, therapeutic, open in form, personal, expressive of self, ironically detached, narrative and anti establishment, but after her death, her poetry used to observe from different perspective: feminist, traumatic, new historicist etc.

And also after her death her poetry began to be read from political perspectives as well as the intellectualization or universalization of her personal pain and suffering has been given to her poetry a political color.

Plath fictionalizes the aspect of her personal life to warrant the reader about women's psychic, emotional, social, physical and mental torture due to male suppression, hegemony and restriction and even status quo mentality of the society. Through her poetry she has attempted to tackle with the status quo mentality of the society. In some of her poems she presents women reduced to nothing more than commodities appear robbed of their humanity. On the other hand her persona is in revolt resisting to assimilate the patriarchal norms and value. She used to write to release from her childhood fear that her mother would abandon her if she cried for any reason. She re-experiences and remembers her childhood memory from the vantage point of maturity and chooses the words of a child to best convey her audience and reader. Plath become unable to release from psychic pain despite the supremacy of life writing but it seems that her future has been shaped by the real or perceived parental influence from early childhood. She berated herself for her inadequacies engaged in negative thinking, could see nothing but her failures. Mood disorders are potentially fatal illness. "Self destructive thoughts and impulses and even suicide attempts are not uncommon in persons suffering from these illness" (Stanley 405). Her hysterical nature is the expression of psychological instability and excessive emotionalism.

Autobiography is another un-ignorable dimension in Plath's poetry, but she always transmutes personal experience and issues into a representative agony as a female and a human being. Plath uses madness as a way to escape from the home as prison, male dominated culture, patriarchal ideology and domination to achieve a more authentic self. She tries to imply that domesticity or patriarchal society inhibits the women writers' creative practice. Her poems allow us to look into her mind. They provide a few snapshots of torture

and pain in her life. Regarding women's commodification and the consciousness of women Plath writes in her journal; "to yearn for an organism of opposite sex to comprehend and heighten your thoughts and instincts, and to realize that most American males worship woman as a sex machine with rounded breasts and a convenient opening in the vagina, as a painted doll who shouldn't have a thought in her pretty head other than cooking a steak dinner and comforting him in bed after a hard 9-5 day at a routine business job (Stanley 36).

Sylvia Plath expresses her pain and torture through verbal art, especially poetry. She was inspired by the view that instead of direct and open expression of pain and suffering, expression through poetry could be more effective to release oneself from traumatic life experiences and events. Behind the expression of torture through poetry, is feminist politics. The motifs of the feminist politics are to explore, criticize and resist the male tyranny and hegemony, and the status quo mentality of any society. She believed that poetry could give better information about male suppression upon women and it should make them able to revolt resisting assimilation to patriarchal norms and values. By doing so she colored or disguised her poetry with politics.

Even though she used her poetry to discover her self, it represents all female hood and her poems are social. In this way Plath has been doing politics in a hidden and secret way. The expression of what she has been experiencing is the best way to inform women about their pain and suffering. By writing poetry with such deep and heartily/hurtful experiences, she tries to convince all women to raise voice against male tyranny and hegemony. Therefore, she has been doing indirect and hidden politics by transforming her personal pain, torture and agony into universal and social. So literature can not remain aloof from the socio-political condition of the time. We can not separate personal experiences and life from our society and culture. In this way like culture, politics is one of the most influential factors of life. So, by expressing personal pain and suffering it is the rights and purposes of human being to do

politics. The expression of P.B. Shelly, “poets are unacknowledged legislators of the world” (Stanley 225), strengthens the bond between poetry and politics.

Therefore, for Plath poets shouldn't limited to their own personal experiences but they should be able to universalize them. There is convincing power in the writing of the poets so they should revolutionize women against male tyranny and hegemony. Plath presents her persona as a sufferer, panicked and agonized in her earlier poems but in her later poems she presents her persona as hysterical and revolutionary. The persona of her earlier poems is also revolutionary in an indirect way, but her hysterical persona is more revolutionary and challenging to the patriarchal society. Hysterical persona presents in an unacceptable way or expresses harsh and undigested matter for a society, which should be more effective to reform the patriarchal society.

In the time of Plath women were seeking release from patriarchal domination, hegemony, suppression, tyranny, pain, torture and agony. So her duty was to make the women conscious about their rights and make them revolutionary against patriarchy.

Before her death, her poetry didn't become so popular and, critics and scholars didn't give keen attention to her poetry, even though she presents traumatic persona, as a silent threaten to patriarchy. But after her death her poetry gained sufficient attention of critics and society. The way, her death is a poetic and literary act which makes her poetry more important and her suicide gives great shocks to patriarchy. It is the patriarchal society, which compelled her to revolt against it. Through the help of poetic diction she fights with the patriarchal society. She didn't attack the patriarchy directly by using words as weapon but her way of revolt is different because she presents her persona is full of pain and suffering, which should arouse sympathy on the hearts of readers and it should be the source of revolution. Her words are not simply a word but a wound. Her persona didn't speak directly attacking on patriarchy but she presents her persona in a miserable and pathetic condition.

Male writers were permitted to articulate their aggression, however, violent or hostile; women are supposed to pretend that they are never angry. Sylvia Plath refuses to honor this concept of feminine decorum and dares to express her negative emotions. “Beware . . . Beware . . . out of the ash . . . I rise with my red hair...And I eat men like air” (“Lady Lazarus”). Plath chooses to be “true to her experience and to her art rather than to the traditional norms of feminine experience” (Martin195). Plath’s poetry embodies the profound interrelationship of destruction and creation. Plath’s poems explore her own mental anguish, her troubled marriage to fellow poet Ted Hughes, her unresolved conflicts with her parents and patriarchal society, and her own vision of herself.

Plath’s poems have been criticized diversely by different critics in various ways like psychoanalysis, feminism, new historicism and so on. Her poems are the result of hurt and rage. In some poems her rage is directed to her father, in others at her husband and her mother. Many feminist critics have “focused on the writers rage at her relationship with society and her contemporary literary world” (Park 467). Regarding her relations with contemporary society, Pamela J. Annas writes:

Sylvia Plath has this dialectical awareness of self as both subject and object in particular relation to the society in which she lived. The problem for her and perhaps the main problem of cold war America, is in the second aspect of a dialectical consciousness – an awareness of oneself in significant relation to past and future. (177)

In the same way Plath has been suffered by different traumatic events that are inner as well as outer. Psychological researcher Anton A. Leenars and Susanne Weneksten comment about Plath’s suicide:

Suicide is not only due to external ‘stress’ or pain or even rational choice not one event. The common consistency in suicide is, in fact, with lifelong

adjustment patterns; something that is evident in Sylvia Plath's life, as in Cesare Pavese's and Natalie's. These suicidal people have experienced a steady toll of life events; that is threat stress, failure, loss and challenge-pain-that has undermined their ability to adjust and they chose death. (623-24)

The critic tries to show that her poems reveal that she was suffering from a mental disorder. They conclude that, "unbearable pain; an emotional state of forlornness, deprivation, and distress; heightened disturbance; over powered by emotion and mental constriction; a serious disorder in adjustment; frustrated and unsatisfied need; and wanting, if not needing to egress"(qtd in Stanley 402) are constantly appeared themes in Plath's poem.

Similarly Gina Wisker argues that Plath presents her domestic as threatening deceptive and unreliable. The pain of child bearing and rearing is revealed through surreal images. Plath takes her domestic life which has been controlled by patriarchy as the main cause of her pain and suffering. Focusing on Plath's use of domestic as threatening, Wisker argues that:

The removal or undercutting of the dependable domestic is the stuff of horror. Romance and 'happily ever after' are problematised in Plath, well before sociology focused on the house-bound housewife, disenfranchised, her visions undermined by her physical and economic situation. (107)

Her controversial poem 'Daddy' explores her hate and love for her father. To some extent it seems that due to the lack of her father's love she presents her father in a negative way. But feminist critics, Gina Wisker writes:

Standing at the blackboard in her memory as he does in one of the few remaining pictures of him, her teacher-father reminds her of a devil with a cleft foot, a vampire lover capture from the tomb whose power is unavoidable even after death. Although she rejects his contact, it is unavoidable. The

severed, uprooted, black grave voices which just can't worm through are heard simultaneously as they are denied. (110)

In fact Plath's poetry and her autobiographical life are inseparable. Through the reading of her poems we should study her life. Her death brings change in the perspective to see her poem. Patrica Stanley clarifies that "her husband's infidelity is the main cause of her deep depression which leads her to suicide" (813 Stanley).

Hence for Plath creating literature was to get self realization as well as to attack on patriarchy. It is her husband, representative of patriarchy, whose infidelity makes her more tormented. Plath talks about women's commodifications in her poem 'The Munich Mannequins'. Regarding this issue, Pamela J. Annas writes:

Man has finally transformed women into a puppet, a mannequin something that reflects both his disgust with and his fear of women. A mannequin can't have children, but neither does it have that messy, terrifying, and incomprehensible blood flow each month. Mannequins entirely do away with the problems of female creativity and self-determination. (181)

Plath has been victimized by her father and her husband. She identifies the repressive figure of her father with Nazi Germany because the memory of her dead father is always tormenting her. In the mean time her husband began an affair with another woman then he and Sylvia had got separated. All of her pain, Plath intellectualizes in her poems. Due to excessive pain she presents herself full of rage. Focusing on rage Alica Ostriker comments on her poem Ariel:

There was the thrilling idiomatic yet intense language, the incantatory repetitions, the surreal imagery, the slant rhymes, the cackling wit, the pure rage at all that I was supposed to hold holy, including love,

marriage, children. “kindness” was the ironic title of the poem with the blood jet in it . . . kindness is helping with a crying child, declaring that sugar can cure everything, offering a cup of tea, and threatening to anesthetize the poet – who responds with her antithetical fluid. (371)

Her poems are the reflection of her true inner self. As a confessional poet we can interpret her poems as the confession of her psychological fragmentation and inner conflicts. Her poems show us her wretchedness and unbearable pain. In this regard, emphasizing on her psychological condition, A.A. Leenaars and S. Wenekstern writes:

A related document, and in many ways a personal one, is the poem. Poems have always been seen as a looking glass, being open like the diary and suicide note, to understanding the human mind. ...there are a hosts of poets who killed themselves, including John Berryman, Hart Crane, Cesare Pavese, Anne Sexton, Sara Teasdale, and of course Sylvia Plath (Lester, 1993). These poets’ lives, as evident in their poems, diaries and other documents were full of pain, depression, and suicidal behavior. (618)

In the same way her poetry explores the torture, pain, suffering, agony etc. of twentieth century women. These happen due to the oppression and suppression done upon women, social and political injustice, marginalization, victimization, restriction and so on. Plath’s poem ‘The Applicant’ presents the women’s commodification. Referring this poem Pamela J. Annas writes:

The woman in the poem is seen as an appendage; she works, but she works in a realm outside socially recognized labor. She works for the man in the black suit. She is seen as making contact with the world only through the medium of the man, who is already twice removed.

