

## Chapter I

### Introduction

The research endeavors to excavate the traumatic experience of the female characters in Maria Wollstonecraft's posthumously published novel *Maria or The Wrongs of Women*. More specifically, it brings forth the therapeutic value of oral and written self expression of traumatic experiences in the novel, in which the heroines have been subjected to psychological trauma through the series of insults, humiliations, deprivations, beatings and fatal or near-fatal disasters. Although an act of speaking or writing may not cure psychological problem or bring the dead back to life but this form of self-expression provides some comfort to the wounded psyche of Maria and Jemima at the hands of an oppressive patriarchy. The narrativization of traumatic memory provides the relief, if not permanently, to the characters who have been living with such experiences.

In Wollstonecraft's *Maria or The Wrongs of Women*, Maria, the protagonist has been confined in an asylum by her own husband where she is haunted by her past memories pain and suffering. She tells that experience with a girl named Jemima inside the asylum that functions as therapy for psychologically wounded Maria. Beside her oral expression, Maria uses the written language to further express her traumatic memory that haunts her time and again throughout her life. In chapters seven to fourteen Maria relates her own life story in a narrative she has written for her daughter. She explains how her mother and father loved their eldest son, Robert, more than their other children and how he ruled "despotically" over his siblings, how Maria visited that of a neighbor and fell in love with his son, George Venables to escape her unhappy home, how Venables presented himself to everyone as a respectable and

honorable young man; in actuality, he was a libertine. Maria's family life becomes untenable when her mother dies and her father takes the housekeeper as his mistress.

Maria's life is doomed to move towards the way of suffering when her rich uncle, who is fond of Maria, arranges a marriage for her without knowing the true character of Venables. Maria quickly learns of her husband's true character. She tries to ignore him by cultivating a greater appreciation for literature and the arts, but he becomes increasingly dissolute, he gambles and bankrupts the couple. Maria soon becomes pregnant after unwanted sexual encounters with her husband. Such unwanted sexual relationship has become a traumatic residue in her memory which she expresses in the letter written to her daughter.

Likewise, Jemima, another female character tells her life story to Maria and Darnford, explaining that she does not know her parents. Jemima's mother dies while she is still an infant, making her already precarious social position worse. She is therefore forced to become a servant in her father's house and later bound out as an apprentice to a master who beats her, starves her, and even rapes her. When the man's wife discovers that Jemima is pregnant with his child, she is thrown out of the house. Unable to support herself, she aborts her child and becomes a prostitute. After the death of the gentleman keeping her, she becomes an attendant at the asylum where Maria is imprisoned. Jemima has the shocking experience no lesser traumatic than that of Maria.

*Maria or The Wrong of Women* was written in 1792, the historical period when women were suffering as the female subjects of Enlightenment, because the male dominated society did not allow freedom to female. The character Maria represents all the marginal women of the century, dominated and trapped by the biased patriarchal society. In that society female are not allowed to take part in

politics and education as well. They are trapped in the tyranny of laws which is made by the society. Maria is the victim of that patriarchal society which considered home as the best place for women.

Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) was an eighteenth-century British writer, philosopher, and advocate of women's rights. She mainly writes about female struggle against the patriarchal domination in the society. A woman with a tumultuous career, Wollstonecraft was a single parent writer, teacher, mistress, wife to a philosopher and mother of a famous novelist. She is best known for *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), in which she argues that women are not naturally inferior to men, but appear to be only because they lack education. It is the product of personal experience and turbulent events and ideas of late 1700s. She suggests that both men and women should be treated as rational beings and imagines a social order founded on reason.

Published in 1790s, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* is an answer to Edmund Burke's reflection on the revolution in France and asserts Wollstonecraft's belief in liberty and political rights; it argues for greater equality for humanity and for the removal of the traditional injustices of property and rank. She sees her own sex as a coherent group within the class or group that is united by a particular oppression. Indeed, she was trapped by a language issue, a way that sees men as norm and woman as deviant. She argues that females of upper class are only half human. For them flirtation has become the "grand business of life", and their whole concern must be to please men; they can thus be defined as the sexual being (48). She feels deeply that life should be a serious business, a preparation for eternity, and should not be degraded into a trivial pursuit of pleasure. Since women have souls, they should cultivate more virtue, which alone has eternal beauty, and not the transient sexual beauty demanded them by society. As she advocates for the equal rights of male and

females, she argues against the female exploitation in the society of Europe during the last half of eighteenth century.

Her novel *Maria or The Wrong of Women* shows the wrongs of different class of women equally oppressive and tortured by the male, the powerful one in the society. Maria, the female character tolerates difficult kind of subordination and tortures endures all sorts of insults and tortures which are given by her cruel husband. Maria is very suppressed and dominated women in the novel. She has been imprisoned in a mad house, and snatched her infant daughter from her in order to gain control over the independent fortune of both Maria and her daughter. In this way, in the novel, Mary Wollstonecraft dramatizes the suffering and painful condition of women that prevailed in the contemporary society Maria, in other words, chronicles one determined women's struggle to get rid of male domination.

Since the time of its publication, Mary Wollstonecraft's novel, *Maria or The Wrongs of Women* has elicited a lot of critical attention and massive argument from the large number of critics and scholars. Some critics have paid attention to the thematic analysis of the novel whereas the other has gone throughout the experimental aspect of the novel. Although most of the critic has analyzed her book from the feminist perspective, some others have interpreted from different theoretical framework like that of gothic and trauma. Danielle Mallinck interprets the novel by focusing upon the gothic and sublime elements on the self affirming oral and written means of expression. He says:

In *Maria or the Wrongs of Women*, Wollstonecraft argues that a self-affirming version of the sublime, regulated by reason and grounded in religious conviction, enables individuals to imagine their own agency in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles. In the novel, the

sublime functions as a prompt for individuals to remember their own powers of reason, their origin, and destination. Her attempt to advocate for a revised sublime, one that forms the basis of a new, non-Alexandrian heroic agency that will in turn have a powerful effect on readers, constitutes one of the era's many programs to "create a taste" for unconventional characters or themes. Wollstonecraft's reformulation also contributes to broader debates regarding the interplay of passion and regulation. (27)

He clarifies his view that subliminal characteristic in the novel which enables to practice reason over sensibility. He also advocates it as constituting a new era for unconventional character or themes by creating a new taste.

Elaine Jordan commented on the novel regarding its feminine sensibility and consider it as the next version of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, Wollstonecraft's theoretical expression of feminism. She regards the novel as more radical in terms of sexuality:

Maria's representation of herself in *The Wrongs of Women*: as a sexual subject in her memoir to her daughter, and as a would-be citizen in her letter to the judge. *The Wrongs of Women*, although using the novel form, can be taken as the promised second volume of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, on the "partial laws" of England. I argue that it also revises the *Vindication's* view of feminine sensibility, and experiments with a more radical and generous account of sexuality. (221)

What above mentioned lines says that this novel as a second volume or continuation of her idea expressed in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. She also argues that it is a revival of the Vindication's view and also experiments with more radically.

Another prominent critic Janet Todd assesses the novel in different way. He wages Maria as a woman of sensibility, romantic passion love and emotion. Focusing on the character Maria he asserts:

In the novel Wollstonecraft presents Maria, a woman of sensibility who put love before any other emotion and who, for this love, was prepared to appear adulterous in the eyes of the world, and Maria speaks of the desirability not of reason, but of romantic passion and 'that fire o the imagination' which produces active sensibility. (Todd 17)

Todd has interpreted the novel with considering Maria not as the advocate of reason rather of sensibility. For him, she is lost in the world of imagination. While doing so her decisions are not based upon the reason rather she is guided by the emotion and passion that she has.

Christine M. Cooper observes the politics of abortion throughout the novel by associating it with the lack of female agency over them. According to her:

Yet abortion became in Wollstonecraft's final, unfinished work, *Maria, or The Wrongs of Women*, a means to argue for women's political capacities. Whereas their lack of agency, over their bodies and over processes dependent on their successful delivery of future generations of citizens, allowed for a continuance of things as they are, any moment in which women's control with the reproductive process become evident signaled a more general political agency. (737)

The above quotes makes it clear that the novel presents the female subjugation in the male dominated society, which consider the female as the weak creature made to fulfill the coveted desires of male. The novel does not only talks about the individual story of Maria but of the whole women in the world who are doomed to be suffered under the suppressive patriarchy.

