

Chapter 1: Trauma, Effects, and Resolution

'Trauma' is a medical term. In Greek it means a 'wound' or 'injury' with lasting effect. The term also refers to the action shown by an abnormal mind to the body. It keeps close contact with psychology and develops accordingly. Trauma is a psychological casualty, results in mental and emotional disorder. Along with the change of time the very term 'trauma' widens its limit and questions its previous assumptions. Now the word trauma not only denotes the medical and psychological domain but also the temporal, historical, cultural and other domains as well. Trauma has now become a mode of interpretation of narrative, history, culture and various other philosophical fields. Because of its wide acceptance and broader periphery, trauma cannot be limited only to medi-clinical studies and psychiatry. It has now developed as the theory and is now given a distinct position in the help of theories. Modern world is not beyond the traumatic effects and experiences since the world itself bears disorder, catastrophe, destruction, and devastation which are undoubtedly features of trauma. It is a matter of survival, a metaphor of existence. Modern people are directly or indirectly haunted by traumatic experiences.

The definition of trauma depends on context. *Oxford Advance Learner's Dictionary* defines trauma as "a mental condition caused by severe shock, especially when the harmful effects last for long time, or trauma is an unpleasant experience that makes you feel upset or anxious" (1963). The theoretical basis for the proposition is that the status of trauma as trauma is dependent on the socio-cultural context of the affected society at the time the historical events or situation arises. A society emerging from a major war suffering from diminished economic resources, experiencing rampant internal conflicts are more likely to be the symptoms of trauma in the existing society. Neil J. Smelser in his article "Psychological and Cultural Trauma" states trauma befalls due to mass migration, wars, mass unemployment, and dislocations associated with the rapid social change. Catastrophic natural

disaster, massive population depletion and genocide are further cause to make a life traumatic. As he states:

Firstly it must be remembered, or made to be remembered. Furthermore, the memory must be culturally relevant, that is, represented as obliterating, damaging, or rendering problematic something sacred- usually a value or outlook felt to be essential for the integrity of the affected society. Finally, the memory must be associated with a strong negative affect usually disgust, shame, or guilt. (36)

Trauma is a transformative event which is realized in the variety of historical, rhetorical and cultural symptoms. Trauma theory intersects with other critical vocabularies which problematize representation and attempts to define its limit discourse of the sublime, the sacred, the apocalyptic and other in all its guises. Trauma even brings the after effects of the emotional upheavels. It leaves a catastrophic effect and the recovery from this requires holistic and meaningful physical development of a person. Regarding to the psychological trauma Freud, a related critic and the explorer of the trauma theory, relates trauma with the study of hysteria. Berger cites Freudian notion of trauma theory in his famous essay "Unclaimed Experiences." As he states:

Freud's earlier idea, in studies in hysteria, concerns the dynamics of trauma, repressions, and symptom formation. Freud held that an overpowering event, unacceptable to consciousness can be forgotten and yet return in the form of somatic symptoms or compulsive repetitive behaviors. The initial theory of trauma and symptom became problematic for Freud when he concluded that neurotic symptoms were more often the result of repressed drives and desires than that of traumatic events. (570)

The phenomena of trauma, particularly hysteria in Freudian analysis, were closely linked with modernity, industrial revolution, and great wars. Due to the disintegration with the historical perspectives and destruction of earlier norms and values life became problematic. Likewise the mental disorder in life comes due to the causes of alienation, depression, war, and many more. Since trauma is a mode of interpretation of narrative history, culture, and philosophy it is not only limited to any specific genre.

Trauma is in the form of individual, natural, psychological, ethical, technological, or even historical. Initiators of trauma theory like Freud, Hartman, Caruth, LaCapra, Luckhurst, focus their views on psychological, social/cultural, absential and memorial domain respectively. They agree that trauma is an incomprehensible phenomenon when it occurs and it is acting out and working through in the form of dreams, nightmares, anxieties, and other repetitive phenomenon.