This buffering effect is exacerbated by the fact that the man is probably not engaged in work that would allow him to feel a relationship to the product of his labor. (175)

All these criticisms prove that Plath has been expressing her torture, pain and suffering and anger in her poem. The poem 'Lady Lazarus' can be interpreted as a struggle for control over one's own art. For Lady Lazarus, domination over her art (death) is prevented by her torture, Herr Doktor. She identifies this powerful character with a Nazi doctor who brings the speaker back to life from her suicide, performing experiments that echo actual atrocities of the Jewish Holocaust.

Plath has been involved with the world's events and she identifies with its pain and suffering through her artistic skills of transmuting the personal into universal art work. About the identification of her personal pain with other normal woman she writes: "I have come, with great pain and effort, to the point where my desires and emotions and thoughts center around, what the normal woman's center around, and what do I find? Barrenness" (qtd in Pinsky). Her last poem 'Edge' expose that how much women are tormented through the control on their life. 'Edge' begins:

The women is perfected

Her dead

Body wears the smile of accomplishment.

On this extract Pinsky comment: "the dead body is the finished work of the speaker, her product and destiny" (565).

All these criticisms prove that Plath roused the problem of the 1950s before women who face patriarchal domination and status quo mentality of the society. This period assumed an attitude towards women that, women shouldn't be angry, shouldn't make individual identity, shouldn't face public directly, they need to be submissive and polite, they should be

responsible to their husband and children. Plath also felt great social pressure of marriage. At that time average marriage age for women was 20, but Sylvia was nearly 23, so she feels great social pressure and suppression. So her poems are the voice of tortured, agonized and panicked women of the 1950s in America. Plath creates the platform in her poems to resist the oppressive patriarchy. She simply clarifies and makes conscious to the women who are unconscious about their own miserable, marginalized, and suppressed condition, but not she directly attacks on patriarchy. As the society and her family desire she should be submissive and docile, she presents her poetry and her self in the same way. So by simply making women conscious through her poetic persona she has been doing politics.

II. Trauma

The word 'trauma' was used for physical blows and injury before 20th century but it is used today to describe psychological wound due to torture and pain upon individual. In general trauma describes an overwhelming experiences of sudden, or catastrophic events in, which the responses to the event occurs in the after delayed and uncontrolled repetitive occurrence of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena" (Caruth 181). Freudian psychoanalysis provides a model of traumatic subjectivity and various accounts about the effects of trauma and memory. Feminism generated not only as a political context but also as a model of community for speaking out about forms of physical and sexual abuse that has been borrowed by subsequent survivor groups. Deconstruction is another theory, which shapes the emergence of trauma theory. This theory includes both work around the experiences of survivor of Holocaust and other personal and collective pain, torture and suffering.

The clinical work on trauma also has shaped trauma theory on literature, which informed by the development of special type of psychological theory in America. When the memory of traumatic experience takes place, the mind and the body become numbed. In such condition Post Traumatic Stress Disorder takes place. Trauma theory has been institutionalized in the concept of post traumatic stress disorder, by the American psychiatric association in 1950. Ruth Leys defines post traumatic stress disorder "is fundamentally a disorder of memory" (2). Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub's *Testimony; Crises of Witnessing in Literature* (1992), Cathy Caruth's *Trauma; Explorations in Memory* (1995), Dominick Lacapra's *Trauma, Absence, loss and writing History, writing Trauma* (1999) and Kali Tal's *Worlds of Hurt* (1996), has been opened the interest in trauma within humanities considering the importance of these books and trauma theory, Susannah Radstone opines:

Pointing to influential texts raises questions, then, concerning both the academic and cultural contexts into which these book emerged and the

past played by these contexts in the consequent adoption, canonization and development within the humanities of the theories and perspectives disseminated by these volumes. Though the rise of cultural movements and moods serves as the object of study for cultural and social studies, the ascendance of theories and ideas within the Humanities themselves is less commonly placed under such scrutiny (9).

Geoffrey Hartman considers trauma within the limits of language and literature. For Hartman, literary verbalization is a means to make a wound acceptable. As a specifically literary endeavor trauma study explores the relation of words and wounds. Its main focus is on words that wound and presumably can be healed.

Judith Herman and Laura S. Brown are feminist psychologist began to comment on the implicit male bias in defining PTSD because traumatic hysteria was first diagnosed as a female disorder only belatedly being applied to men. Literature of trauma is the expression of traumatic experience, to make it real both to the victim and to the community. Such writing helps to produce sympathy for the traumatized author.

The word ‘trauma’ couldn’t become synonymous word for disaster. The idea of “catastrophe as trauma provides a method of interpretation, for it posits that the effects of an event may be dispersed and manifested in many forms not obviously associated with the event” (Berger 572). Moreover, this dispersal occurs across time, so that the impact of the experienced event is produced it’s full impact only years later. This representational and temporal hermeneutics of the symptoms has “powerful implications for contemporary theory” (Berger 572).

In it’s emphasis on the retrospective reconstruction of the traumatic event, a traumatic analysis is both “constructivist and empirical” (Berger 572). It pays the closest attention to the representational means through which an event is remembered and yet remains the

importance of the event itself, the thing that did happen. It is at this point the concept of trauma can be of immense value in the study of history and historical narratives and also narrative in general as the verbal representation of temporality.

Another crucial aspect of trauma is its importance to the study and an interpretation of cultural symptoms of the growths, wounds, tortures, scars on a social body and its compulsive repeated actions. The overwhelming power of trauma always “produces the same effect, which is to turn you into a helpless subject – whether in domestic situations or war or natural disasters” (Hartman 261). Another striking importance of trauma theory is that it provides ways of “reconceptualizing important directions in critical theory itself” (Berger 571). It is helpful to solve the controversies between Heidegger and de Man about “how events in the past return to haunt in the present” (Berger 573). Berger writes:

A theory of trauma will intersect with critical vocabularies which problematize presentation and attempt to define its limits—discourses of the sublime, the sacred, the apocalyptic, and the other in all its guises. Trauma theory is another such discourse of unrepresentable of the event or object that destabilizes language and demands a vocabulary and syntax in some sense incommensurable with what went before (573).

As a specially “literary endeavor or trauma study explores the relation of words and wounds” (Hartman 259). The main focus of trauma theory is on words that wound and presumably can be healed. Trauma theory can be defined from two approaches: first is psychoanalytic approach, second is cultural approach. Sigmund Freud, Dominik Lacapra and Cathy Caruth are the leading figure in psychoanalytic trauma but Kali Tal is a prominent figure in cultural trauma.

Sigmund Freud, a trauma theorist and main explorer of trauma in the form of psychoanalysis. In *Studies on Hysteria* Freud and Breuer express the view that the “reminiscences that causes hysterical suffering are historical in the sense that they are linked to a actual traumas in the patients life” (qtd in Kaplan 186). They explore the causes of trauma in male and female “males largely have traumatic effects from accidents, women from watching by the beside of sick parents or children, or from extreme sexual repression” (qtd in Kaplan 26). The causes of hysterical phenomena in female are due to both seductions and fantasies.

Oxford Dictionary defines hysteria is “a state of extreme excitement, fear or anger in which a person or a group of people, loses control of their emotions and starts to cry, laugh, etc” (766). Freud emphasizes on the recurring memory of traumatic events. For him traumatic neurosis “emerges as the reenactment of an event that one can not simply leave behind” (16). Here “the dissociation of un assimilated memories, a focus on the traumatic nature of unconscious association” (qtd in Kaplan 17) is a central issue for psychoanalysis. Freud theorize that the hysteria as an internal assault but war as an external assault. Motivated unconscious is a condition in which “the traumatic event may trigger early traumatic happenings, already perhaps mingled with fantasy, and shape how the current event is experienced” (qtd in Kaplan 33). For example in case of Sylvia Plath, her husband’s infediliate behavior, recall her relationship with her dead father. Freud conceptualizes that “family became the site for female hysteria” (qtd in Kaplan 33). Hysterics suffer mainly from reminiscences of their past traumatic events. The main component of Freud’s psychoanalysis is that the past can cause pain in present.

Freud was of the opinion that an overpowering event is unacceptable to consciousness, can be forgotten and yet return in the form of somatic systems of compulsive repetitive behaviors. Here, the traumatic event and its aftermath again become central to

psychoanalysis, but again he shifted his emphasis from the event to which he then theorize is “somasochism”. Somasochism is a psychological condition in which individual is entertaining or taking enjoyment from hurting somebody and being hurt by remembering a traumatic event. Returning of a traumatic event after a period of delay is striking for Freud.