Another prominent critic Ashley Tauchert, criticizes this novel on Mary's argument for female reason which remains a standing article in the feminist canon. The historical struggle between claims to equality and difference for women, her work is remarkable for its dramatic grasp of the antinomy within European enlightenment thought exposed by simply being female. He further writes:

Positioned between Burke and Paine, she voices an abiding contradiction for feminist awareness: the necessary failure of arguments for female embodied reason. Her novel *Maria or wrongs of women* grasps with bloodied nails the questions of sexed embodiment and gender raised by positing reason for women in writing. Her work in total redefined our understanding of women in an unprecedented move towards an analysis of femininity as social construction.

Here, Ashley advocates this novel for its positing reason for women on the radical patriarchal society. This novel tries to redefine the understanding of women in an extraordinary move towards an analysis of femininity as a social creation.

Wollstonecraft offers a quite different mode of writing about reason for women in her novel. Wollstonecraft raises deep struggles between female embodied subjectivity and enlightenment reason to become a symptomatic disturbance in her polemic and narrative writing.

Although many critics have observed and interpreted the text from different critical perspective but none of them have analyzed the novel from the perspective of therapeutic nature of trauma theory. So the researcher would like to explore the themes of therapeutic values from the expressions of the wounded psyche of the characters in the novel. The researcher seeks to explore the traumatic experiences of the female characters living in the male dominated European society of the late eighteenth century.

As the issue of hypothesis at hands demands, the working framework will be trauma theory, more particularly the theories of Cathy Caruth and Dominic Lacapra who stress on the therapeutic nature of trauma theory. The concept of Cathy Caruth, who views the trauma as the second wounding, “trauma is not locatable in simple violent or original event in an individual’s past but rather in the way that its very unassimilated nature”(4) which is located on the body of the victim, will be the guiding principle of the thesis. Thus Trauma is an emotional wound or shock that creates substantial lasting damage to one's psychological development. Trauma is a repeated suffering of the event, but it is also a continual leaving of its site. The impact on people of the loss of home, family, culture, values and norms their originality of the way of life and the adaption to life in an unfamiliar culture and place result the traumatic effects. Similarly the painful suffering and the disappointing childhood memory hunts the people time and again to the psychology of the characters which has the traumatic effect upon them. In the novel *Maria or The Wrongs of Women*, the painful memory of their past life hunts the female characters.

Finally, the research brings forth the therapeutic notion of trauma in conversation with the women in the suppressive patriarchal society. Considering the self expression of oral and writing as having the healing power to the past wounds,

this research further aims to reexamine the writing from its therapeutic value. Similarly, the study also aims at establishing the importance of therapeutic value in the novels with traumatized experience of female owing to the male dominated society.

The thesis has been divided into four chapters. The first chapter presents an introductory outline of the work – a short introduction to Mary Wollstonecraft as a writer who deals with the issue of traumatic experience mainly in the context of females and their victimization by the male dominated society. Along with the brief introduction of the writer and the book, the research presents the literature review and the departure of the research from the past researches that have been done on the book. Moreover, it gives an outline of the entire work.

The second chapter tries to explain the theoretical modality briefly that is applied in this research work. It studies the novel *Maria or the Wrongs of Woman* from the theoretical perspective of trauma, and thus it discusses the trauma theory with the special reference to the trauma theory developed by Dominick Lacapara and Cathy Caruth.

On the basis of the theoretical framework established in the second chapter, the third chapter analyzes the text at a considerable length. It analyzes how the novel *Maria or the Wrongs of Women* presents the therapeutic effect of traumatic experience. Finally, the fourth or the last chapter sums up the main points of the present research and the findings of the researcher.

## Chapter II

### Theoretical Modality

#### Trauma

Trauma, a medical term of Greek origin denotes a severe wound or injury and the resulting aftereffects. It is also a psychological term which shows a mental condition caused by severe shock, especially when harmful effects last for long time. As a literary theory it came into existence only in the last half of twentieth century by including diverse fields, with its specific focus on psychological, philosophical, ethical and aesthetic questions about the nature and representation of traumatic events. These concerns of trauma theory “range from the public and historical to the private and memorial” (Luckhurst 497).

For the development of trauma theory, the credit goes to Sigmund Freud who initially took the job of managing and flourishing the trauma theory in course of his treatment of the people who were being mentally and physically wounded, disturbed and disordered . Freudian psychoanalysis provided a model of traumatic subjectivity and various accounts about the effects of trauma and various accounts about the effect of trauma and memory. Being the propounder of psychoanalytical approach both in treatment and literature, most the trauma theorists and critics and more or less influenced and associated with him and they try their best to define trauma basing on Freud’s psychoanalysis even speak for or argue against it.

The phenomenon of trauma seems all-inclusive, for it can be defined from the two approaches: first, psychoanalytic-formalistic approach and second, cultural approach. According to the first approach, a victimized subject does not disclose the real distressing experience; she rather exposes and expresses the testimony, in a very distorted and deceptive manner due to the fear of social death. Regarding the

psychoanalytical approach, Freud's ideas are very much significant. In *Studies on Hysteria*, Freud and Breuer are committed to the view that the "reminiscences that cause hysterical suffering are historical in the sense that they linked to actual traumas in the patient's life" (186). The effect associated with the past trauma can't be acknowledged and the amnesia that results means that the force of the affect becomes dammed up. The injured person's reaction to the trauma "only exercises a completely cathartic effect if it is an adequate reaction, he wrote, the past that continues to wound is the "past originally found no outlet" (187).

Unlike the psychoanalytic-formalistic approach, cultural approach examines the undercurrents of the distorted by contextualizing it in the network of cultural-politics. It is, in that sense, trauma brings home the limitations of our understanding and at the same time it dislocates the so-called traditional disciplinary boundaries leading us to rethink our notions of experiences and of communication. In a person's telling of trauma "what remains to be said is the disaster, ruin of words, demise of writing for both the speaker and listener" (Lamothe 543).

Feminism has generated not only the crucial political context but also a model of community for speaking about forms of physical and sexual abuse fascinated by repression of historical narrative has developed a model of countervailing recovery of what has been silenced or lost in traditional literary histories. Finally, deconstruction, in its American Yale school version has redirected its concern with reference, representation limited of knowledge to the problem of trauma. The problem of trauma is not simply of destruction but also fundamentally, and enigma of survival. It is only in recognizing traumatic experience as a paradoxical relation between destructiveness and survival that we can also recognize the legacy of incomprehensibility at the heart of catastrophic experience.

The trauma theory has aroused a vivid interest among the cultural and literary theories the reason behind why trauma theory has begun to drag the attention of theorists pushes us to look at popular culture and mass media obsessed by repetitions of violent disaster. In this connection, William Cote E. and Roger Simpson in their *Covering Violence: A Guide to Ethical Reporting about Victims and Trauma* write, “prisoners and torture victim suffers from trauma not from single acts but from months or years of having their sense of safety destroyed. A woman continually abused by a violent spouse and a child repeatedly exploited sexually will be trauma victim” (22).

Trauma theory in literature developed systematically after the mid 1990s when various lines of inquiry converged to make trauma a privileged critical category which includes diverse fields with its specific focus on psychology, philosophical, ethical and aesthetic questions about the nature and representation of traumatic events. New historicism, fascinated by repression of historical narrative, has developed a model of countervailing recovery of what has been silenced or lost in traditional literary histories.

Trauma is intrinsically multidisciplinary so it needs to displace older paradigms and attend to new configuration of cultural knowledge. Geoffrey Hartman, Cathy Caruth, Dominick LaCarpa, Ryan Lamothe, James Berger and others, basing their theory of trauma on Freud’s psychoanalysis speak and argue about the need for “acting-out” or “working-through” of the trauma for leading life as healthy citizens. Sigmund Freud, in “Mourning and Melancholy,” describes two opposite forces that act simultaneously to convert traumatic experience in all form of writing: “The literary form gets its strength from the struggle between the urge to cry out from the burning core of traumatic experience on the one hand, and the drive to rationally

construct the core of the trauma as a symbolic representation molded in language, thus keeping it at a safe distance” (8).

In other words, all forms of writing on traumatic history is based on two forms of remembering trauma- the first result in the process of “working-through,” the other is based on denial and results in “acting-out.” Both concepts come from Freud and have been developed in such a way that it could be used in historical studies.

In 1980s, psychological trauma surfaced as a topic of serious and intense debate within the community of clinical psychologists and psychotherapists. By the mid-1990s, trauma therapies had mushroomed into an entire Industry. The disorder’s acronym, PTSD, become a household word, a metonym that stands for a whole constellation of symptoms, reinforced by popular culture images ranging from the now well-known phenomenon of “flashbacks” to the stereotype of the “crazy vet”, to the claims of some women that they have recovered memories of child sexual abuse. Literary interest in trauma and traumatic events is long-standing, and works of both creative artists and critics have always reflected and helped to shape contemporary cultural understanding of the nature of psychological trauma. Much of the recent literary critical writing on trauma and memory is rooted in psychoanalytical approaches. As a body, it draws heavily on Freud and Lacan.