Trauma synthesizes resources from a number of critical schools such as historical, ethical, memorial, psychological, social, individual, philosophical and aesthetic. Cathy Caruth, in her essay "Unclaimed Experience Trauma and the Possibility of History" defines trauma as perplexing experience and other contrastive responses. Each traumatic event is the result of its own triggered experience. She further elaborates:

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

Trauma explores not only a phase of destruction but enigma of survivals, a metaphor of existence. Frustrated situation, anxiety, sleeplessness, disorder, irritation, memorization of past events which becomes obstacles for progress and a failure to maintain psychological equilibrium are the general characteristics of trauma. These characteristics affect the daily survival to an individual and in this sense trauma is a metaphor of existence. Trauma, now has inevitable part of life, especially in the modern devastated world, necessity of trauma is grow fonder. Traumatic figures cannot forget the event and some are haunted by nightmares and flashbacks to sense of unimaginable horror. Modern man's life cling in dream hallucination, imagination, fantasy, and flashback.

Likewise Geoffrey Hartman in his essay "On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies" clarifies his concept about trauma. According to him "where there is dream there is (was) trauma" (546). In the same way Hartman also clarifies the atmosphere of trauma. He writes, "For it is clear that accidents too that is, apparently simple, daily events uncover or are dawn into an atmosphere of trauma" (546). Hartman especially in his essay "Trauma within the Limits of Literature" turns off the Freudian psychoanalytical perspective of trauma and unfolds its relationship with literature or literary works. At one point of his essay Hartman explores the relationship of trauma with language itself. In his essay "On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies" he remarks trauma theory throws the light on figurative or poetic language, and perhaps symbolic process in general, as something other than a prior (non) experience (540).

As it has been already pointed out that trauma explains the unexplainable of events, person and situation, its major emphasis in literature lies in the fact of interpretation of disorder, anxiety, distress, destruction, misrepresentation, odd presentation caused mainly due to the mental repression and abnormal activities. Hartman writes "the post-traumatic story often needs a suspension of disbelief" (541). Hartman copes with this idea in Coleridge's

famous poem "The Rime of Ancient Mariner" where according to Hartman requires a kind of empathy i.e. suspension of disbelief. He explores the relationship between worlds, images, and wounds in this poem. He further clarifies:

Imagination purposes a body and atmosphere of fact. It tries to make us believe the unbelievable; it demands the acknowledgement of being real not only imagined. The means for doing so include somatic feelings. We are drawn into the species of belief by the recovery of certain visceral sensation: extremes of heat, cold and thirst, glare of color horror of the void, loss of speech, perhaps the only way to overcome a traumatic severance of body and mind is to come back to mind through the body. We recall how voice drives up, and chokes its way out again. (241)

Through these lines it is clear that, literary study or say literature enables traumatic knowledge to become a part of personal and cultural memory. Literature provides clues for the unexplainable and it makes trauma studies lighter and easier.

Regarding the issues of trauma and literature and literature Hartman's major trust lies in another essay "Trauma within the Limit of Literature." In this essay he relates trauma with literature as well as language and question the Freud's earlier hypothesis regarding trauma theory. As Freud relates trauma theory with the study of hysteria as well as with historical development, are the cultural-specific component. Trauma theory is motivated by concern about social and moral well being. Hartman's major focus in this essay is trauma study in art and literature exploring the relation between psychic wounds and signification. How trauma study affects the formation of words in particular and of language in general is his focus. He answers through these lines:

How trauma affects the formation of words or how world deals with trauma, can be viewed as the technical matter in which the focus becomes what region

of the brain are involved. But neurology, cognitive science, or a formal therapy are not the primary concern of trauma study in arts. In so far there is an established field to which it belongs, it would be closer to semiology in Saussure's definition as the study of sign within the context of social interaction. (258)

Hartman traces out the historical interpretation of literary works and has made a special comment on it. According to him literature has been analyzed from a political perspective and our duty is to read literature from a traumatic point of view. This sort of reading provides much more refractive ideas. In his essay "On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies" he further clarifies:

Trauma studies provides more natural transition to a real world often falsely split off from that of the university, as if the one were activist and engaged and the other self-absorbed and detached. There is an opening that leads from trauma studies to public, especially mental health issues, an opening with ethical, cultural and religious implication. (543-44)

It is clear that trauma study provides a real model to interpret literary works. There is no doubt that trauma study provides more accurate, more authentic, and more realistic mode of interpretation rather than other interpretative mode since it deals with unexplainable of the things.