The term “latency” which means the period in which the effects of experience are not apparent has been described by Freud “as the successive movement from an event to its repression to its return”. Caruth opines that the victim of a crash is never fully conscious during the accident itself. The experience of trauma, the fact of latency, would thus seem to consist, not in the forgetting of a reality that can never be fully known, but in “as inherent latency within the experience itself” (qtd in Caruth 8). Giving emphasis on the historical trauma Caruth opines:

The historical power of the trauma is not just that the experience is repeated after its forgetting but that it is only in and through its inherent forgetting that it is first experienced at all. And, it is this inherent latency of the event that paradoxically explains the peculiar, temporal structure, the belatedness, of historical experience: since the traumatic event is not experienced as it occurs, it is fully evident only in connection with another place, and in another time (6).

The recent view of trauma studies that “trauma is not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual’s past, but rather in the way its very unassimilated nature ... the way it was precisely not known the first instance ... returns to haunt the survivor later on” (Caruth 4). The theory focuses that trauma is only known through repetitive flashbacks that literally reenact the event because the mind can not represent it. Traumatic experience is understood as a fixed and timeless photographic negative stored in an unlocatable place of the brain, but it maintains the ability to interpret consciousness and maintains the ability to be

transferred to non-traumatized individuals. This view of trauma perceives that presenting trauma through speaking or narration as inherently pathologic. In another way presenting trauma as inherently pathologic perpetuates the notion that all responses to any kind of traumatic experiences produce a dissolute consciousness.

Caruth's formulation of trauma theory based on the abreactive model and Freud become a source for the theorization of literary trauma studies, especially as a source to support the notion of transhistorical trauma. Caruth also believes in the intergenerational transmission of trauma. Such type of trauma theory claims that traumatic experience is repetitive, timeless and unspeakable. Caruth argues that "the experience of a trauma repeats itself, exactly and unremittingly, through the unknowing acts of the survivor and against his very will" (2). Trauma is a repeated suffering of the event, but it is also a continual living of its site. Caruth suggests that traumatic experience is contagious by stating that trauma: "is never simply one's own . . . but precisely the way we are implicated in each others traumas" (24). Caruth also claims that traumatic experiences is transhistorically passed across generational gaps, primarily through verbal or written acts of remembering. Caruth in her *Traumatic Awakenings* defines trauma "as the response to an unexpected or overwhelming violent event or events that are not fully grasped as they occur, but return later in repeated flash backs, nightmares and other repetitive phenomena"(208). Caruth writes in *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* about "how wound becomes voice" (Berger 577). She opens a new ground in the "relation between pain and language, in its narrative historical and ethical dimensions" (Berger 577). Caruth argues that trauma as it first occurs is incomprehensible. It is only later, after a period of "latency", that it can be placed in a narrative: "the impact of the traumatic event lies precisely in its belatedness, in its refusal to be simply located" (Caruth 8).

Several key trauma theorists adhere to the notion that a traumatized protagonist in literature brings the awareness of an individual trauma that is after connected to a larger social factors and cultural values. We can see that the trauma literature provides a picture of the individual suffers, but presents it is to suggest that this persona is an every person figure. In fact, a significant purpose of presenting a persona in such traumatic way as a reference to a historical period in, which a group of people or a particular culture, race and gender have collectively experienced massive trauma. Traumatized persona expresses a specific, idiosyncratic response to trauma, while also functioning as a representative figure of a social group. Tortures effects of suppression on female body and psyche, yet emphasizes the inner strength and resiliency of American women, which is a perspective articulated in Sylvia Plath's poetry.

According to Felman and Laub testimony "demands a witness and it is only within the content of witnessing that testimony to trauma is possible" (20 Radstone). Ruth Leys brings the context of sexual harassment of Paula Jones by president Clinton. Jones was suffered from post traumatic stress, anxiety, intrusive thoughts and memories, and sexual aversion. In this context Leys writes: "the victim is unable to recollect and integrate the hurtful experiences in normal consciousness, instead she is haunted or possessed by intrusive traumatic memories" (Leys 2). The rise of trauma theory is associated with hypnosis. With the help of hypnosis and hypnotic, Charcot "legitimated the concept of trauma by proposing that the historical crises that he suggestively induced in his patients were reproductions of traumatic scenes"(Leys 8). Leys clarifies trauma "as a situation of dissociation or absence from the self in which the victim unconsciously imitated or identified with, the aggressor or traumatic scene in a condition that was likened to a state of heightened suggestibility or hypnotic trance" (Leys 8).

The individuals or groups never experienced the trauma directly themselves but they are inheriting the traumatic memories of those who died long ago. In this context Leys comments on Felman's view:

Felman has applied the same idea specifically to women asserting that "every women's life contains, explicitly or in implicit ways the story of a trauma," including the story or symptoms of psychic traumas that have occurred "entirely at secondhand, as it were, through the mechanism of insidious trauma" and that can be transmitted intergenerationally. (Leys 284)

Ruth Leys dissolves the contradictions remain in the US based trauma theory that is between mimetic and anti-mimetic theory of trauma. According to the mimetic theory of trauma, the traumatized subjects are neither fully in control of nor in charge of themselves. But anti-mimetic theory regards trauma as if it were a purely external event. According to this model, production of memories is not linked to the unconscious, unbiddable process of the inner world. Instead memories are understood as an unassailable record of traumatic events. Where as in the mimetic theory, trauma produces psychical dissociation from the self, in the anti-mimetic theory, it is the record of an unassimilable event which is dissociated from memory. For Leys, mimetic and anti-mimetic approaches can not dissect from each other. The mimetic paradigm posits a moment of identification with the aggressor, but the anti-mimetic theory depicts violence as purely and simply an assault from outside. Ruth Leys elucidates:

Mimetic theory holds that trauma or the experience of traumatized subject, can be understood as involving a kind of hypnotic imitation or Identification in which, precisely because the victim can not recall the original traumatogenic event, she is fated to act it out or in other ways

imitate it . . . The anti-mimetic theory is compatible with, and often gives way to, external event that befalls a fully constituted subject; whatever the damage to the latter's psychical autonomy and integrity, there is in principle no problem of eventually remembering or otherwise recovering the event, though in practice the process of bringing this about may long and tortuous. (Leys 298)

Traumatic memory is rarely represented as an exact recalling of event. Rather, the construction of the past includes new details with each telling, or it is constructed from different perspectives, which demonstrates that memories of the traumatic experience are revised and actively rearranged according to the needs of the individual at a particular moment.

Violence upon women is the most heinous form of torture. Torture in the form of violence is potential for trauma. Regarding this issue Kavita Dayia raises the question about violence upon women in Indian context:

Is sexual violence against women always about communal (understood as masculinity in their analysis) "honour" or do other kinds of motivations and desires (class discontent, cast conflict, gender conflict, sexual desire) manifest themselves in the form of community? How do we address, and in what histories do we inscribe, the sexual violence against women that was intracommunity, for which few official records exist in the archives? How are memories and gendered bodies intertwined and what burden does sexuality bear in the production of identity local, national, ethnic, class through violence? (Dayia 235)

Dominik Lacapra's, *Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory Trauma* focuses on three psychoanalytic topics: the return of the repressed, acting out versus working through,

and historical trauma versus structural trauma Lacapra argues a traumatic historical event “tends to be repressed and then to return in forms of compulsive repetition” (Berger 575). He is concerned “primarily with the return of the repressed as discourse, rather than with physical returns such as genocidal repetitions in Cambodia and Bosnia” (Berger 575).

Lacapra’s next concern is “transference” “Transference in psychoanalysis is itself a return of the repressed, or rather more conscious summoning of the repressed, transference repeats or acts out a past event or relationship in a new therapeutic setting that allows for critical evaluation and change” (Berger 576).

Lacapra’s next concept of trauma studies is acting out and working through, which she takes from Freud and psychoanalysis and then she developed them in a way that makes them especially interesting for use in historical studies. Acting out is related to compulsive repetition, to the people who undergo a trauma. They have a tendency to relive the past, to be haunted by the ghosts of traumatic memory. But Lacapra describes working through as a “desirable process (Lacapra 143). In working through individual tries to gain critical distance on a traumatic event, and the individual is distinguished from past and then exists in present which dissects him/her from their past.

To theorize the concept of acting out and working through, he develops the concept of historical trauma and structural trauma. Historical trauma is specific and everyone could not become a subject to it. It involves a kind of “virtual experience through which one puts oneself in the others position, while recognizing the difference of that position and hence not taking the others place” (Lacapra 722). Historical trauma is related to particular events that do indeed involve losses. But in structural trauma everyone could become subject. Structural trauma is not an event but an anxiety producing condition of possibility related to the potential for historical traumatization.

Lacapra describes two important implications of his view regarding the historical trauma. First, trauma provides a method of rethinking postmodern and post-structuralist theories with the historical context. As Lacapra says, “the postmodern and the post-holocaust become mutually intertwined issues that are best addressed in relation to each other (Berger 576). Secondly, Lacapra provides over the literary canon suggesting that a canonical text should not help permanently install an ideological order but should rather “help one to foreground ideological problems and work through them critically” (qtd in Berger 576). Each text would be in effect a site of trauma with which the reader would have engaged. But Lacapra doesn’t examine the relations between historical trauma and any literary text although literature can be the site of acting out.

Kali Tal, in *Worlds of Hurt: Reading the Literatures of Trauma*, takes an entirely different approach from those of Lacapra and Caruth. Tal’s approach to psychoanalysis is hostile, but her view of trauma is based on cognitive psychology and feminist politics. Her main strategy is to observe a systematic violence against women and a sense of how traumatic literature might produce social change. Tal’s world of hurt is divided into three sections: the first discusses the testimonies of Holocaust survivors; the second concerns some of the literature produced by American veterans of the Vietnam war, and the third concerns the testimonies of women survivors of incest and abuse. Tal argues that the literature of trauma consists only of the writing of victims and survivors of trauma. Focusing on this issue Tal writes:

Literature of trauma is defined by the identity of its author. Literature of trauma holds at its center the reconstruction and recuperation of the traumatic experience, but it is also actively engaged in an ongoing dialogue with the writings and representations of nontraumatized authors. It comprises a marginal literature similar to that produced by feminist, African-

American, and queer writers in fact, it often overlaps with these literatures, so that distinct subgenres of literature of trauma may be found in each of these communities. Theories that treat such marginal literatures are necessarily predicated on the critic's ability to discern an author's relationship to the group in question (17).