Trauma is defined as a serious injury or shock to the body as from violence or accident and relating psyche. It is an emotional wound or shock that creates substantial lasting damage to the psychological development of a person. Trauma effects may also be evidenced as multiple personalities, paranoia, anger and sleep problem and difficulty trusting people and difficult relationships. Cathy Caruth, in *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma Narrative and History*, is concerned principally with the question of reference and representation how trauma becomes text or how wound

becomes voice. She outlines a theory of references as the imprint of a catastrophe fall in a discussion of de Man and Heinrich Von Kleist and ends with a reading of Lacan's gloss on Freud's interpretation of the dream of the burning child (a sequence of interpretation that itself sightings of traumatic transmission). Caruth sketches a theory of trauma as instigator of historical narrative through an analysis of mosses and monotheism which describes the intersections of traumatic narratives.

Similarly, Caruth's essay "The Wound and the Voice" opens new ground on the relationship between pain and language, narrative and historical and ethical dimensions. Caruth argues that trauma first occurs in incomprehensible. It is only later, after period of latency, it can be placed in the interactions of traumatic narrative: "the impact of the traumatic event lies precisely in its belatedness, in its refusal to be simply located" (qtd. in Berger 573). traumatic narrative, than is strongly referential but not in any simply or direct way. And the construction of the history develops from this delayed response to trauma, which helps "history to rise where immediate understanding may not" (578).

Trauma theory is a discourse of the unrepresentable of the event or objects that according to James Berger "destabilizes language and demands a vocabulary and syntax in some incommensurable with what went before" (573). In troubling ways, these discourses often blur into each other, creating a traumatic-sacred-sublime alertly in which historical complexity and historical pain are affected or redeemed. In the field of literary studies, trauma theory has come not as a surprise. As Cathy Caruth points out that the issue of trauma has emerged from an originally fragmented discourse on reactions to catastrophe.

In the analysis of the relation between traumatic memory and history, expanding Freud's ideas, Caruth and Felman have added some more. Trauma's

meaning in Western medicine extends from a surgeon's description of a wound to the head in the early nineteenth century to a much more complex and puzzling narrative about a wound to the psyche toward the century's end. This transformation has about it a compelling social character: trauma becomes attached to psychic injury when train accident victims complain of lingering mental and physical disorders despite the fact that they emerge from accident scenes "unharméd". Giving a general definition of trauma in her essay "Unclaimed Experience: Trauma and the Possibility of History," Caruth says:

1. Trauma describes an overwhelming experiences of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, and uncontrolled repetitive occurrence of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena. The experience of facing with sudden and massive death around him, for example, who suffers this sight in a numbed state, only to relieve it later on in repeated nightmares, is a central and recurring image of trauma in our century. (181)

The trauma theory has aroused a vivid interest among the cultural and literary theorists. The reason behind why trauma theory has begun to drag the attention of theorists pushes us to look at popular culture and mass media obsessed by repetitions of violent disaster. James Berger says in this regard:

It has become popular because of the successions of Die Hards, Terminators and Robocops, as well as Nightmares on Elm Street, disease and epidemic films, and now the return of the "classic" disaster films and twisters and turbulence and the repeated sequence of miniapocalypses within each films: at "real life" cop shows; and at the news itself, that never exhausted source of pure horror. (571)

By the same token of why trauma theory has become popular and inevitable makes us look at the preoccupation with family dysfunctions, child abuse, incest, spousal abuse in the media, most strikingly on the talk show circuit. There appears to be the sense both that family is the only hope for curing all social ills and that the family is “damaged beyond hope” (571). Along with the interest in family breakdown and violence comes the interest of enigmatic figure of the survivor, the one who has faced the catastrophe and can tell us what it is like. The survivor is a kind of living “black box,” a source of final knowledge of authority. Over the past fifteen years there has been an enormous growth in the interest in eyewitness accounts and testimonies of all kinds: by victims of child abuse, holocaust survivor, survivor of near death experiences.

Trauma has now crossed the boundaries of psychiatry and mediclinical field and has shown an increasing insistence on the direct effects of external violence in psychic disorder. This happened after the multi-culturalist’s celebration of decenter and meaninglessness. Within psychiatry, recent discussion has been dominated by two disorders that entered the official diagnostic manual of the American psychiatric Association in 1980s; Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Multiple Personality Disorder.

In the field of literary studies, trauma theory has come not as a surprise a Cathy Caruth points out in her essay “Introduction to Trauma Exploration in Memory” the issue of trauma has emerged “from an originally fragmented psychiatric, psychoanalytical and sociological discourse on reactions to catastrophe” (333), in 1980, as PTSD by the American psychiatric association. Yet this recognition does not seem not have produced a more complete understanding of the phenomenon. On the contrary the category of trauma has triggered a “fundamental disruption in our

receive modes of understanding and or cure and a challenge pathology” (335). Instead of generating a rigorous scientific discourse and clear cut pathology the recognition of PTSD and the subsequent pathological practice have led to a veritable epistemological crisis challenging the bound arise between academic disciplines by radically questing very limited of our understanding. And this is not surprising where literature comes in. actually, the more we satisfactorily locate and classify the system of PTSD, the more we seem to have dislocated the boundaries of our modes of understanding so that psychoanalysis and medically oriented psychiatry, sociology, history and even literature all seem to be called upon to explain, to cure or to show it is that we can no longer simply explain or simply cure. Now the phenomenon of trauma has seemed all inclusive.

Multiculturalists and post-colonial critics share an interest in dismantling those intuitional mechanisms that rein scribed a power structure that favored the interests and continuing privilege of certain groups and nation. This interest did not arise in a vacuum; however its emergence had been prepared by the Civil Rights, women and Gay Liberation movements of the 1960s and 1970s. These movements provided strength from a radical questioning of federal authority to which the protest against Vietnam War had given vent and which contributed to its conception as a ‘national trauma’. In order to clarify this issue, Berger points out:

A theory of trauma in addition suggests ways of reconceptualizing important directions in critical theory itself. In particular, the recent crisis in post structuralist thought brought on by Heidegger and Paul de Man controversies seems to require a way of thinking about how events in the past return to haunt the present. More fundamentally, it may be useful to look again at the rhetoric of post structuralist and post

modern theory-their emphasis on decent ring, fragmentation, the sublime of apocalyptic- and explore what relation they might have to the traumatic historical events of mid-century [...] like Jacques Derrida, Jean-Francois-Lyotard and Hayden white while writing explicitly about the Holocaust in the 1980s in ways that seem uncannily to echo earlier works. (573)

Similarly, in “Violence and Time: Traumatic Survivals,” Cathy Caruth further clarifies that traumatic disorders reflect the direct imposition on the mind of the unavoidable reality of horrific events where impact of violence cannot be registered. Trauma is constituted not only by the destructive force of a violent event but by the very act of its survival. In this point she posits:

In recent years an increasing insistence in psychiatry in relation to external violence in psychic disorder has culminated in the study of “Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.” As it is generally understood today, [...] as the most real, and also most destructive psychic experience. If we are to register the impact of violence we cannot, therefore, locate it only in the destructive moment of the past, but in an ongoing survival that belongs to the future. It is because violence inhabits; incomprehensibly, the very survival of those who have lived beyond it that it may be witnessed best in the future generation to whom this survival is passed on. (25)

In the same way, Dominick LaCapra’s theory of trauma focuses on three psychoanalytic topics: the return of the repressed; acting out versus working through; and the dynamics of transference. A traumatic historical event, as LaCapra argues, tends first to be repressed and then to return in forms of compulsive repetition.

LaCapra is primarily concerned with the return of the repressed as discourse, rather than with physical returns, and thus symptomatic possibilities for the return of historical trauma as discourse. LaCapra emphasizes more in trauma's nature which denies compulsively fixated but accepts the role of paradox and aporia. In this regard, Berger writes:

LaCapra wants to create a position that avoids both redemptive narrative and sublime acting out. He sets out to describe a way to work through trauma that does not deny the irreducibility fixated [...]. If there is no acting out at all, no repetition of the traumatic disruption, the resulting account of the trauma will be that teleological, redemptive fetishizing that denies the trauma's reality. (575)

Among the three, transference is the most pervasive concern of LaCapra that the failure to come to terms with the discursive returns of some traumatic event usually signals the failure to recognize one's own emotional and ideological investments in the event and its representation. Transference in psychoanalysis is itself a return of the repressed, or rather a more conscious summoning of the repressed; it repeats or acts out a past event or a relationship in a new therapeutic setting that allows for critical evaluation and change. Transference is the occasion for working through the traumatic symptom. It is imperative therefore to recognize the symptom and the trauma as one's own, to acknowledge that the trauma still is active and that one is implicated in its destructive effects.