Trauma may result out of various stress-related disorders such as attachment disorder, dogmatized disorder, conduct disorder, dissociated reaction or even eating disturbance of a victim. Trauma effects may also be catered as multiple personalities, paranoia, anger sleep problem and difficulty to trusting people and difficult relationship with fellowship. Hartman's investigation makes clear that trauma theory has opened up new modes in the study of mind body relation. Trauma is mainly concern with the psychometric

network extending in the body. Traumatic events are laid down as perceptual, somatic-sensory experience, or as implicit memory. Making his notion stronger Cathy Caruth argues, "Trauma is an unexpected or over whelming violent or events that are not fully grasped as they occur but other repetitive phenomenon. (18)

Similarly Cathy Caruth in her book *Unclaimed Experience: Traumatic Narrative and History* argues trauma first occur incomprehensibly. In the same book Caruth relates the traumatic with referential aspects. Trauma is an experience which is assimilated with latency. She argues, "The experience of trauma, the facts of latency, would thus seem to consist, not in the forgetting of the reality that can hence never be fully known, but in an inherent latency within the experience itself"(Berger187). Caruth also exposes the history of trauma and how it comprehends, she clarifies:

To be a history of trauma means that it is referential precisely to the extent that it is not fully perceived as it occurs, or to put it somewhat differently, that history can be only in the very inaccessibility of its occurrence. (187)

"Parting Words: Trauma Silence and Survival", Caruth's best known essay regarding trauma, examines an enigma at the heart of Freud's work on trauma. She analyzes the striking juxtaposition in Freud's work beyond the pleasure principle:

My own understanding of Freud's insight didn't emerge, however, simply through a reading of his text but began, in fact, in my encounter with a real child in Atlanta, a child whose best friend was murdered in the street and who is interviewed by the friend's mother. I thus read together the language of the nightmare and the language of the child in the Freud's text, and then attempt to understood how Freud's text and the language of real child shed light upon each other.(8)

Berger in his essay "Unclaimed Experience" cites Caruth to elucidate the concept of problematic ground of trauma theory propounded by Geoffrey Hartman, Elaine Scarry and Slavoj Žižek. Berger's major focus in this fact is that trauma theory explores the relation between pain and language, in its narrative historical, and ethical dimension. Caruth states that the effects of traumatic event lies in the belatedness in its refusal to be simply located. Narrative of trauma is strongly referential. It can be understood only with reference in an indirect way.

Trauma has crossed the boundaries of psychiatry and medi-clinical and it has shows its close affinity with external effects of violence in psychic disorder. That is why there is no single trauma but traumas such as historical, national, cultural, individual, ethical, aesthetic, betrayal, and war trauma. Each traumatic event are the consequences of its own "triggered" experiences.

Jeffrey C. Alexander in the article "Cultural Trauma and Collectivity Identity" defines trauma as the blow to the psyche that breaks through one's defense so suddenly and with such brutal force that one cannot reach to its effectively (4). He says it is first of all an empirical, scientific concept, suggesting new meaningful and casual relationship between previously unrelated events, structures, perception and actions (2). Alexander opines that for trauma to emerge at the level of the collectivity, social crisis must become cultural crisis. Events are one things, representation of these events quite another. Trauma is not the result of group experiencing pain, it is the result of this acute discomfort entering into the core of the collectivity's sense of its own identity.