After a contextualization of the trauma theory we can separate the trauma of survivors from the trauma of other people. The criticism of the literature of trauma is "both to identify and explicate literature by members of survivor groups, and to deconstruct the process by which the dominant culture codifies their traumatic experience" (Tal 18). Tal emphasizes patriarchal power relations and its impact upon women. Almost young women or girl become a victim of patriarchal society. All American women were threatened with violence whether they are white or black, from middle class or from lower class, just as all Jews were in danger in Nazi Germany. Women are threatened not to walk alone in the dark, at that time attackers are man. If this case reach in court, could will ask "what was she doing alone down there at night?" (Tal 20). Victims cannot find support from social and legal institutions, churches and even a victim's own family and friends. They also place the blame on her shoulders. So the:

Enemy is free to assault her on the street, in her place of work, or in her in her own home. He may attack her once or repeatedly. If she hides from him, he may find her. If she asks for the protection of the authorities, he may have the right to demand she be returned to his controlled. If she tries to press charges he will be protected by a legal, political and social system that is biased against her (Tal 20).

Tal tries to clarify that man are the cause of female trauma in American society. But American patriarchal society teach women and girls "to believe that they provoke men into assaulting them, and that they will bring pain and humiliation upon themselves by dressing,

speaking or acting in a provocative manners” (Tal 20). Literature of trauma is written from the need to tell and retell the story of traumatic experience, to make it real both to the victim and to the community. If the victimized women do report acquaintance rape, battering and violence, police refuses to forward this report for possible prosecution.

Literature is an indication of the power hierarchy that exists in the community of women who produce such literature. Almost feminist writers in America use confession and memory to tell the story of victimization. Regarding this issue Black, feminist critic Bell Hooks warns us about our motivation:

Feminist thinkers in the United States use confession and memory primarily as a way to narrate acts of victimization, which are rarely rendered dialectically . . . we must . . . be careful not to promote the construction of narratives of female experience that become so narrative that all experience that does not fit the model is deemed illegitimate or unworthy of investigation. Rethinking ways to constructively use confession and memory shifts the focus anyway from mere naming of one’s experience. It enables feminist thinker to talk about identity in relation to culture, history, politics, whatever and to challenges the notion of identity as static and unchanging . . . in early feminist consciousness-raising, confession was often the way to share negative traumas, the experiences of male violence for example. Yet there remained many unexplored areas of female experience that need to be fully examined there by widening the scope of our understanding of what it is to be female in this society” (qtd in Tal 194).

Morgan and Mc Naron are familiar to a reader about the psychiatric literature on PTSD. By translating overwhelming and anxiety-producing memories into language, Mc Naron and Morgan believe that women begin to transform their painful experiences into

more manageable stories. The writing and re-writing process allows women to “manipulate imagery and generate metaphors for their sufferings, reframing their problems in a useful and creative manner” (Tal 59). Morgan and Mc Naron criticized universal masculine standards about artistry value, because male accusing female creations are only confessional. But Morgan and Mc Naron affirm that women artistic work as “hearing, enriching and affirmative” (Tal 172). As a result of feminist consciousness many narratives about incest and violence were published after 1970s. These narratives expresses “witness to the fact that violence was perpetrated systematically and regularly by American men upon American women in a society that supported the oppression and subjugation of women” (Tal 156). These narratives help to speak out, women become enraged and empowered and become able to challenge the laws and social conditions that protested sexually abusive men. Women first need to convince audience that violence upon women was widespread problem, only then they could successfully testify to their personal experience as a sexual violence survivor. Sexual abuse literature helps to women to speak out against atrocity. These literatures play the role of testimony.

Testimony is a form of remembering. The faculty of memory functions in the present to recall a personal history vexed by traumas that thwart smooth flowing chronicles. Simultaneously, however, straining against what we might call disruptive memory is an effort to reconstruct a semblance of continuity in a like that begins as, and now resumes what we would consider, a normal existence. “cotemporality” becomes the controlling principles of these testimonies, as witnesses struggle with the impossible task of making their recollections of the camp experience coalesce with the rest of their lives. If one of them links their narratives more than any

other, it is the unintended, but invariably unavoidable failure of such efforts (qtd in Tal 49).

Mc Naron Morgan in *Voices in the Night* gives message of oppression and struggle. They make clear that all women were “suffer the injuries inflicted by the patriarchy” (Tal 176). This book expressed in the “midst of repression and attack” (Tal 176). *Voices in the Night* identifies gender difference as the foundation upon which political social and economic analysis of sexual violence should be based. Tal not simply witness to individual crimes of abuse and brutality, but to an entire system of oppression that keeps women in thrall. She tries to link between maleness and violence.

Randal expresses that “patriarchy denies the value of women and children and that capitalism works in tandem with patriarchy in a white, male, upper-and middle-class conspiracy to oppress” (Tal 228). Randal deals with the politics of oppression.

Tal’s next concern is testimonies of holocaust survivors. Des Pres argues that “testimony is part of collective effort to come to terms with evil to distill a moral knowledge equals to the problems at hand” (qtd in Tal 228). Holocaust is not remain only holocaust but in the contemporary political arena it is complicated by the reactions of various groups by contextualizing it with the every kind of current social, cultural and political events. Tal, argues for the legitimacy of using the holocaust as “a figure, a universal point of reference for all kinds of evil oppression and suffering” (Tal 49). Dawidowicz opines that “the holocaust stands as a vindication of traditional (Jewish) religious culture and conservative politics, and places the Jew at the center of the greatest tragedy in the history of the world” (qtd in Tal 26).

Tal’s next issue is the act of healing to the victims of trauma survivor and the relation between victim and therapist. In this issue David Read Johnson views:

First, the patient needs to gain access in a safe and controlled way to the traumatic memories, to overcome denial or amnesia for the events.

Second, the patient needs to engage in a lengthy working through process in which the trauma can be acknowledged, re-examined, and conceptualization, resulting in a modification of its intensity. The trauma is transformed from an intrusive re-living of the event into a memory that can be recalled when one wishes. Third, the patient needs to re-join the world of others through interaction with others trauma victims, to find forgiveness from others for what happened, and to be able to go on with one's life (qtd in Tal 202).

In the context of feminist victim, feminist “promotes and supports the testimonial process and the community of feminist will create an environment in which testimony may be both given and received” (Tal 203). Testimonial act has both personal and political implications. According to Tal testimony must be as nearly as possible unmediated and uninterpreted. Women's testimonies are often dismissed by the patriarchal critical community as mere confessional, personal, narrative rather than literary. The healing process “is located in the acts of storytelling and of listening to stories” (qtd in Tal 205). The desirable process of telling the stories of own and listening the stories of other victims, also helps to the victim to share their pain and suffering with the community. For Tal “therapy should consists of survivors talking with each other and speaking out to a wider audience, and its goal should be political” (qtd in Berger 580). Kali Tal's model of therapy of victim is the act of storytelling is close to some extent with LaCapra's concept of acting out and working through model of trauma.

Acting out and working through are two forms of remembering trauma. Both are interrelated modes of responding to loss or historical trauma. Both acting out and working through could be applied to absence but in different contexts. Melancholia as a form of acting

out, and mourning as a form of working through. Freud compared and contrasted melancholia with mourning. He opines:

Melancholia as characteristic of an arrested process in which the depressed self berating, and traumatized self, locked in compulsive repetition, is posed by the past, faces a future of impasses and remains narcissistically identified with the lost object (qtd LaCapra 713).

In the same way Freud defines mourning:

Mourning brings the possibility of engaging trauma and achieving a reinvestment in or recathexis of, life that allows one to begin again . . . mourning be seem not simply as individual or quasi-transcendental grieving but as a homeopathic socialization or ritualization of the repetition, compulsion that attempts to terms it against the death drive. . .

(qtd in LaCapra 713).

Acting out deals with actual loss whereas, working through deals with dramatic or imaginative loss. Acting out is related to writing about trauma, which is an aspect of historiography related to the project of reconstructing the past. In acting out “the past is performatively regenerated or relived as if it were fully present rather than represented in memory and inscription and it hauntingly returns as the repressed” (LaCapra 716). In this case people undergo a trauma. They have a tendency to relieve the past to be daunted by the ghost or to exist in the present as if, they were living still fully in the past, they create of closeness with their traumatic past, through flashback, nightmare or words. They are compulsively repeated but not in their ordinary meaning because they are talking different connotations from another situation. The Commentator, interviewer and observer also tend to repeat the trauma of the victim.

But working through is a desirable process in which individual tries to gain critical distance on a traumatic event and distinguish between past, present and future. Working through does not totally avoid or harmonize the past but they simply forget the past and submerge oneself in the present. One of the difficult aspect of working through in the “ability to undertake it in a manner that is not tantamount to betraying the trust or love that binds one to lost others-that does not imply simply forgetting the dead or being swept away by current preoccupations” (LaCapra 144). With respect to traumatic losses, acting out may will be a necessary condition of working through at least for victim. Truly speaking, the mitigation of trauma is nonetheless recognized so to acted out in a requirement or precondition of working through problems. Generally, acting out and working through are intimately linked but analytically distinguishable process.

Acting out is a repetitive process in which the “past or the experience of the other is repeated as if it were fully enacted, fully literalized” (LaCapra 148). She opines that the tendency to “fixated on acting out on the repetition compulsion, to see it as a way of presenting closure, harmonization any facile notion on cure but also by the same token, to eliminated or obscure any other possible response or simply to identity all working through as closure, totalization, full cure, full mastery” (LaCapra 115). Acting out is the extreme identification with the victim. There is a danger of identification with the victim is that it seems to make one a “surrogate victim and a survivor, hence to justify an approach to life including politics (LaCapra 145).