Trauma is a serious injury or shock to the body, from violence or an accident and relating to psychiatry. It is an emotional wound or shock that creates substantial lasting damage to the psychological development of a person. Trauma may be in the form of natural and technological disaster, war or individual trauma. While defining

the concept of trauma Ron Eyerman in his *Cultural Trauma: Slavery and the Formation of African American Identity* writes:

Trauma refers to a dramatic loss of identity and meaning a tear in the social fabric affecting a group of people that has achieved some degree of cohesion. In this sense, the trauma need not necessarily be felt by everyone in a community or experienced directly by any or all. While it may be necessary to establish some event as the significant. (2)

According to this definition, trauma is embedded in the psyche of those people who have been eye witness of the bruised incidents. The medical profession has quite logically approached trauma in its most severe manifestation, the collection of symptoms that persistently troubled a person for a month or longer after a traumatic event. In this connection Cote and Roger in their *Covering Violence: A Guide to Ethical Reporting about Victims and Trauma*, state:

Memories related to traumatic injury are not created equal. A memory fo how a loved one died in al drive-by shooting may be very painful but clearly remain just that a memory not a terrifying reenactment. Retelling the painful memory under the right conditions can even help reduce and eventually master the pain. (30)

Traumas are very hazardous that ultimately lead towards the psychological destruction damages the life of innocent people. It also provides long lasting torture to the people who have faced devastating condition in their life.

Trauma can be defined from two approaches: first, psychoanalytic-formalistic approach and second, cultural approach. According to first approach, victimized subject does not disclose the real traumatic experience he/she rather exposes and expresses the testimony in a very distorted and deceptive manner due to the fear of

social death. Regarding psychoanalytical approach, Freud's ideas are very much significant. In *Studies on Hysteria*, Freud committed to the view that the "reminiscences that cause hysterical suffering are historical in the sense that they are linked to actual traumas in the patient's life" (186). The after associated with the post trauma can't be acknowledged and the amnesia that result means that the force to the effect becomes dammed up. The injured person's reaction to the trauma "only exercise a completely cathartic effect if it is an adequate reaction, they wrote the past that continuous to would is the past originally found no out let" (187). Denied appropriate responses, the ghost of past experiences continuous to hunt the hysteric. Freud was committed to the idea that the traumatic memory referred to a real passive experience that was later sexualized. He believed that the memory that remained charged with affect continuous indication of reality. His fundamental interest in the ways the past can cause pain in the present was a stable component of his psychoanalysis. The discovery of the hostile impulses helped Freud decides to give up his reduction theory. Regarding the traumatic experience occurred in the past he says. We are not only the victims of our past nor are we simply their survivors we do not only undergo the trauma, we are "capable of making meaning and direction out of our post" (193). For him, however, the work of mourning consisted in the progressive detachment from the past.

Unlike the psychoanalytic-formalistic approach, cultural approach examines the undercurrents of the distorted testimonies by contextualizing it in the network of cultural politics. It is that sense trauma brings home the limitation of our understanding and at the same time it dislocated the so-called tradition of disciplinary boundaries leading us "to think our nations of experiences of communication" (334) to a person's telling of trauma 'that remain to be said is the disaster [...] ruins of

words, demise of both the speaker and listeners” (Ryan 543). The ruin of words in this sense of being defeated by the disaster is embedded paradoxically, in the very act of speaker. It is the catastrophe of trauma that undercuts our attempts to organize and communicate experience through our stories theories and models. Therapist and patient struggle to understand through there “is no reaching the disaster” (543).

An act of speaking and responding intends, affirms, a confirm continuity and community that to use Blanchot’s phrase. The very ‘knowledge of the disaster’ undercuts. This is to say that effects to narrate the experience if sense trauma more disaster that is ‘inexperienced experienced’ experiences lost and outside of communion and community (543). It is paradoxically ‘known’ inexperienced experience trauma of trauma that hunts the affected person and at least in some ways hunts those who listen.

Trauma theory, which focuses on acting out on working through trauma has its own issue and it cannot be explained within its limited territory for it is interconnected “with specific ethical and socio-cultural tension” (Hartman 257). This arises from and awareness of persistence of violence in a cultural that no longer condones the material virtue of war. After Nazism and totalitarianism generally, yearning or the arts of peace has never been greater. But continuous ethnic conflict, genocidal episodes and irrational and bloody event reports as the main staple of the news, set u an intolerable contrast between that yearning and intractable. As a matter of fact, the transhistorical awareness of the incidence of trauma, personal or collective should make it realized the extent of human suffering.

Relating to the medic the *American Heritage College Dictionary* defines trauma as “a serious injury or shock to the body, form violence or an accident “and relating to psychiatry the dictionary defines trauma as “an emotional wound or shock

that creates substantial lasting damage to the psychological development of a person” (1439). Trauma may be in the form of natural and technological disaster, war or individual trauma. Emotional trauma occurs when “the psychological pain of a traumatic event involves damage or threat of damage to an individual’s psychic integrity or sense of self” (Carlson 29). Various stress related disorder may result from the trauma experience, eg. PTSD, depression, phobia, attention-defucut/hyperactively disorder, anxiety disorder, summarization disorder, attachment disorder, and conduct disorder, dissociative reaction, eating disturbance and substance abuse (Pynoos 96). Trauma effects may also be evidence as; “multiple personalities paranoia, anger and sleep problem, tendencies toward suicidability, irritability, mood swings and odd rituals, difficulty trusting people and difficult relationships and general despair, aimlessness and hopelessness” (Root 229).

Mind –body research has opened up many new vistas in the studies if trauma- among which are psychoneuroimmunology (PNT) and concept of cellular memory. Relative to trauma research, PNT and cellular memory help to explain the somatization of trauma. C. B. Pert writes:

Memories are stored not only in the brain but in a psychosomatic network extending in to the body particularly in the ubiquitous receptor between never and bundles cell bodies called ganglia, which are distributed not just in and near the spinal cord, but the way out along pathways to internal organs and the very surface of our skin. (143).

This shows that memories whatever they are sweet or traumatic not only stay in the brain but also in other parts of the body which cause somatic disorder. However, the oral and written expression of such memories leads towards the redemption.

Edkin Jenny puts forward her idea about trauma and says, “Meaning is not straightforward especially in the case of traumatic memory” (16). Jenny further argues that some forms of remembering can be seen as way of forgetting: ways of recovering from trauma by putting its lesion to one side, refusing to acknowledge that anything has changed restoring the pretence. So after trauma events there is a struggle over memory. In this regard he points out:

As far as memory is concerned now we remember a war for example and the way in which we acknowledge and describe what we call trauma can be very much influenced by dominant views there s by the state [. . .] can be contested and challenged. Form of statehood in contemporary society as form of political community are themselves produced and reproduces though social practices including practices of trauma and memory. (11)

In fact, this definition about traumatic memory clarifies that memory is not straightforward, especially in the case of traumatic memory. So, forms of state hold in contemporary society are produced. In this way, this essence of the trauma is precisely that it is too horrible to be remembered and to be integrated in our symbolic universe. They cannot forget, and some are haunted by nightmares and flashback to scene of unimaginable horror. Jenny further puts out that, “traumatic invocation registers a movement in the boundaries of acceptability of the use and abuse of violence in relation of power and forms of authority” (9). That is why trauma oscillates between victimhood and protest and can be linked with or articulated to either. To explore the connection between violence, the effects of trauma, it aims to contribute to understand the particular way in which power, social order and the

person are reconstituted in the contemporary west through a study of trauma and memory.

Focusing on the fact that memories are very much fruitful as they serve to history and work for therapeutic need, Urbashi Butalia looks at the memories even if they are shifting, changing and unreliable. Memory becomes important not only for the therapeutic need that is served but also because it is “part of truth in any particular vision of history” (11). Miranda Alcock opines that people try to copy by blocking all memories of their shattered past. It is painful for them to think what has happened to their family. The fictiveness in testimony does not “involve disputes about the facts, but the inevitable variance in perceiving and representing these facts, witness by witness, language by language and culture by culture” (Butalia 11).

Kali Tal draws our attention to the discursivity of the literature of trauma which according to her, “is defined by the identity of its author . . . the work of the circle of the literature of the trauma is both to identify and explicate literature by members of survivors groups and to deconstruct the process by which the dominant culture codifies their traumatic experience” (5).