Likewise, Jenny Edkins in her essay "Introduction: Trauma, Violence and Political Community" states that the trauma theory now has become a mode of discourse which studies any text in relation with trauma, violence and political community. She elaborates the concept of trauma mentioning the fact that each traumatic have the distinct tale to tell

because of the violence that they have faced. She opines "Some traumatic persons are haunted by nightmares and flashback to sense of unimaginable horror. In their dreams they re-live their battlefield experiences and awake in the sweat"(1). She relates trauma with the political community and violence. And also examines the connection between these terms. In the same essay, she explores how traumas inscribed and re-inscribed into everyday narrative. She further says through these lines:

Trauma takes place in practices of remembrance, memorization, and witnessing. It also takes place in political action. All these practices are the sites of struggle. For example, the temporality and inexpressibility of trauma makes the role of the witness an almost unbearable one. I argue that the process of inscription into liner narrative, whilst possibly necessary from some point of view. It is argued that telling the story alleviates the traumatic stress. And that there is an alternative, that of encircling the trauma. (15)

These lines makes clear the fact that, narrative of trauma requires a sort of historical implication that is closely attached with catastrophe of human civilization due to the different types and size of war. Trauma studies in literature outlines the turmoil of victims. The result of trauma has become a tool of the literary and cultural analysis, which undoubtedly keeps close contact with political community and violence respectively. Edkin's notions of trauma elaborate the trauma's relation with catastrophe, horror, death and violence. She views that we can find trauma everywhere because of the frustrated, devastated destructive worldview of modern life. In modern chaotic or mechanized world chaos find by people is closer than peace, which makes them traumatized. Saying differently, trauma cannot be isolated from contemporary socio- political situation and it keeps intimate relationship with day to day phenomena.

Trauma studies explore the relationship between words and wound. After traumatic events, there is struggle over memory. Edkins opines "Memory is not straightforward, especially in the case of traumatic memory" (16). To elaborate this concept of traumatic memory she states:

As far as memory is concerned how we remember a near, for example , and the way in which we acknowledge and describe what we call trauma can be very much influenced by dominant views, that is by the state. However, it is not determined by them: their influenced and the state structure itself can be constructed and challenged. (11)

Trauma has become a socially, morally, and politically acceptable phenomena. To revolve around on the ground of multicultural institutional survival in the act of finding a sublimated objected trauma plays significant role. Trauma can also be dealt with catastrophic history which carries the affective force of tragic events, captures the cynical reasons of this moments and continues to function as a cultural trope that structure public attention, even as it devolves into the specie of cliché. Now, trauma no longer revolves around the mind and psychology, it has become cultural necessity because of its wide territory. To the great extent a traumatic event, traumatic analysis is both exploration and experimentation. Thus a concept of trauma has a great value in the study of history, narrative and historical narrative and also of narrative in general, as the verbal representation of traumatic events.

Above all,trauma is unpleasant, emotional, and physical experience with variable and more or less permanent effect upon the mind and personality of the victim. Traumatic experiences include hysteria, double or multiple personalities, hypnotic or other trance states and roots in some experience long since consciously forgotten and repressed and which later on manifest in the form of nightmares, overwhelming anxieties and other accidental disturbances. It is no more than past event which now haunts regularly and remain obstacle

for sound livelihood. To identify and resolve the trauma one should have to address it properly. Acting according to trauma and working through it is the way forwarded by Dominick LaCapra. Likewise empathy, suspension of disbelief in Coleridge's term is another fruitful way to overcome from traumatic dread.

Chapter 2: Trauma from LaCapra's Eyes

Dominick LaCapra, one of the pioneer figures of trauma theory develops his own especial notion towards trauma. To him trauma is a psychological as well as physiological casualty that results in mental and emotional disorder. Trauma is not something naturally existing only; it is something constructed by the social behavior. In the similar manner, trauma is an unexpected stress related to various disorders such as attachment disorder, dogmatized disorder or conduct disorder. This stress has become more prevalent and complex in the contemporary world life. Trauma is a state in life caused by war experience, violence, repression, depression, alienation and even frustration. As it comes under theory, it becomes mode of interpretation of narrative, history, culture and various other philosophical fields. This theory explores not only a phase of destruction and disorder but enigma of survival, a metaphor for existence.