Derrida’s deconstruction creates binary between acting out and working through. But this binary opposition may be dubious. This binary opposition is very closely related to the “scapegoat mechanism and that past of the process of scapegoating is trying to generate pure binary opposition (self-identified) self and (totally different) other, so that the other becomes totally different from the Nazi, . . .” (LaCapra 149). In this sense acting out and working

through constitute a distinction, but one may not totally separate from the other. LaCapra accepts that, especially for the victim it may be impossible fully to transcend acting out. It is impossible to the victim to transcend the past totally. So they deeply indulge in their past. Acting out and working through trauma are to some extent therapeutic purposes. Acting out totally tries to regenerate their traumatic past and the victim tries to be close with their traumatic past. But the concept of working through totally tries to separate from the traumatic past and the victim tries to begin their new life which is totally different from the past. In acting out traumatic past is compulsively repeated in different forms. This compulsive repetition of the past is “death drive” (LaCapra 143), it is often violent scenes in a way that is self destructive. It is the feminist politics embedding in acting out trauma, that my study seeks to unravel.

For secondary witness or historian, acting out may “very well be necessary or inevitable” (LaCapra 143). LaCapra acknowledges a certain value in acting out. If there is no acting out at all, no repetition of the traumatic disruption, the resulting accounting of the historical trauma will be that “teleological redemptive fetishizing that denies the traumas reality” (LaCapra 575). Therapeutic for individual but have political and ethical implication. Traumatic experience takes its root in the psyche of a victimized person when tormented by the members of the community of which s/he is a member, and when the family can no longer provide safety and shelter but remains a site of threats. Women victims, who have suffered from torture, pain and suffering, display hysterical behavior to attack on who tortured them. If they are tortured or agonized by their close relatives they become sadomachocistic; torturing oneself by remembering her past traumatic life events.

III. Poetics of Torture: Trauma in Sylvia Plath's Poems

Sylvia Plath is one of the 20th century American poets. She has been suffered or agonized by the haunting memory of her relationship with her father. This research attempts to prove that expression of her personal traumatic experiences are representing the age-long excruciating pain and suffering of all women of her time. Plath in her poetry brings the haunted and terrified figure. Through her poetry she universalizes her personal pain and suffering. By writing poetry on traumatic memory, she tries to make it real both to the community and to the victim.

Plath's poems are the voice of traumatized women by patriarchy. She advocates the women's traumatic voice. She tries to clarify that her relations with her husband and society is full of pain. She writes: "Intercourse would be dead, a dead end .My pleasure no pleasure, a mockery Ted should be a patriarch. I a mother, my love for him, to express our love, us, through my body, utterly thwarted" (500).

Plath generalizes all sorts of oppression suppression and torture's agent is male. All of these suppression and oppression upon her or womanhood caused psychological as well as physical pain to express these pain and suffering. Plath uses savage and violent imagery, her persona is revolting, which express hysterical behavior. Even though she presents her persona in aggressive way, ultimately it leads her to self destruction, she compares her father, husband and even the doctor who is caring her with patriarchy, Nazi and she her self with Jew. Her father died when she was only eight, and she remembered him through out her life as a dominating man who left her a destitute, poor and exposed to intense suffering and trauma.

The poem "Daddy" explores traumatic inner self of Plath. This poem is autobiographical to some extent, because she said herself the 'daddy' of the poem is her own daddy. But the poem is psychological. This poem also explores the relation between oppressor and oppressed victimizer and victim. Through this poem Plath tries to escape from

her obsession with her dead father, she has been acting out. She identifies her father with patriarchal society. The poem has a significant aural effect; haunting, repetitive, overwhelming just as the memory of her father haunted and overwhelmed the speaker: especially this poem is published after her divorce with Ted Hughes. So we can say that the anger is not only an attack on her father, but also on her husband Ted Hughes, who always suppressing and tormenting her.

The poem begins with an aggressive attack on her dead father. In the beginning she explores the suffocative environment of patriarchal society. Criticizing male tyranny Plath writes:

You do not do, you do not do
Any more, black shoe
In which I have lived like a foot
For thirty years, poor white,
Rarely daring to breathe or Achoo. (222)

In this stanza Plath compares her self with a foot and her father or the patriarchy with black shoe. She describes the environment of the patriarchal society or the shoe is suffocative, in which she lived for thirty years. Living in a shoe means living in a deplorable and pathetic condition. The 'black shoe' was a symbol of the German Nazi, soldiers who were extremely hated by all the Americans. The 'black shoe' also represents the male dominated society in which women are treated as second grade citizens. She says in this condition she lives for thirty years being 'poor' and white and she is also not able to breathe properly and express her pain. She uses the word 'Achoo' to express her pain, which is German word for 'ouch'.

Plath has been acting out in this poem about her father's atrocities. She expresses her desire to kill her father even though he had already died, she says: "Daddy, I have had to kill

you/ you died before I had time-" (222). She picturizes her father as a heavy man, "a bag full of god", a ghastly statue with one grey toe as big as a Frisco seal." It means she has been presents her father exaggeratedly. Presenting father's image in such a way she tries to expose the suppression of her father. She always wants to get him back from his grave and kill him again. She uses the word 'Achoo' to express her pain and suffering.

By bringing the reference of the holocaust imagery, Plath identifies the father with the Nazi and herself with the Jews Plath is neither a Jew nor a survivor of the holocaust but she uses holocaust and concentration camp Metaphors to expose all kinds of evil, oppression and suffering of women. Plath makes language as a medium to keep memory alive. Plath writes:

In the German tongue, in polish town

Scraped flat by the roller

Of wars, wars, wars.

But the name of the town is common. (222)

Here Plath expresses her hatred against Germans, and identifies her father with them. She sees her father in the polish town where the Nazis ran the roller machines over man on the streets. So she identifies the roller over man with the atrocities of the patriarchal society and her father upon her or women. As a famines Plath raises voice against all kind of atrocities upon women, which cause mental or psychological torture to her or women. She also writes that her father is, everywhere, he is the symbol of atrocity and genocidal tyranny with such man she can't talk. She writes:" the tongue stuck in my jaw" (223). She presents her father as demon and masculine power and he becomes wild and Plath's effort to communicate and expressive power is seized.

She also clarify that even there was no freedom of speaking for women. She adds that her tongue has "stuck in a barb wire snare" (223). This barb wire symbolizes the fence of the Nazi army. The sounds "ich, ich, ich, ich" is an expression of not being able to speak because

her tongue is hooked by the army wires. She also compares that her father with every German man and the language he uses is vulgar. “The pain in the attempt to move to tongue around in barbed wire, to form the word “I” in the oppressor’s language is cleverly communicated even by the sound of the word itself” (Pinsky 568). Again she presents more pathetic and torturous death in concentration camp:

An engine, an engine
Chuffing me off like a Jew.
A Jew to Dachau, Auschwitz, Belsen.
I began to talk like a Jew.
I think I may well be a Jew.

Using the image of engine she reminds the scene of killing Jews by roller machine upon them. And she also identifies herself with these dead people. She says that she is like one of the Jews who were crushed or tortured to death, in one of the concentration camps of Hitler. Dachau, Auschwitz and Belsen are the places, where Hitler killed thousands of Jews. This traumatic and pathetic image makes mad not only her but also to the readers and it also evokes empathy on the hearts of reader.

By presenting such traumatic and pathetic condition of Jews, she tries to act out her traumatic past events. She says “I began to talk like a Jew. / I think I may well be a Jew” (223). These lines expose that she is not surfacely identifies herself with Jews but she identifies her physical and psychological condition with Jew. Here she becomes sado-machosistic; she torments herself by remembering her traumatic past events and also she identifies with Jews and Jews sufferings.

Plath changes context and says the blood and oppression has made the world impure. She also says Tyrol in Italy and the beer of Vienna in Austria no longer remain pure. The history and the world of male traditions are all false and impure. To connect her identity with

Jew she says that she has Tarot pack of astrologer's cards. She remembers that her ancestors were short, so she could be really a Jew. She also presents a list of thing with which she afraid are her father, German, airlines, ununderstandable language, moustache and her father's bright blue Aryan eye.

Plath uses the images of victimization such as Nazis, Swastikas, barbed wire, fascists, brutes, devils and vampires are so unacceptable, that the poem seems more out of control than it actually is. These images expose that the corruptibility of Nazi Germany and her father. To present her psychological traumatic condition due to the excessive oppression of her father, she brings up the exact image of her father as he stood before the blackboard. This seems to be her mental picture of his harshness as he tried to teach her. She remembers the cleft chin instead of having a cleft feet like those of pigs or oxen. This means her father didn't have any signals of being a demon outwardly, but she that he ought to be a demon inwardly.

Time and again Plath uses traumatic autobiographical elements. She says he is no less than a devil because he has bitten her pretty red heart into two pieces. And she remembers that they buried him when she was ten. At the age of twenty Plath again tries to kill herself but she get back to kill him even his bones would do. The desires to kill her father, symbolizes her desire to destroy the norms and values of patriarchal society, which didn't let her to die even it didn't let her to live freely, so her life become traumatic. Plath tries to suicide two times before but she becomes success in her third attempts. She says that they compelled her to live by bringing back from her suicidal attempts. To attack on them who returned her to life, Plath creates a black model of her father and destroyed it. She made it look like Hitler, a tyrannical person who killed Jews. She becomes satisfied after killing her model (creation) that is her father. So she reached a conclusion "so Daddy I'm finally through."(224). To prevent his voice coming to her, she has switched the black telephone. It

means she tries to escape from the memory of oppressive love hate relationship with her father.

In every stanza she talks only about the traumatic memory through the artistic creation of her vampire father whose memory always torments her. She says by killing one man, she has killed two men; her daddy and his ghost which drank her blood for seven years. Again she remembers the traumatic event that there is big stick in his black fat heart. She also reminds that he is disliked by every villager. After his death they are dancing and stamping upon his grave. All of them know him as rogue, tyrant, oppressor and so on. She also used most angry word 'bastard' to curse him.