Tal in “World of Hurt: Regarding the Literature of Trauma” takes an approach entirely different from those of Lacapra and Caruth. Tal is hostile to psychoanalysis and bases her views of trauma on cognitive psychology and of feminist politics that identifies strongly with the testimonies of rape and incest survivors. Tal’s main discussion deals with recent critical approach to the testimonies of Holocaust survivors, literature produced by American veterans of the Vietnam War and testimonies of women survivors of incest and child abuse. Tal’s chief concern is the social propitiation of individual testimonies. Differing quite emphatically from psychologically oriented writers like Caruth and Lacapra, Tal argues, “The literature

of trauma consists only of the writing of victims and survivors of trauma” (Berger 576).

Tal emphasizes on the individual survivor’s account of trauma and her opposition to all interpretative “appropriations” that prevent her from seeing trauma in broader social and historical forms. Tal has no sense of traumatic return of the repressed of widespread cultural symptoms and fetishes, and of the role of trauma in ideology. Her political diagnosis seems simplistic: essentially that men are symptomatically inquiring and dominating women and women should rise up and stop them. Kali Tal defines trauma as a life threatening event that displaces one’s preconceived notions about the world. Tal stresses that the event must be experienced firsthand and not vicariously perceived as mediated through any textual conduct. In other word, trauma is known as threat to life or bodily integrity or a close personal encounter with violence and death.

Certainly, the effect of trauma is profound. Trauma brings changes to the individual and he/she recognizes the experience for the integration. Kali cites Root as saying:

Trauma permanently changes a person. In contrasts to its stressful experience, which challenges an individual’s capacity to cope trauma destroys multiple dimensions of security and exceeds the limits of human capacity to process and integrate horrible experiences into a coherent perception of self – in – relationship to other and the world. The disorganization created by this upheaval motivates the individual to attempt to find meaning in the experience so that s/he can recognize the experience and integrate it into her/his perception of self and self in relationship to others and the world. (3)

According to Kali, there has been surprisingly little research conducted in the area of birthmother trauma. That relinquishing of a child in a traumatic experience is alluded to over and over again throughout the literature; unresolved grief, guilt and shame are signatory of many birthmother. Unresolved grief has been cited as a major component of the relinquishment experience. Some of the social psychological factors were identified as contributing to unresolved grief among birthmother. The factors are described as absence of social recognition regarding the loss, perceived absence of social supported from family and friends and perception of coercion by family, friends or professionals relinquish the child, to the same extent, may be the product of sadomasochism. Sadism is a psychological mechanism in which the sadist events gratify unconscious erotic fantasies by inflicting pain and violence. Masochism sometimes mistakenly understood to mean the enjoyment of pain is, in fact, a complex psychodynamic in which powerless becomes eroticized, there entrenched within the victim's self identity (12).

Thus it becomes clear that traumatic theory is developed form of psychoanalysis which not only includes those psychoanalytical theories but also it includes various fields. That is why, philosophical, ethical, aesthetic question about nature, violence, sexual abuses, depression, phobia, hyperactivity disorder, anxiety disorder, attachment disorder, dissociative reactions, paranoia and anger tendencies towards suicidal orientation, irritability, aimlessness and hopelessness include defining the actual meaning of trauma theory.

### Chapter III

#### Therapeutic Value of Traumatic Experience in Wollstonecraft's *Maria or The Wrongs of Women*

Wollstonecraft's novel *Maria or The Wrongs of Women* presents the version of the sexually frightened, persecuted, victimized heroine Maria, a woman unable to find a suitable male soulmate because social and financial corruption doom her from the outset to the status of an exchange object. She is living with the various torturous scars of her childhood memory that she expresses whenever she finds appropriate for it. The victim of one atrocity after another, she finds herself at the beginning of the novel literally in a madhouse, but metaphorically in the madhouse of her own mind. Unable to battle the selfish scheme of her tyrant husband, she has been vanquished both in body and in soul. Her written expression first dissolves her into the traumatic memory and gives redemption. Whether telling with Jemima or writing the diary to her daughter, she revisits the traumatic experience that she has gone through in her life which gradually leads towards its evacuation.

Maria's psyche is ruptured by the brutal treatment she has received from her husband. Her baby girl's face floats always before her eyes, but she is not aware that the child is already dead. She only mourns that she has given birth to a daughter, because by doing so she has perpetuated the cycle of misery and abuse. In the asylum, she revisits those events which torture her time and again:

Abodes of horror have frequently been described, and castles, filled with specters and chimeras, conjured up by the magic spell of genius to harrow the soul, and absorb the wondering mind. But, formed of such stuff as dreams are made of, what were they to the mansion of despair,

in one corner of which Maria sat, endeavoring to recall her scattered thoughts! (6)

As is clear from the lines above, Maria has been hunted by the memory of bitter treatment done upon her. Different sorts of past memories haunt her time and again in every step of her life. As a woman of having traumatic psychic, she has the feelings of mental disorder. Because of this she remembers the events in the sequence of disjunctive way. She feels horror in her life and feels despair with her life situation which ultimately leads her towards the extreme form of traumatic experience.

Maria has the traumatic memory of painful childhood experience of living under the strict guardianship of her father and the domination of elder brother. Her brother Robert sets all of the father's financial affairs in his own favor and begins to dominate her. She remembers that, "Having settled my father's affairs, and, by my exertions in his favour, made my brother my sworn foe" (92). The bitter treatment of her brother has remains as the residual memory which hunts her when her brother appears in her thought. She writes the ill treatment of her brother in her letter to her daughter who is seized by her husband:

My eldest brother was articled to a neighbouring attorney, the shrewdest, and, I may add, the most unprincipled man in that part of the country. As my brother generally came home every Saturday [. . .] He seemed to take a peculiar pleasure in tormenting and humbling me; and if I ever ventured to complain of this treatment to either my father or mother, I was rudely rebuffed for presuming to judge of the conduct of my eldest brother (69)

As her brother has been given more priority and freedom in the family than Maria, he assumes the authority over other members in the family where Maria is not the

exception. She is always tormented by her brother whenever he comes home after long period of time. Due to the lack of her brother's domination and the parents' silent support in such domination, Maria has the pangs of disappointment and anger towards her own weak parents. She revisits her disappointing childhood experience while writing the letter to her daughter whom she fails to support despite of her intense desire.

The excess suffocation brings turmoil and disturbance, physical and psychological pain and many other internal and external hurts in Maria. The feeling of lost identity on her own home upsets her too much. The painful and traumatized situation compels her to resist against it. Maria's way of establishing an affair with the neighboring boy is guided by her mind that was fully perpetuated by the freedom. The problem of psychosis and a type of hysteria develops in her that manifests both in love and hate.

Moreover, Maria is tormented by the very incident of deciding to marry with George Venables who later turns out to be cruel, barbarous and drunkard. Her husband's nature is brutal, who feels women as the property at their husbands and she becomes victim to the prejudices of mankind. **“Dehumanized by his dismissive and condescending” attitude, Maria finds herself continually “silenced by him” ()**. Apart from shock encounter with brutality or death, in this context of Maria, trauma can be seen as initiated from the betrayal of a promise or an expectation.

Traumatic events that Maria faces tear her from herself and binds her to others, irreversibly, if not fatally. The task of sex is the requirement of Maria as a married woman, just as tending to the education of children is the task of a governess. But most degrading of all is their sexual relationship, which Maria rather coyly discusses initially in the abstract “for personal intimacy without affections seemed to

be the most degrading as well as the most painful state in which all woman of any taste, not to speak of the peculiar delicacy of fostered sensibility, could be placed” (85). Maria equivocates about the reality of women’s sexual desires, seethes with ambiguity as well as unresolved trauma. The equally traumatic to the forceful sexual relationship with her husband is the incident when her husband attempts to sell her sexual favors to an older man, Mr. S. “to whom he owes gambling debts. The trauma of sexual betrayal is reactivated during her affair with Darnford in the asylum.

While writing to Darnford, she is invoked to her own suffering by the sad objects and the horrid noises around her which previously has continually employs her feverish fancy. She changes the traumatic memory of her husband’s cruel punishment to confine her in the madhouse despite of her being sane into the narrative memory by writing and changing it into script so that anybody can penetrate her trauma. As Wollstonecraft writes by describing her situation after meeting with Darnford in asylum:

Thinking it selfish to dwell on her own sufferings, when in the midst of wretches, who had not only lost all that endears life, but their very selves, her imagination was occupied with melancholy earnestness to trace the mazes of misery, through which so many wretches must have passed to this gloomy receptacle of disjointed souls, to the grand source of human corruption. Often at midnight was she waked by the dismal shrieks of demoniac rage, or of excruciating despair, uttered in such wild tones of indescribable anguish as proved the total absence of reason, and roused phantoms of horror in her mind, far more terrific than all that dreaming superstition ever drew. (26)

In the above lines Maria seems to be suffering from the Psychological trauma which always involves an interaction between the 'outside' and Maria's internal world. Her mind is full of melancholy and horror which hunts her while living the miserable life inside the asylum, the punishment of her husband. She wakes in the midnight due to the wounded psychic memory she is living with. Her mind is not stable rather it is fluctuated, for she is the person suffering with the traumatic memory.