Generally, La Capra's trauma theory is understood on three topics: the return of the repressed, acting out versus working through and dynamic or transference. He is concern primarily with the return of the repressed as discourse, rather than with the physical returns, and he outlines two symptomatic possibilities for the return of historical trauma as a discourse. La Capra emphasized the role of working through and acting out traumatic situations. The most pervasive concern of La Capra is transference. For him transference basically means implication in the problem on treats, implication that involves repetition. It takes place in relation between people and the object of study itself. The transferential relation helps one to understand the so called contagiousness of trauma. In this regard Berger writes:

Transference in psychoanalysis is itself a return of the repressed, or rather a more conscious summarizing of the repressed; transference re-past or acts out a past events or relationship in a new, therapeutic setting that allows for

critical evaluation or change. Transference is the occasion for working through the traumatic symptom. It is imperative therefore to recognize the symptom and the as one's own, to acknowledge that the trauma still is active and that one is implicated in its destructive effects. (4)

So it is clear that trauma is not limited to psychoanalytical territory but it widens its limit and territory with the development of historical and structural trauma. La Capra in his essay "Trauma, Absence, Loss" talks about the distinction between historical and structural trauma and also differentiate the notion of "Absence" and "Loss". He outlines the concept of Trauma Recovery Center, and its function in the field of marginalized sectors especially victims. He clarifies this notion through these lines:

The Trauma Recovery Centre also provides a forum for the voices often the suppressed, repressed, or uneasily accommodated vices-of certain victims who were being heard for the first time in the public sphere. This complicated past was none to be disclosed truthfully in order for a process of working it through to be historically informed and to make some chance of being effective ritually and politically in creating both livable society and a national collectively. (696)

In the sane essay LaCapra elaborates the distinction between "Absence" and "Loss". These stakes certainly include intellectual clarity and cogency, but they also have ethical and political dimensions. To clear this argument LaCapra further states:

Post-Apartheid South Africa and post-Nazi Germany face the problem of acknowledging and working through historical loses in ways that different groups differently. Indeed, the problem of beneficiaries, earlier oppression in both countries is how to recognize and the losses of former victims. (697)

Trauma deals with how the victims endeavor to cope with post traumatic event which now haunts him/her. He describes two important implications of his views regarding the historical trauma. First trauma provides the method of rethinking post-modern and post-structuralism theories with the historical context. Berger cites La Capra and views, "The post-modern and post-holocaust became mutually intervened issues that are best addressed in relation to other" (4). Secondly, La Capra provides historical text other than the literary canons, suggesting that a canonical text should not help permanently install an ideological order but should rather "help on the foreground ideological problems and work through them critically" (4). Each text would be in effect a site of trauma with which the reader have to engage. But La Capra dares not examines the relations between the historical trauma and any of the literary text although literature can be the site of acting out or working through traumas.

LaCapra talks about "working through" rather than "acting out." Acting out is related to repetition and even the repetition compulsion. The very term acting out is a tendency to relive the past to be haunted by the ghosts or even exist in the present as if one were still in the past with no distance from it. Flashbacks, nightmares are the event which traumatizes the victims. Literature is the site of symptomatic acting out combined with critical, playful working through. To LaCapra working through is an articulatory practice: to the extent one works through trauma. The very process of working through problems should be closely related between the issues victims of traumatic historical and others not directly experiencing them and even to the economic, social and political issues. Working through along with acting out add a necessary dimension to economic, social and political analysis. Through this process one is able to distinguish between past and present and recall in memory. LaCapra see working through as a kind of countervailing force not a totally different process, nor even something leading to cure. It is a desirable process in which a person tries to gain

critical distance on a problem and to distinguish between past, present and future. Moreover, especially in an ethical sense LaCapra says working through it doesn't mean avoidance, harmonization, it simply forgetting the past or submerging oneself in the present but what he means is that it means coming to terms with trauma, including its detail and critically engaging the tendency to act out the past and even to recognize why it may be necessary and even in certain respect desirable or at least compelling. LaCapra shows the importance of linking process of working through to the re-conceptualization of socio-cultural issues and socio-political action through these lines:

The process of working through Including mourning and modes of critical thought and practice, involve the possibility of making distinction or developing articulations that are recognized as problematic but still function as limits and as possibly desirable resistance to undecidability. (22)

What these lives unfold the ideas is through the means of empathizing with traumatic events, mourning, critical, thoughts and practice over trauma be falling upon him. Likewise LaCapra even said that melancholic sentiment, working through the past enables to survive or a reengagement in life, one is betraying those who were overwhelmed and consumed by that traumatic past. It makes clear that unconscious desires are associated with trauma moreover and a somewhat different level, there has been an important tendencies in modern culture and though to convert trauma into the occasion for sublimity, to transvalue it into the extra ordinary. He in order to, makes clear about negative sublimity created by trauma writes.

Even extremely destructive and disorienting events, such as the holocaust or the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, may become occasions of negative sublimity or displaced sacralization. They may also give rise to what may be termed founding traumas-traumas that paradoxically become the valorized or intensely cathected basis of identity for an individual

or a group rather than events that pose the problematic question of identity.(23)

The hiddenness, death or absence created by war makes life traumatic in which anxiety threatens to color, and perhaps confuse all relations became paradoxical, there lacks solidarity, trust and wariness to which LaCapra termed relation without relation his views towards war infected trauma. He clarifies through nation of holocaust experiences:

This is not to suggest that we will give up effort to represent the holocaust realistically, but rather than our nation of what constitutes realistic representation must be revised to take account of experiences that are unique to our century and for which representation have proven inadequate. (25-6)

Perhaps the most generous way to interpret this passage is see in it both an attempt to evoke the questions of truth claims in historiography (as well as in fiction) and a call for traumatic realism that somehow attempts to come to terms, affectively and cognitively, with limits experiences involving trauma and it's aftereffects.

The effect of trauma is profound. The extreme traumatic situation of people in the holocaust time is unjustifiable. One may be justifiably be wary of the over extension of the concept of trauma even though any idea of strictly mastering its use and defining its range may be self defeating. He writes:

But it's blatantly obvious that there is a major difference between the experience of camp in mates or holocaust survivors and hat of the viewer of testimony videos, still, even the viewing of videos may have different subjective effects on different people, including recurrent nightmares, and the possibility of secondary trauma cannot be discounted. (102-03)

Through these lines he makes clear that the empathic unsettlement of trauma affects to mode of representation in different ways. One's own unsettled response to another's

unsettlement can never be entirely under control. That is to say there is nonformulaic effects on one's mode of representation.

LaCapra provides his views upon understanding the trauma, what the role empathy plays. He says that empathy is an affective component of understanding which is difficult to control. It is bound up with a transference relation to the past and is affective to understand objectification and implication of the past, its victims and traumatized one. To make it clear he writes:

Emphatic unsettlements may, of course, take different forms, and it may at time result in secondary or muted traumas well as objectionable self-dramatization in someone responding to the experience of victims. It is plausible to think secondary trauma is likely in the case of those who treat traumatized victims or even in the case of those who treat traumatized victims or even in the case of interviewers who work closely with victims and survivors. (102)

In this way, the effect of trauma is profound. Trauma theory is developed out of psychoanalytical foundation which not only encompasses psychoanalytical theories but it includes various disciplines. Up to now trauma theory has crossed a number of boundaries and made a special position in the field of literary theory. Trauma theory has become the cry of the day because contemporary frustrated, alienated, chaotic, and destructive phenomena compels modern man to think about their trauma. The Great War further strengthens traumatic studies and now it has a wide coverage to deal.

In this regard, philosophical, ethical, aesthetic question about nature, war experiences, violence depression, repression, alienation frustration are the common working field of trauma. Further hysteria, double or multiple personality, hypnotic effect, amnesia, sleeplessness, anxiety disorder, abnormality, nightmares, flashback, hallucination tendency

towards sociability, hyperactivity disorder, somatic disorder, attachment disorder, anger, paranoia and aimlessness are also the common working field of trauma theory. These are also taken for granted to define the actual meaning of trauma theory.