It seems that she becomes satisfied and gets relief from cursing him, but infact through the memory of such traumatic events and his ghost figure only torments or tortured her. Infact she tries to create a psychological distance by 'working through' but she indulges in 'acting out'. "The anger that permeates the poem is to intense and comprehensible that it seems logical to suppose to suppose that all the major figure in the poets life-those who had betrayed her or failed her in some way, father, husband and mother should be included." (Platzky 250).

The written date of this poem is significant. She wrote this poem on "12 October 1962, four months before her suicide, fifteen days before her thirtieth birthdays, on the twentieth anniversary of her father's legamputation and on the day she learned that Ted Hughes, the alleged "vampire" who drank her blood for seven years had agreed to divorce" (Platzky 106). This criticism shows that Plath has already desired to divorce with her husband. Plath's compulsive uses of the /oo/ sound and the ubiquitous a rhyme to be a sign of a disordered psyche of Plath due to the excessive torture and pain by patriarchy. This poem is a powerful myth of patriarchy.

Plath radically redefines herself within historical ground and collective worlds. By doing so Plath successfully displaces the solitary and private individual. Regarding this issue Phelps writes:

When identifying herself with the concentration camp Jew, she compares herself to a community, just as she identifies her father and husband, who plays the tormenting Nazis as a part of an historical political organization (250).

Plath repeats the word 'ich' for many times, which is a language of German Nazi. So, by using Germanic word Plath tries to presents the role of language in tormenting and suppression. It seems that language plays the role of psychological oppressor. She finds that the presence of suppression and pain in the language. Through the use of oppressors language she tries to remember the concentration camps like Dachau, Auswitz and Belsen where thousands of Jews were tortured and killed.

But some critic claims infact, Plath's father loved her very much when she was child, before her death she was only eight. So his death was always a shock to her. But while she felt tortured and destitute without her father, she also felt tormented, agonized and panic by her father's dominating image. So this poem seems contradictory, but it is certain that this poem expresses her tormented self. Due to her uses of image and language, this poem moves far beyond the father-daughter relationship theme. Plath's frustration and anger against a dominating father, who left her a destitute, has become a central symbol for larger issues including Hitler, torture and inhumanity. So the poem is slightly autobiographical but it is more general. Here Plath tries to relieve from psychological traumatic memory through the medium of creativity. But in fact she indulges in deep trauma and ultimately that leads her to death. This poem is a prediction of her third or last of suicide.

Next significance clue of this poem is that Plath wrote this poem on the day Plath learned that Hughes had agreed to divorce. This poem recounts the speaker's attempt to loosen herself from the pull of her dead father by marrying someone like him and then by dissolving the marriage, to find freedom from torture, pain and suffering due to the suppression of patriarchy. Expression of brutality and torture in order or systematic way emphasizes the oppression of patriarchal system. Her Plath cohere the order of poetry with the system of patriarchy which makes rules and regulations to dominate women. Regarding this issue Wisker comments:

Daddy is specifically related to Plath's own sense of haunting by the father who died of gangrene following diabetes, when she was young unable to mourn, she continued to work through her feelings . . . Images of oppression equate the horrors of personal suffering with human suffering and cruelty on a wider scale, relating the individual to history. Unable to speak to him because he is dead lover important, the speaker feels she resembles a Jewish victim in a concentration camp, he a Nazi, war time oppressor, flattening polish civilizations. (109)

In conclusion through the exploitation of individual suffering and torture, she gives the message about female's pain and suffering. To give this message Plath uses the scene of Holocaust. By identifying her with Jews and her father or her husband with Hitler Nazi, she makes more intense her suffering. In this poem Plath presents herself in a hysterical manner because to attack on patriarchy. In a normal behavior it is impossible to attack on patriarchy. But by pretending of being mad, she curses on male, the traumatic factor of female. In this poem plath presents herself as a traumatic victim. By presenting herself in such a way she gives the perspective of female trauma. Plath is crying in the poem to expresses her anger for father or patriarchy. This crying signifies her inner psychological traumatic condition. Plath's

next aspect of trauma is her loss of her father, because her separation from her loved father makes her traumatic. To make him alive psychologically not physically she presents herself in the form of anger, which is also become fruitful to curse her husband and the patriarchal society, who always torments her by restricting her in a certain boundaries. Plath reacts to hurtful situations in a manner typical of persons with depression; she berates herself for her inadequacies, engaged in negative thinking, and could see nothing but their failures. "Mood disorders are potential fatal illness. Self – destructive thoughts and impulses and even suicide attempts are not uncommon in persons suffering from these illnesses" (Mandimore 193).

Her another poem 'Lady Lazarus' is a poignant expression of her hysterical and sado-masochistic psychological expression. In the same way she presents her persona in an aggressive way to attack on patriarchy. She expresses her resentment, even vengeance, against the male dominated society, for all kinds of oppression upon women. She does not directly expresses her traumatic experience but presents it in such a way, these are the faults of patriarch. In the poem it seems that due to excessive pain she desires her own death. In this poem also she brings the images of German Nazi and Jews. She identifies herself with the Jews and male or her father and her husband with "Herr Doktor".

She begins the poem with her claim "I have done it again" (244). Plath has made another suicide attempt after ten years of a previous one. She also describes her process about, how did she manage it. Plath writes: "My skin /Bright as a Nazi lampshade" (244). This line introduces Plath's concern for torture of the Jews. She compares her skin with the lampshade that the Nazi concentration camps made by flaying the Jew's skin. Plath also compares her feet with a paper weight and her face with line cloth that the reader with the same male who tortured her. Plath writes:

The nose, the eye pits, the full set of teeth?

The sour breath

Will vanish in a day. (244)

Here Plath presents a horrible picture of her own dead body foreshadowing her death. These lines expose that the speaker is trying to embrace the death by rejecting life and people. And she also says that her flesh will soon be eaten by the grave. Now she is only thirty-one, but she has attempted it three times. But she finds it boring to attempt it again and again, and also irritability, when a crowd of people surrounds to see her after the failed attempt at suicide. It means she has compelled to do it. By writing in her such personal pain Plath tries to represent the suffering of all the modern women victims. By converting her private into public she tries to show that the modern world is the example of hell on earth in the concentration camps. She identifies her home and the society in which she lives with the concentration camp.

Plath also talks about physical torture, sadism is general and perennial. This poem is against the modern man's tendency to destroy the human identity, as well as their bodies. By being agitated by her desire and habit of attempting to suicide, Plath writes:

These are my hands

My knees.

I may be skin and bone,

Due to her plan of suicide again and again she becomes skilled at death. In her second attempt she is confident, she must be success but she has been returned again. This poem tries to show that the modern human beings destroy the human identity as well as their bodies. Individual suffering can be heroic and it should provide identity to the person who is suffering. But in the mass suffering man and women become equal and identities loses and nothing remains certainly on value, no humanity. The anonymity of pain, which makes all dignity impossible was her subject. Next the root of her suffering was the of her father, whom she loved, who abandoned her and who dragged her after him into death.

Here Plath confesses her desire to death. It seems that she tries to reincarnate through death. For her death is easier and valuable than life because the life only torments her. Plath writes:

Dying
Is an art, like anything else.
I do it exceptionally well.
I do it so it feels like hell.
I do it so it feels real.
I guess you could say I've a call.
It's easy enough to do it in a cell.
It's easy enough to do it and stay put.
It's the theatrical.

Plath thinks that dying is a resurrection. She reinterprets herself as she is reborn from the suicide. For her dying is an art but for this patriarchy has been creates an obstacle. But she is crafted in doing so. She does it because she feels it as hell and real. She also claims that she can do it in a short time very skillfully. She takes it as very easily but she says her return from death attempt is "theatrical".

It seems that she has been trying to escape from traumatic life memory by dying, which always hurts her. For her death become more accessible than life. For her life is hell. By presenting death as an art she tries to present the relationship between art or literature and society. She believes in potential transformation of self. To justify her suicide attempts, Plath builds up a mythical temporal scheme. For her coming back in the same place, with the same face with the help of what she calls brute makes her amused and it is also a miracle.

Plath compares her suicide attempts to the victimization of the Jews. It signifies that her suicide is due to the oppression of her father and this memory which always haunts her.

She claims there is a change in her hair and in her clothes, so she compares her rescued self with Jesus Christ.

From stanza 19 to 26 Plath talks about her victimization at the hand of Nazi doctor:

So, so, Herr Doktor.

So, Herr Enemy.

I am your opus,

I am your valuable,

The pure gold baby

That melts to a shriek.

I turn and burn.

Do not think I underestimate your great concern. (246)

Plath uses Nazi oppression imagery such as 'Herr Doktor', 'Herr Enemy'. She compares her suicide with the killing of Jews by Nazi Doctor in concentration. By comparing her suicide with Holocaust she tries to make us conscious about her death's hardness. Even though it is very hard to perform she has been heartily desirable to commit suicide. Plath has been rescued when she wants to die. It is her desire and also social condition which compelled her to become victimized. Here Plath identifies herself with the pain and torture of Jews who was victimized by German doctor because they perform an oppression for learning something about the human body. Identifying with torture of Jews, she has been asking questions "I am your opus / I am your valuable" (246) with patriarchal society. Similarly she is also a corpus for the scavengers to collect gold ornaments for the 'dentists' to look golden teeth, and for the German industry owner to make soap out of the fat from her body. The German actually did these things during the war.

But last two stanzas express her rage against patriarchy: "I rise with my red hair / and I eat men like air" in the form of creative art or poetry it is in a sense a kind of therapy. It

shows that a new and vibrantly brave is being born to fight against all traditional including social, political, cultural and literary which have tortured and destroyed female identity and self. It seems that it is an expression of her relieving anger and frustration, and an alternative outlet of the neurotic energy in the form of poetic expression. This anger is directed to the violent, torture and pain of women only by the males. The extremity of anger of speaker is not normal but it is due to the neurosis that Plath was actually suffering from. Speaker is relieving from anger and frustration.