Furthermore, in spite of her lack of interest, Maria becomes pregnant which makes her mere possession of her husband that frequently disturbs her inner psychology and makes her mentally disordered. In such condition, even after visiting to her comforting uncle she gets no way out anywhere and considers herself as the victim of the partial laws enacted by men "the inhabitant of an alien country, she muses that women have no country". Bastilled for life, Maria finds herself an "out-law of the world" (95). But rather than taking direct action, calamity on beating fantasy after another is catalogued in order of demonstrate yet again the persistent power of traumatic residue. Maria is so much traumatized by the very event when her daughter was seized from her lap and kept far from her so that she can never meet her daughter. She feels sorry for failing to give appropriate environment and the motherly love to her daughter which she has desired for because of her own poor upbringing:

The loss of her babe was the tender string; against other cruel remembrances she labored to steel her bosom; and even a ray of hope, in the midst of her gloomy reveries, would sometimes gleam on the dark horizon of futurity, while persuading herself that she ought to cease to hope, since happiness was nowhere to be found. (14)

Maria is depressed by her memory of her daughter whom she loves by heart. The obligation to remain lonely despite having offspring is the traumatic disaster for

Maria. During her confinement in the mad house, Maria is doomed to suffer in the memory of her daughter who is separated by her cruel husband. Her infant's image is continually floating on Maria's sight, and the first smile of intelligence remembers, as none but a mother, an unhappy mother, can conceive. She hears her half speaking half cooing, and feels the little twinkling fingers on her burning.

When Maria's uncle dies later she admits that she feels she has been "widowed by the death of my uncle" (101), suggesting that there was an emotional tie. Her hysterical reaction to genital sexuality encodes the existence and effects of residual trauma on the victim of betrayal and abuse. It is therefore, the death of her uncle has traumatic effect her life stronger than we might ordinarily assume.

Suddenly, inexplicably, George Venables is the ardent lover, although Maria has to admit that she would have preferred that he remain attentive to prostitutes rather than to her: "my husband's renewed caresses then became hateful to me; his brutality was tolerable, compared to his distasteful fondness. Still compassion and the fear of insulting his supposed feelings, by a want of sympathy, made me dissemble and do violence to my delicacy. What a task!" (93).

After much dramatic acting out and hyperbolic hysteria, Maria flees her husband and begins the series of moves that brings her to her final distinction, the madhouse, "hunted like an infected beast, pursued by her husband for her uncle's inheritance" (124). Maria is the ultimate caricature of a female victim. Even the landladies who shelter her turn her over to her husband. In a sort of paranoid fantasy, Maria realizes that she is haunted as well as hunted by Venables:

Who seemed to assume terrific or hateful forms to torment me,  
 wherever I turned sometimes a wild cat, a roaring bull or hideous  
 assassin, whom I vainly attempted to fly; at others he was a demon,

hurrying me to the brink of a precipice, plunging me into dark waves, or horrid gulfs; and I woke in violent fits of trembling anxiety to assure myself that it was all a dream. (125).

Not only in the stage of awakening, even in the dream Maria is tormented by the sexual anxiety which is rooted in the residual memories of persistent abuse. The intense anxiety and the physical disgust to her husband create horror in the very psychology of Maria because of her husband's insistent search when she attempts to flee away from him. He never lets her go away from his possession in which the national law also supports. So she is hunted by her husband who brings horror in her psychology.

Maria's actions throughout the novel make sense only if we view them as traumatic residue, evidence of the fact that trauma itself can never be rationalistically dismissed on matter how many times one tries to reshape and thereby control it. Once a wounding has occurred, trauma lives a life of its own, twisting and turning in the victim's psyche and on whatever page he or she attempts to compose.

Another equally important female character in the novel is the lower class surrogate Jemima, who has been destined to be servant in the asylum where Maria is confined. Like Maria, Jemima is also full of woes, sufferings, abuse, and beatings that have been delivered to her though she is an innocent woman. Her only fault is to be born as a woman in a society that views such being as the raw sexual material to be used and consumed. Jemima tells her past events with Maria whom she has befriended while living in the same asylum. Jemima's narrative is an embarrassingly painful series of insults and affronts, beginning with maternal rejection, maternal death, paternal neglect and physical abuse, emotional wounding, and then another

illegitimate pregnancy resulting from rape, and the entire cycle is slated to begin again.

When Jemima comes to know that she is bastard born, it causes stress and shock in her psychology. She is emotionally tortured as she visualizes the very fact of her mother's seduction by her father. Jemima's traumatic memories is attributed to real or imagined phenomena, not because of their actual harmfulness or their objective abruptness but because these phenomena are believed to have abruptly and harmfully affected her future identity. In fact, traumatic memories are hazardous to her personal life of the experience. In the asylum, she begins her narrative from the very point of her mother's seduction. As Jemima says:

My father seduced my mother, a pretty girl, with whom he lived fellow servant; and she no sooner perceived the natural, the dreaded consequence, than the terrible conviction flashed on her that she was ruined. Honesty, and a regard for her reputation, had been the only principles inculcated by her mother; and they had been so forcibly impressed, that she feared shame, more than the poverty to which it would lead. Her incessant importunities to prevail upon my father to screen her from reproach by marrying her, as he had promised in the fervor of seduction, estranged him from her so completely, that her very person became distasteful to him; and he began to hate, as well as despise me, before I was born. (39)

The above lines vividly depicts how Jemima's mother unfortunately gets the dreaded consequence of the conception of an illegitimate child after being seduced by a fellow servant who has promised a subsequently refused to marry her. The very fact of her father's seduction of her mother has remained as a residue of her psychology that

leads her towards the anxiety of loneliness. In fact, it is the trauma that makes wound on her emotional feelings. There is no final resolution or the successful realization of trauma. Its effects linger like scars on a body, like marking on a blank page. Her mother's sexual abuse by her father, who later abandons her, may hardly be deleted from her memory, for it is not only a shocking event but also one that paves the way for her birth.

In the life of Jemima, suffering is initiated from the very day of her birth as her "mother died in the ninth day" and "consigned to the care of cheapest nurse who suckled her own child at the same time, and lodged as many more as she could get" (39). She never gets the motherly love in her childhood and doomed to be reared by a professional woman who keeps the bastard children like chicken in the farms. Jemima's life is so much pathetic in such condition where many other children have been dying due to the lack of good care. As she narrates with Maria and Darnford:

Poverty, and the habit of seeing children die off her hands [. . .]The chicken has a wing to shelter under; but I had no bosom to nestle in, no kindred warmth to foster me. Left in dirt, to cry with cold and hunger till I was weary, and sleep without ever being prepared by exercise, or lulled by kindness to rest; could I be expected to become anything but a weak and rickety babe? Still, in spite of neglect, I continued to exist, to learn to curse existence. (40)

Jemima is reared under the sever poverty as she is alone and had nobody to care her. The woman who has kept her does not care her in well manner because she has to go after various other children. In such poor environment she struggles for her life. Though she is abandoned by everybody she survives even in such adverse

environment. Sue to the lack of appropriate care and balanced diet she begins to like a “little old woman” (40).

In such situation, her father gets married with another fellow servant and gives birth to another child at that time she is working another house. She has taken to house; but not a home for a home she never knew. Her stepmother is hiring a girl to assist her in the care of the child and she is taken to another to use for employment. Her father also scolds her very cruelly and beats as well. When she attempts to resist, her step-mother becomes so much furious:

Feeling her own consequence, before she could speak, she had learned the art of tormenting me, and if I ever dared to resist, I received blows, laid on with no compunctious hand, or was sent to bed dinnerless, as well as supperless. I was sent out in all seasons, and from place to place, to carry burdens far above my strength, without being allowed to draw near the fire, or ever being cheered by encouragement or kindness. No wonder then, treated like a creature of another species, that I began to envy, and at length to hate, the darling of the house.

(40)

During her childhood Jemima is treated like an animal by her stepmother. She is not only beaten severely but also kept without giving food even after working for long. She is forced to do the work which remains out of her capacity. She has to carry the burden that goes out of her capacity, like “an obstinate mule” that receives “loaded back” (42). Her step-mother even blames her all faults and disposition which she had brought in to this world with her; inherited from her mother.