This present dissertation tries to analyze Seierstad's book *The Bookseller of Kabul* from the perspective of trauma. *The Bookseller of Kabul* is a colorful portrait of the life under various tribal regimes, Islamic law called Sharia, and the Taliban rule. Further it depicts the struggle of survival of Afghan people in the most brutal circumstances of war and its destruction, devastation, chaos, and traumatically haunted life due to war. It shows how women and other vulnerable people are treated in the society, how the misogynist Taliban authority denied dignity and autonomy to women and how they are confined within the four walls of the house are the issues that the book deals with. The association of book with the theme of trauma further strengthens by various points such as their alienated and frustrated life, the refugee life that they spent and the tyrannical nature of protagonist, Sultan Khan, a strict representative of patriarchy.

From the trauma theory generated due to the impact of war by Dominick LaCapra the textual criticism of the text has been carried out. How people in the war zone affected by the characteristics of trauma, their losing mentality, the infection of war in their life in the following chapter. The following chapter will analyze traumatic experiences of the character due to the civil war and the cruel regime of Taliban. Seierstad as finest war correspondent in this novel vividly portrayed the traumatic experiences especially to the Khan family and its member. Lastly to analyze the traumatic experiences of them is to analyze the contemporary social-political situation of Kabul and its surrounding.

Chapter 3: Unresolved Trauma in *The Bookseller of Kabul*

The Bookseller of Kabul is a colorful portrait of the peoples' struggle to survive in the most brutal circumstances. It depicts the Taliban war and its destruction, devastation, chaos, character's rootless ridge and the traumatically haunted life of them. Seierstad in this very work pictures out the traumatic experiences through the actual depiction of post Taliban war chaotic society. Almost all the characters of this novel are haunted by the traumatic circumstances such as disillusioned scenario, devastated and frustrated worldview. In other words, the novel's setting, character's behavior, their involvement in freeing themselves and their gossiping leads the novel's direction toward traumatic experiences. Not only the major character of the novel is fallen in the traumatic circle but also others are not beyond the whirlpool of trauma. Seierstad also pictures the traumatic situation through the portrayal of disintegrated and alienated characters.

The Khan family is traumatized by the warfare laws and orders of the Taliban and the tribal rulers. They are unable to maintain sound life due to civil war and the terrorism spreaded in the country. Their anxiety and their vigorous problems are recurred in the novel in the form of dreams, flashbacks, distorted memory and other repetitive phenomena. From such repetitive phenomena traumatic figures cannot maintain the psychological equilibrium which increases irritability, sleep disturbances, failing to trust people and communication, aimlessness in life and so on. These are the basic symptoms of trauma. The novel is filled with these features so it is not far from the novel of traumatic experiences. Seierstad's literary world is war infected Afghanistan where there is destruction, horror, violence, death and disorder. As a war correspondent writer her writing is full of traumas, sufferings pain and problems of characters. Further peoples' attempt to oppose war through various means such as revolution, going against the authorial norms and orders and cursing them for forcing them to live in such pitiable life is other issues Seierstad has depicted in her works. In this sense

her works are full of referential issues which make easier to analyze the text. Regarding these facts into consideration, the present researcher carryout this research from traumatic perspective.

Sultan Khan, as a major character of the novel, is a bookseller who collects books of ancient myths, history books, scientific publications, ideological works on Islam cultures and so on. But for his such deeds he has been punished, imprisoned and treated inhumanly. First torture face by Sultan is that the religious police of Kabul in Taliban regime order him not to sell the book, torn the books and tossed on the fire. Those books which portray living things be they human or animal are chosen to torn out. The authority considered anyone who loved pictures or books, sculptures or music, dance, films or free thought are the enemies of the society. The trauma even enlarged when the illiterate soldiers couldn't distinguish orthodox Taliban doctrine from heresy and closed and sealed the shop and sent him to jail for anti-Islamic behavior. The overwhelming traumatic shock of Sultan Khan revealed when he is doubtful about his profession to which the writer writes:

The authorities resisted all modernization; they had no wish to either understand or adopt ideas of progress or economic development. They shunned scientific debate, whether conducted in the West or in the Muslim world their manifesto was above all a few pathetic arguments about how people should dress or cover themselves, how men should the hour of prayer, and the women be separated from the rest of society. (19)

These lines clearly unfold the activities of traumatic figure. They didn't adjust with the modernization. Their norms and values are guided by traditional ethics and war values. They even disregard the scientific progress and push citizens to the poorer state. Not only this, Sultan Khan can't live a prosperous life due to the war infected thoughts of rulers. He, as the moderate Muslim, curses the country for being rule by either warriors or mullahs.