The oppressed women of the poem, who is herself the speaker, embodies all the oppression upon women and also many kinds of violence for which man is responsible. Plath has reversed the traditional roles of man and female, and she empowers women to fight against victimization in patriarchal society, whether it is done by daddy or doctor or even by God. The title of the poem refers to the female power. The anger of the speaker is directed against the general forces of inhumanity, violence and destruction only symbolized by the patriarchy in the poem. Plath makes her anger more intense by bringing the reference of Hiroshima and Dachau. This means that the frustration and anger is directed to the domination of her father becomes a central symbol or issue of the poem against all kind of torture and inhumanity.

This poem is autobiographical. Through the creation of Herr Doktor she not only recall the history of holocaust but she contextualization her autobiographical elements with this events. She has suffered from leprosy; incurable disease is equated with extremities. This poem is a dramatic monologue, which exposes her inner psychological conflict and suffering. The title ironically identifies a female with Lazarus: but the original Lazarus was a male, whom Christ brought back to life, the speaker is identifying herself with Lazarus different in sex, behavior and everything. Plath wants to subvert the male tradition that brings her back to torture, rather than let you choose death or life. This female figure represents the oppressed

modern women's consciousness of the fact that the male society will bring her back to life because they need to be satisfied by oppressing the women. The theme of self destruction pervades in the poem as it really happens in her life.

By bringing the myth of Lady Lazarus she implies that she will return from death like the Sphinx and eat men like vampire or fire. It is psychologically about the aspiration to revenge that is felt by all the female victims of male domination, once they become conscious about the domination. Sylvia Plath provided a self exploration during a radio reading: "The speaker is a woman who has the great and terrible gift of being reborn. The only trouble is, she has to die first. She is the Phoenix, the liberation spirit, what you will" (Stein 569).

The poem tells us little more than a news paper account of the actual event because this poem draws on Plath's suicide attempts as a process to transform herself. This poem written in 28 stanzas that are suggestive of the 28 days of the normal female menstrual cycle or in a sense, there is rebirth because they are suffering or become panic in this period. Plath experienced many losses including abortion, miscarriage, childbirth, severe postpartum depression, torture and divorce. Plath tries to convert this into achievements as a source to fight against patriarchy but her attempt turn wrong and she commits suicide. To show her suicide is complicate and uneasy, Plath uses the myth of Lady Lazarus. Also the myth of Lady Lazarus tries to subvert traditional gender roles. Regarding this issue Karen F. Stein writes: "Lady Lazarus voiced many of the tensions about traditional gender role expectations that American women become acutely aware in the 1960s and that continue to trouble many women" (569). This poem's persona is hysterical but not sane.

In conclusion Plath has exposed her inner traumatic psychological condition through the uses of different images of Lady Lazarus, Nazi "Doktor", "Herr God", "Herr Lucifer" and Holocaust. Stein writes: "poems such as "Lady Lazarus" and similarly self-revealing work by Plath mix politics with personal revelation and the baring of the authors emotions" (569).

Through this poem “her interior suffering is exteriorized as physical annihilation, her private pain publicly dramatized” (Stein 569). She tries to present herself as a capable enemy of the male traditions after the oppression and destructive physical, political, cultural, artistic, and psychological and all sorts of tortures. But this traumatic memory haunts her always and it compels her to commit suicide. This poem is a symbolic prediction of her suicide. She use very short and small stanza in the poem to symbolize her fragmented psychology.

In the poem ‘cut’ Sylvia Plath explored the voice of feminist sexuality. This voice is about psychological and physical oppression of good little girls of Somali tribe in Puritan America. In fact this poem is about the practice of female circumcision. This practice was 10,000 yrs old custom of cutting or mutilating the gentile of young girls to control and inhibit their sexuality. This poem tells us how a woman feels about having her throat cut, about having her sexuality and her ability to express it affected. Plath addresses the society which practices these activities.

Plath brings us under her skin to show us wound of her both physical and psychic. To show the fissure in our every life, she presents the fissures of her inner world. Plath presents a sensual and tortures activities of patriarchal society which controls women sexuality. The poem begins: “what a thrill ____ /my thumb instead of an onion.” If we connect these lines with title ‘cut’, it’s meaning is so that what a thrill, instead of cutting on onion, my thumb is cut. Webster dictionary defines thrill as “an experience of sudden, sharp excitement.” It seems that Plath uses this word in an unusual context, but this word is symbolic connotation with the practice of female circumcise is very usual. In fact a physical cut opens a wound, but this cut opens the mind of women who were sexually oppressed.

This poem’s every line presents thrilling and traumatic scenes. Plath writes:

The top quite gone

Except for a sort of a hinge

Of skin

A flap like a hat,

Dead white. (235)

She presents an event of hanging a piece of flesh in body and a flap become like a hat. To make impressive Plath presents this events of circumcise, mockingly. Sandra Stricker writes on this event as:

A “hinge” hangs in space at the end of a line like an open door. We stand at the threshold and are invited inside. Our hostess makes a joke that “flap like a hat” __ and we are again disarmed of __ balance, the guests do not know whether to laugh or scream. The arrival of blood to the wound relives the tension with a luxurious, sexual image: “then that red plush” (183)

When Plath sees blood in her thumb then become shocks to her and she directly addresses her thumb as:

Little pilgrim.

The Indian’s axed your scarp.

Your turkey wattle

Carpet rolls

Straight from the heart.

Here Plath describes the thumb as a “little pilgrim”. But by definition a “pilgrim” is a person who Journeys in foreign lands, travels to holy places. The poet and the thumb are holy wanderers. By identifying the thumb with pilgrim she attacks on the act of mutilation of a girl’s genital, where this act is thought of as sacred act. Plath chooses the image of a massacred American pioneer for her pilgrim thumb. Here Plath undermines the status quo mentality of the American patriarchal society. She mixes violence with nostalgia. The ugly and unpleasant “wattle” of the sacrificial bird transform into a red carpet of welcome as a

visitor of our consciousness. The body's physical blood pumps the heart welcomes and honored guest. Plath writes:

I step on it.
Clutching my bottle
Of pink fizz.
A celebration this is. (235)

Here the poet tries to stop the flow of blood by pressing down on the cut. She uses antiseptic, pink fizz from a bottle. Plath presents us that a cut opens both physically and emotionally. It is hard to contain the outward flow. Here again the poem hinges on a question "whose side are they on?" (235) The thumb has begun to throb. This cut, which until now has been experienced with curiosity, wonder, even a sense of "celebration" has begun to hurt. But on the figurative level Plath describes her plight as a trans-Atlantic poet, an American living in England. On her next some line the answer the questions by presenting her past is a repressor of pain:

Oh my
Homunculus, I am ill
I have taken a pill to kil
The thin
Papery feeling.

Here Plath addresses her thumb or a clitoris as "homunculus" defined as a small creature like men. She says that she is ill so she takes a pill to kill or suppresses her traumatic or painful memory. She presents her feelings as a thin paper. She presents sexual traumatic scene. She seems to be talking about masculine part of herself that feels castrated, de-sexed. She calls this wounded self as a betrayer or a revealer o secrets.

Saboteur

Kamikaze man _____

The stain on your

Gauze ku klux klan

Babushka

Darkens and tarnishes . . . (235)

Like kamikaze man, the thumb is on a suicide mission. She brings an image of “babushka”, that she connects this event to a feminine lineage, to the things women have passed down to each other. In this painful or traumatic event sander stricker comments:

To an African woman it may echo a connection to the elderly tribal women who must often perform the rite of female genital mutilation on young girls. The thumb also looks like a klansman’s hood. Again the startling juxtaposition of images of grandma with racist extremism unsettles us. The holy wanderer the poet has heretofore addresses affectionally as “pilgrim” has turned into a self immolating “kamikaze”.

The thumb has participated in an act of sabotage. (185)

To emphasize on the rituals of circumcise, Plath uses the words like “balled pulp”, “jump”. The word “balled” connotes sexual intercourse, “pulp” connotes the soft interior flesh of vagina. To attack on female sensitive part in the act of intercourse male jump violently. Here poet also co-relates this idea with the jump of blood from the heart. Here the heart is the essence of one’s self, has been gutted by male. This heart produces only a silence like a mill. This silence stops the expression of speaking against the systematic oppression of female sexuality. In such condition of systematic oppression, Plath finds herself mute, but by writing poetry she expresses her personal pain and by bringing the reference of circumcision of puritan American women she universalizes her personal pain.

In the last stanza Plath names her thumb as:

Trepanned veteran,
Dirty girl,
Thumb stump. (236)

The word trepanned connotes the World War I soldiers, whose wounded heads were surgically trepanned and the “veterans” connotes the experienced fighter in the war. By bringing these two words Plath identifies herself with the veterans and her thumb or clitoris with the wounded head of soldiers. Here, the thumb has been gutted by the knife just as the clitoris of a young girl is wounded during circumcision. Here Plath uses a metaphor of “dirty girl”. Dirty girl implies all women, who have been thought as immoral due to their sexual power. By presenting the event of thumb gutted, Plath figuratively implies the tradition of wounding a clitoris during circumcision. Circumcision is a ritual practiced in American society to control and suppress women’s sexuality.

To emphasize on this traumatic experience of circumcision, Plath uses the assonantal rhyme of “thumb” and “stump”. In the practice of circumcision, clitoris is cut away to control the female from deriving pleasure from the sexual act. Infact Plath, herself doesn’t have any experience of circumcision, she listens only about it. But she identifies herself with the victim of circumcision to express her own sexual repression, sexual maturity and the pain of her menstruation. Here Plath doesn’t express her traumatic experience explicitly, but she expresses it implicitly. To mock the act of circumcision, Plath uses the word ‘pilgrim’. In puritan America, before 10,000yrs ago people takes this practice as a religious ritual, but the hidden purpose of this act is to control the sexual power of women and to traumatized them.