The torture of her step mother in her childhood hunts her in the later part of her life. Though she escapes from them, she has brought that shocking experience

with her. “I cannot forget it” (40) she says with Maria. She is “shuddered with horror when [she] recollects the treatment [she] had now to endure” (41). She has no taste of human kindness during her living with step-mother as she is no longer described like human being. Instead, she has the position of wretch in the family. Remembering the maltreatment of her family member, Jemima compares her past state with dog or cat which can be kicked out from the family if the owner dislikes it.

Though her position might seem potentially freeing, allowing her to define her by herself rather than being defined by the rigid social system of classification, her birth determines her life even more rigidly. Her own life structures are not simply because she encounters cruelty and abuse akin to that of her mother, but also because others especially her father, step mother, but those outside her family who are tyrannous over her as well use the conditions of Jemima’s conception her motherlessness as evidence of her own depravity and worthlessness. She suffers from all the misery, abuse, contempt’s bitter punishment. In this stance, however, the mother’s absence, not her life, prescribes her future. Her identities are continuously constructed and secured not by facing the present and future but by reconstructing the collectivity of earlier life.

When she grows up there is nobody else to love and care her. She is sent from one family to another to work as a servant where she is tortured by the misters and mistress. She feels she is like “an egg dropped on the sand” that is “hunted from family to family” (43). All of which is caused by the lack of mother’s support which is the great misery of her life. Along with the lack of her mother’s support she misses the sibling which she never gets in her life. As she says:

I was despised from my birth, and denied the chance of obtaining a footing for myself in society. Yes; I had not even the chance of being

considered as a fellow creature yet all the people with whom I lived, brutalized as they were by the low cunning of trade, and the despicable shifts of poverty, were not without bowels, though they never yearned for me. I was, in fact, born a slave, and chained by infamy to slavery during the whole of existence, without having any companions to alleviate it by sympathy, or teach me how to rise above it by their example. (43-44)

While working in the house of other family, Jemima is not only forced to do the hard labor but also deprived from the good manner; she is treated as slave. Neither she gets love and tender nor does she get food as she needs, what she is given is the scold and torture from her master and mistress. Nobody likes to show affinity with her. Here story is simply a replication of her mother, however it is degeneration. She has “nobody” to claim or care for her, or to provide her example to fellow. Motherless, a bastardized, Jemima is subject to great persecution and more humiliation. She describes her pathetic condition of being powerless a laboring woman in the society.

She remembers how she is bitterly punished by her mistress even in a minor mistake. Such punishment turns out to be the traumatic event of her life. The notion of traumatic event as having spatio-temporal location leads us to the realm of voided experiences that brings the ruin in which peculiarity of one spatial ruin in that it manages to attain to both the unclaimed experiences of trauma and the impossible limit situation. In this process, fragmented and bruised images of the past become the hunting memory of the present. The word ‘ruins’ designates location of memory in which trauma took place. The ruined capacity reveals the undercurrents of the sense of traumatic feelings which Jemima narrates in the non-linear sequence with Maria

inside the asylum. She narrates the traumatic event when her mistress beats her like an animal:

Often has my mistress, for some instance of forgetfulness, thrown me from one side of the kitchen to the other, knocked my head against the wall, spit in my face, with various refinements on barbarity that I forbear to enumerate, though they were all acted over again by the servant, with additional insults, to which the appellation of bastard, was commonly added, with taunts or sneers. But I will not attempt to give you an adequate idea of my situation, lest you, who probably have never been drenched with the dregs of human misery, should think I exaggerate. (42-43)

The above lines are sufficient to visualize the atrocity that Jemima has been enduring while living in others' family as a servant. Her mistress sometimes becomes violent in such a way that she does not distinguish between human beings and animal while punishing her servant. She seems to lose her consciousness and beats in the way she likes, she never thinks about the effect of her attack upon an innocent girl who has only a small mistake while working. Such bitter persecution of her mistress turns out to be a trauma which, in fact, is rooted in an event or series of events, but not necessarily in their direct experience. So, the bitter experience with her mistress remains in the memory that reappears in her mind time and again which ultimately bother her normal peaceful way of life.

Apart from the bitter experience with her mistress she has the similar kind of traumatic memory formed in relation to her master who takes the advantage of her being guardian less by attempting to sexually abuse her. She fails to revolt against him when he forcefully stacks her when she is alone in the house. Such sexual abuses

by her own master have bad effects on the psychology of Jemima. Whenever she is informed about the events related to the sexual abuses, she is traumatized by the memory of that event. As she narrates:

At sixteen, I suddenly grew tall, and something like comeliness appeared on a Sunday, when I had time to wash my face, and put on clean clothes. My master had once or twice caught hold of me in the passage; but I instinctively avoided his disgusting caresses. One day however, when the family were at a Methodist meeting, he contrived to be alone in the house with me, and by blows—yes; blows and menaces, compelled me to submit to his ferocious desire; and, to avoid my mistress's fury, I was obliged in future to comply, and skulk to my loft at his command, in spite of increasing loathing. (44)

When she grows up her beauty becomes problem in her life. Sexually passionate men begin to consider her as a sexual object to fulfill their passion. She becomes the victim of the ferocious desire of her own master who attempts to exploit her sexually.

Although she struggles to save her many times, her master does not let her to escape in the day when she is alone in the house. In this way, she is raped by her “master”. In her life she is traumatized by her memory of rape. Her experience of abuse and societal invisibility leads her to redefined category of bastard. Whenever she goes it haunts her emotional psychology. Even after coming out from the house, it remains as the scar in her mind.

As trauma is an emotional wound or shock that creates substantial lasting damage to the psychological development of person, Jemima’s an illegitimate pregnancy resulted from rape becomes the trauma, for it is a wound that damages her psychological development. Jemima’s narrative comes from such intersection of

traumatic repetitions that history like trauma is never simply one's own rather it are implicated in her relationship with others in the society. As she narrates the unfortunate and pathetic incident with Maria and Darnford, she shares the sorrow of her life. Her sharing of such traumatic event helps her to get rid from the anxiety. Here the language has the therapeutic value in her life. Experiencing the satisfaction of articulating her miseries before others through the language, she can, if not totally sympathetic, at least tear between sorrow and remedy. Words, she speaks, seems to express pain and sadness and paves the way for pleasure and smiles by getting remedy from them.

After a month of her rape, Jemima comes to know that she is pregnant which turns out to be the heavy blow to her innocent psychology. She explains, "I discovered with horror . . . . . that I was with child. I know not why I felt a mixed sensation despair and tenderness, excepting that, ever called a bastard, a bastard appeared to me an object of the greater compassion in creation" (44). She has no way what to do further and even there is nobody else to guide her. Everybody begins to find her mistake and discard her from the community. Her master also wants to kick out her from the house. Again her condition is nothing more than the condition of her mother who died after giving birth to Jemima due to the lack of support from the person who has made her pregnant. However, even with the horrible conditions of this conception, she feels a special bond with her unborn child. She belongs to no one and thus to everyone; her intelligence mate child, belongs very much to Jemima. She recreates the relationship between a women's self and a bodily "other" within her during pregnancy. The master assumes from Jemima's response that his plan to end the pregnancy itself has aborted and thus he protects his "name" by denying it (45). When her master gives her medicine phial she "burst in to tears" thinking that "it was

killing herself yet is such a self as she worth preserving” (45). When her master begins to hate her, she decides to abort the child by considering the situation of her own.

Experiencing trauma can be understood as a sociological process that provides a painful injury, establishes the victim, attributes responsibility, and distributes the ideal and material consequences. After her rape and the rejection of her master, Jemima decides to abort her child which left the emotional wound more harmful than the physical wound. Her physical wound is cured by the medicine but the emotional wound remains throughout her memory for ever. As she narrates the events of abortion with Maria:

I hurried back to my hole, and, rage giving place to despair, sought for the potion that was to procure abortion, and swallowed it, with a wish that it might destroy me, at the same time that it stopped the sensations of new born life, which I felt with indescribable emotion. My head turned round, my heart grew sick, and in the horrors of approaching dissolution, mental anguish was swallowed up. The effect of the medicine was violent, and I was confined to my bed several days; but, youth and a strong constitution prevailing, I once more crawled out, to ask myself the cruel question, 'Whither I should go?' I had but two shillings left in my pocket, the rest had been expended, by a poor woman who slept in the same room, to pay for my lodging, and purchase the necessaries of which she partook. (46)

She is willing to sacrifice herself and the fetus so as not to perpetuate systems of social and economic oppression so as not to reproduce those systems of generating another victim for their purpose. Abortion functions as a way to break the cycle of

“sins” being passed from mother to child-her mother’s to herself, her to her child Jemima disallowed the further repetition of her mother’s but the master as the one who provides the position casts a shadow overall. She resists through her body the directing of her mother and the dire future of her child, she needs the very individual indeed, the very socio-economic system that have persecuted her to do so.

Although she abort the child to end the cycle of sexual persecution which, she assumes, her child will give continuity in the coming future, it left the her the wound which makes her psychologically weak. The event of abortion is the torturous event in her life which she can never forget throughout her life. In fact the oral expression may give her the healing power for short period of time; it always keeps a space secure in her wounded psyche.

1. Finally, in the novel *Maria or the Wrongs of Women*, Mary

Wollstonecraft depicts the pathetic condition of female through a woman who is continually abused by a violent spouse and a child repeatedly exploited sexually. Those victims, indeed, are the victims of trauma, suffering from the emotional injury, they have been living with. The traumatic events that they face hunt them time and again when the related events come into their thought. However, the expression of such events in the oral or written language during the appropriate condition helps to get redemption from the psychic disorder as it transforms the traumatic memory into the narrative one. Maria and Jemima and their oral and written revisiting of traumatic events within the asylum before each other has the therapeutic value for their wounded psychology.

## Chapter IV

### Conclusion

The research has explored Mary Wollstonecraft's *Maria or The Wrongs of Women* which illustrates how the traumatic experience, someone has gone through throughout their life, has the therapeutic value in healing the psychological wounds they have been living with. Maria, the female protagonist has been destined to live in an asylum, the place where her husband has imprisoned her. Jemima, another female character, has been working in the same asylum where both of them become friends to each other and express their past experiences of torture and trauma, they have gone through, to each other. Similarly, Maria writes letters to her daughter while living in the asylum with expressing her bitter feelings aroused by the traumatic events of her life. Such an oral and written expression of residual memory, in fact, comes up with therapeutic value for their wounded psyche.

Since her childhood to the present condition of living within the four walls of madhouse, Maria has been victimized by the predominantly masculine society where females are destined to be marginalized in the cost of the male superiority. Her innocent child psychology has been ruptured when she is forced to live under the strict domination of her brother, an agent of the oppressive patriarchy. After setting all of the financial affairs in his own favor, her brother Robert begins to be superior in front of Maria. Her brother's ill treatment has left over the scars in her innocent psychology with which she is living her bitter life. The extreme domination by her brother suffocates her within her own house which she hardly feels as her own. Such suffocation brings mental pain and ultimately psychosis which arouses the feeling of hate; as a result she begins to associate herself with her neighbor which, in fact, is the consequences of her hysterical problem. Such a bitter effect of ill treatment of her

brother haunts her during her stay in the asylum, whenever she talks about her brother.

Furthermore, Maria is most often distressed by her own decision to marry with George Venables the relationship with whom turns out to be a curse in the life of Maria, for he imprisons her considering as a mad woman rather than having love with her. When she gives birth to a daughter, she is forcefully detached with from own daughter without any fault.

The most torturous and traumatic event in her life is here sexual affair with her so called husband, who tries to show the pretending love in order to fulfill his sexual passion even after his cruel exploitation as a powerful husband regarding his wife as nothing more than the object. Although the task of sex is the primary need in the conjugal life, Maria fails to bear it with her barbarous husband with his cruel behavior, for the pretending intimacy without any heartily affection turns out to be a painful state in the life of every newly married wife who is expecting affectionate love from the side of her husband. Maria revisits such pathetic and poignant condition of her past life lovely while living in the asylum. It is realized from the actions of Maria after such traumatic events that trauma itself is never dismissed rationalistically rather its effect can be lessen with the frequent revisit of that event remained in the residual memory of anybody else. In one way or other trauma remains forever in human psyche once an event is occurred. The oral expression of those traumatic events in front of Maria and the suffering that she has gone through in the asylum is expressed in her letter to her daughter which really gives redemption distressed traumatic psyche.

Jemima, another female character, has also gone through the painful experience not less torturous than Maria. Born as a bastard child, Jemima is destined

to live her life as a servant from her childhood when she gets lots of woes, sufferings, abuse, and beatings from the owner. She is sexually abused in her preteens by her own owner who has been keeping her as a servant. With her realization that her child will have the similar pathetic and poignant condition, Jemima is compelled to make the strong decision of abortion, the event which has remained in her residual memory and haunts her time and again while living in asylum as a servant. Jemima tells her story with Maria in the asylum. Jemima's life story is full of painful insults and affronts which go in the series of maternal loose, paternal neglect and physical and sexual abuse with the psychological scars due to the rape which gives her the reward of illegitimate pregnancy and ultimately the abortion of her child. Jemima revisits all of those events in front of Maria, the woman with similar experience. Her oral expression of those events neither helps her to return towards her innocent childhood, nor she gets her own lost mother but it certainly helps her to get redemption in her wounded psychology.

To sum up, Maria and Jemima, two female characters have been living with the residual memory of the woes, sufferings, abuse, and beatings which was imposed upon them as a representative of marginalized group in the oppressive patriarchal society. They have the traumatic experience of revisiting those events time and again. Their oral and written expression of those events comes up with the mental redemption in their distressed psychology.

## Works cited

Berger, James. "Rev. of Unclaimed Experience." *Contemporary Literature* 38 (Fall 97): 569-82. Print.

Breuer, Josef. Sigmund Freud, James Strachey. *Studies on Hysteria*. New York: Basic Books, 2000. Print.

Butalia, Urbashi. *The Other Side of Silence*. Durham: Duck UP, 2000. Print.

Carlson, Eve B. *Trauma Assessment: A Clinician's Guide*. New York: The Viking Press, 1997.

Print.

Caruth, Cathy and et al. "Unclaimed Experience: Trauma and the Possibility of History." *The New York Times Review* 76.2 (June 1985): 179-87. Print.

--. "Violence and Time: Traumatic Survivals." *Assemblage* No-20 (April 1993): 24-25. Print.

Cooper, Christopher M. "Reading the Politics of Abortion: Mary Wollstonecraft Revisited." *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 16. 4 (2004): 1-48.

Print.

Eyerman, Ron. *Cultural Trauma: Slavery and the Formation of African American Identity*. Cambridge University Press, 2001. Print.

Felman, Shoshana, *Testimony: Crisis of Witnessing in Literature, Psychology and History*. New York: Routledge, 1992. 45-65. Print.

Freud, Sigmund. "Studies on Hysteria." London: Penguin Books, 1978. Print.

--. "Mourning and Melancholy," *The Essentials of Psychoanalysis*. Trans. James

- Strachey. London: Hogarth press,1986. 7-12. Print.
- Hartman, Geoffrey, James Berger, and et. al. "Theory of Trauma and Psychoanalysis." *The New York Times Review* 16.3 (Fall 1985): 262-269. Print.
- Jenny, Edkins. "Introduction: Trauma, Violence and Political Community." *Wartime Memories* (May 2003): 13-16. Print.
- Jordan, Elaine. "Criminal Conversation: Mary Wollstonecraft's *The Wrongs of Woman*." *Women's Writing*, 4.2 (1997): 221-234. Print.
- Kapadia, Novy. "Taslina Nasrin – A Victim of Politics." *Times Weekly* 37.8 (May, 2004): 84-88. Print.
- LaCarpa, Dominick. *Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory and Trauma*. London: Sage, 1982. Print.
- Lamothe, Ryan. "Freud's Unfortunates: Reflection on Hurts Being: Who Knows the Disaster of Severe Trauma?" *American Journal of Psychotherapy* 55.4 (2001): 543-61. Print.
- Luckhurst, Roger: "Mixing Memory and Desire: Psychoanalysis, Psychology and Trauma Theory." *An Oxford Guide: Literary Theory and Criticism*. Ed. Patricia Waugh: Oxford University Press, 2006. 497-506. Print.
- Mallinick, Daniella. "Sublime Heroism and *The Wrongs of Woman*: Passion, Reason, Agency." *European Romantic Review* 18.1 (2007):1-27. Print.
- Pert, C. B. *Psychosomatic Wellness: Healing Body-Mind*. New York: Touchstone, 1997.
- Pynoos, R. S. *Response to Trauma*. New York: New York UP, 1987. Print.
- Simpson, Roger, and William Cote E. *Covering Violence: A Guide to Ethical Reporting about Victims and Trauma*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2000. Print.

Tal, Kali. *Worlds of Hurt: Reading the Literatures of Trauma*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1995. Print.

Tauchert, Ashley. *Mary Wollstonecraft and the Accent of Femininity*. Basingstoke: Polity Press, 2002. Print.

Todd, Janet. "Reason and Sensibility in Mary Wollstonecraft's *Maria, or The Wrongs of Woman*". *A Journal of Women Studies* 5.3 (Autumn,1980) 17-20. Print.