The poem ‘Maudlin’ is totally an autobiographical poem, it includes her experience at the hospital with Dick Norton. She includes this poem in her first volume of poetry ‘The Colossus’. This poem dramatize the experience of delivery case in the hospital, this event, the birth of a baby boy is witnessed by Plath. The delivery was complicated when the child’s

head stuck in the mother's vagina and the incision had to be made to free child. Due to this incision large amount of blood has been collected. So this poem is about the pain of women during the time of child birth. But Plath gives the title 'Maudlin' to the poem very mockingly, because this means "mawkishly emotional" (Giles 56) or it also denotes the name of Mary Magdalene, the very famous whore, from the name is derived. So Plath tries to present this event of giving birth in a very traumatic way. She identifies herself with this event. Regarding this traumatic issue Richard F. Giles writes: "This event was traumatic, humiliating, degrading and ultimately, embittering. Such emotions permeate "Maudlin," as the speaker relates her own experience and then expands it to include all women" (25).

The poem begins with the description of scene as Plath saw it that night at the hospital. The woman was on her back on the delivery table "in a clench of blood", after the incision the blood has flooded out. Plath uses three crucial phrases, "mud-mattressed", "sign of the hay", "clench of blood". These phrases clarify the woman's pathetic condition in the time of delivery and also the rigid rules of patriarchy to dominate women in such pathetic condition, which causes psychological as well as physical torture in female. "The sign of the hay" is a symbol of traditionally constructed female role, which constantly haunts Plath.

This poem's implicit motif is to explore the female's traumatic and pathetic condition in male ruled society. In patriarchal society women are treated only as a child bearing machine, to whom humanity doesn't have any value. Plath addresses this woman as "slip-talking virgin". She intends to convey a picture of a sleeping innocent woman, whose looks are at least virginal. Also by using the word 'virgin', she tries to compare this woman with Virgin Mary. Plath again writes:

Gibbets with her curse the moon's man

Faggot _ bearing jack in his crackles egg. (51)

‘Gibbets’ connotes hangs that is exactly what the mother feels. She arouses “The moon’s man” to refer to the child being born, especially, also the head of baby is resembles with the moon in their roundness and whiteness. The head, the roundness or the baby boy is the intense pain to the mother. To express her anger to the man she indirectly expresses the baby as ‘moon’s man’. To refer to the penis of child, she uses the word ‘Faggot’. To refer to the difficulties of the mother’s having in the child birth she uses “in his crackles egg”. The child’s head is a crackles egg so it will not born from the vegina. Plath further writes:

Hatched with a claret hogshead to swig

He kings it, navel-knit to no groan. (51)

Here the language is Elizabethan and it hard is to find its connotation. But the meaning of these words is modern. The child is not born, he is “hatched”. And this process is quantified in terms of a hogshead of claret that the child swigs. This description is of the afterbirth the large amount of red liquid upon which the child grew until he was able to emerge. This emergence is seen by Plath as a kind of victory of child over mother, male over female. “He kings it” shows that the child is in much better condition than the mother, and he also gain much more power than his mother. “Navel-knit to no groan” refers to the source of life for this heretofore silent child, protected by the hogshead placenta and the worm womb.

The last two lines help to expand her personal experience for all women who suffered from such painful condition. The “pin-stiched skin” refers to the hymn, which in Plath’s case had to be repaired after her experience with Irwin the “fish tailed girls” are virgins whose legs are merely to extensions of the same membrane. The witness of course, refers to the loss of blood mentioned in the second line of the poem.

The entire poem rests upon the careless phenomena of male and its psychological torture on women. Here Plath presents the hidden traumatic experience in the life of female as well as herself. Even though a mother gives birth to her child boy, but when he becomes

mature or young then he become careless about his mothers pain and he pretends he was not born but he was emerges. In such situation mother becomes psychologically wounded.

Plath wrote the poem “Brasilia” before 3 months of her suicide and two years after the founding of Brasilia in 1960. Plath wrote this poem to expose the emptiness of Catholicism. Brazil is predominantly catholic, so tradition draws citizens into Catholicism more than heart-felt faith. Brasilia pays the token of homage its Catholicism with its “crown of thorns” (qtd in Lori 60) cathedral. Inside the “crown of thorns” cathedral fly three baroque angels made of spun aluminum. These angels fly with “winged elbows” (Plath 258), their vacant “eyeholes” (258) waiting for “masses of clouds” (258) the heavens. Once alive, these angels are “super-people” (258).

Here the speaker is Virgin Mary, undergoing the pain and suffering of watching her most perfect baby die. The angels are become powerless in the face of violence and when confronted with the speaker’s pain. While the nailes “driven in” (258) to the body of baby Jesus, Jesus’ pain hammered into Mary’s soul until she can hardly endure it and until she is about to be no longer in existence. Here male baby, the sacrificial Jesus, “shrieks in his grease” (258). The word “grease” connotes to a melted animal fat that is the God-spirit is shrieking in his dissolving animal body. Also possible meaning of grease is grace. If Jesus shrieks in his own grace, the salvation he brings is one not of comfort but of shrieking torture. Plath composed this poem with the belief of Mary grieving over Jesus’ death. And she also identifies herself with this grieving to make her personal pain and suffering universal.

In “Brasilia” Mary watches Jesus die and his bones grope for distances the heavenly home. She goes her past to when Jesus was a brilliant star declared his birth and when she remembered the old story of Messiah, Mary becomes surprise over her baby, the Messiah of three teeth bites her thumb, cutting it so she loses her grasp. Without her thumb, Mary can not hold material things; without her faith, she cannot hold her spiritual things. So she turns back,

where she meets sheep – those animals which are so easily led and wagons. Mary can only see the material, “Red earth” (258) and feel within herself the agony of “motherly blood” (258). Her blood coursing through Jesus can redeem the earth, which is in the red, if Jesus sacrifices himself. But Jesus’ death is unbearable for Mary, so she shouts at God:

O you who eat

People like light rays, leave

This one

Mirror safe, unredeemed (258)

God engulfs humans and Mary begs him to leave her alone and to leave her son, Jesus alone. God must not let the dove annihilate her son, because Jesus is the mirror image of God. Yet in Jesus’ annihilation is his power and glory. When he dies then people will believe on his power and glory.

Here Plath tries to develop the idea that glorification produces from destruction, violence, torture, pain and so on. So in “Brasilia” the three teeth cut themselves and God and the dove conspire to kill themselves through Jesus. After their annihilation, nothing remains safe but the people follow, believe and remember on them because humanity is fascinated by the past or dead. Three months after writing “Brasilia” Sylvia Plath commits suicide, perhaps sacrificing herself for “The power, the glory” (259) which death awards. But this idea is more contradictory because it seems that she identifies herself with the pain and suffering of Mary during the death of Jesus. She writes the masses as violent and terrific in front of such power, Jesus also become powerless. So she compares the patriarchal power with this violent power and she herself with Mary and Jesus.

By identifying herself with Jesus she tries to glorify her death and by identifying with Mary she tries to make her a victim due to the suppression of patriarchal society and the

death of her loved father. Here Plath implicitly expresses her traumatic life experience and presents it political color, by saying death is a glory.

IV. Conclusion

The present research paper has analyzed traumatic life experience and its reoccurrences in different forms. The traumatic event and, physical and psychological torture haunts into the psyche of victimized person. This research discloses two types of victimization in Plath's poetry; in one way she is a real victim of her father and her husband, but in another way she is a surrogate victim in which she identifies with other's trauma, which aims to include politics.

Due to excessive torture and pain by patriarchy, Sylvia Plath becomes psychologically wounded. So these wounds always haunt her, and she also works on the wounds in different representational forms. As Kali Tal said, literature of trauma is defined by the identity of its author, here also meaning of the poems should be autobiographical. Man is the cause of female trauma in American society because male creates certain norms and values to control and dominate women, which causes psychological torture for female. Plath constructs different forms of suppression and she identifies with the victim of that suppression.

By identifying with the victim of holocaust, female circumcision, delivery case and lost of love object, Plath politicizes her trauma in her poems. In her real life she has been suffered from the suppression of her father and her husband, but her poems didn't limit only on her father and her husband but she extends it with psychological trauma with universal theme. In American literary tradition, women writers were not accepted if their expression is full of rage, so to challenge this tradition Plath presents her persona in hysterical way. The female victim displays hysterical responses to the traumatic memories of patriarchal suppression. Plath presents her poems as a testimony of a victim, who has suffered from the patriarchal suffocated environments and presents herself in a very rageful and pathetic condition, by presenting herself in this way, she implicitly doing politics.

One important autobiographical element, Plath's consultant physician suggests her to write more and more about her traumatic past to relieve from her thoughts of commit suicide, but the practice of acting out leads her to more complicated situation. In her beginning poem such as "Maudlin" she tries to create a distance from her past, but in "Daddy", "Lady Lazarus", "Cut" and in "Brasilia" she deeply rooted in her past. So it is very hard to transcend the past to the victim. So it seems that in her writing she expresses her loves to die and she tries to glorify her death. In fact patriarchal society denied the suppression less society to females. Women were tortured, agonized and suffocated by patriarchal society.

Plath's employment of literary devices like metaphor, image, symbol etc themselves are traumatic. Plath used them in such a way to produce a sensation of empathy in the hearts of readers. So in this way she is a surrogate victim, who tortured herself by identifying with others trauma. Plath herself was a victim of patriarchal society but she identifies with other victims to gain more critical attention from readers. In "Daddy", "Lady Lazarus", and in "Cut" she mixes her trauma with other's trauma but, in "Maudlin" and "Brasilia" she only identifies with other's trauma. So Plath is both real and surrogate victim. So it is clear that in her poems are full of political motifs, she politicizes her trauma through her poems. To highlights her political motif Plath presents her persona in a hysterical way who, pretends to be mad due sue to the suppression of patriarchal society. It is sex and gender role provided to women also traumatized them. Through her poems Plath is acting out her past so in her poems she expresses her love to death.

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