In the second chapter of the book, Seierstad elaborates the views of protagonist towards Taliban. He states; "illiterate peasant priests who are originated from the poorest and conservative parts of the country where literacy is low" (20). From these above mentioned lines it is clear that if the rulers are not well educated, farsighted, and are not run according to time frame, it is hard to cope with that society. As a literate figure in the illiterate family, he had to face various difficulties to run his family. Although he opened a bookshop by collecting books from national as well as international book markets king Zahir Shah and the mullah protesters compel him to imprison for his works.

From the early stages his life has become problematic. Tortures from the authority, bitter war experiences, emasculated condition, and contemporary situation makes him painful. He wants to free from not only traumatic disillusionment but also from internal anxiety of running the family but the traumatic shock produced by Taliban, block his all attempts. To justify his trauma his views towards Taliban are quite helpful. As he says Taliban are cruel creatures born in Afghanistan (26). At the time of civil war, Afghan cultures and sculptures are looted and destroyed by the rebels. To justify this notion Seierstad writes:

A enormous sculptures of Afghan king and princes were destroyed and the foot soldiers went to work, exhibiting the same spirit as when they had devastated Sultan's bookshop. Taliban started chopping away at what remained of the art. They hacked at the sculpture till only the plinth remained, in the heap of dust amidst lumps of clay. It took them half of day to annihilate a thousand year of history. (27)

What these lines make clear is that at the time of civil war not only the socio-cultural norms and values but also the sculptures and infrastructures are also in the verge of extinction. When the mujahedeen implement a profusion of ideology, jihad, to the people in

one way or other the life of them is become much more traumatized. The social bonding and the Islamization of the country by them has been made their life traumatic.

The novel is a dramatization of miserable and frustrated characters of war zone. Sultan Khan, a protagonist of this novel has two wives Sarifa and Sonya, their sons and daughters and his sisters are the traumatic figure who are wondering in the society where there lack social values, familial bonding and the whole society is governed by pro-war rulers. It is the war infected trauma that has produced alienation, frustration, detachment, and destruction of life. When the protagonist, Sultan Khan, get the death threat he and his family were granted a visa to Canada. But as a literal intellectual he refuses and bears trauma further. Refugee is another major consequence of war. When Afghanistan was indulged in the civil war the numbers of refugee are increasing dangerously. To become a refugee in another state produces trauma of alienation. During the civil war his family too spent the refugee life for five years.

Abnormality of life is another aspect of trauma. Sultan compares his life with abnormal activities. When his bookshop is robbed and books are burnt, he has to face many problems for running family in well order. Then he shifts his problem towards his family members. The sixteen years long conjugal life with Sarifa has been broken down only for his second wife, Sonya. To make clear Seierstad writes, "Sharifa lives like a divorced woman, but without the freedom granted divorced woman. Sultan is still her master" (32). That is to say abnormality in character deemed the hope of beautiful life of the people and it is limited only in the imaginative world, in real world it is dying out. Everywhere they find no more than misery, pain frustration, hopelessness, anxiety and disillusionment and every time they want to forget it but the traumatic memory of the past strike them bitterly and make their effort worthless.

Alienated life is another vigorous issue caused by war. In the family Sarifa, Sultan's first wife, has been living with her daughter, Sabnam in Pakistan in the hope of sultan will take them back to Kabul. As Seierstad writes; "a temporary shelter against the bullets and grenades of Kabul has now become her prison" (33) makes clear that how traumatic the life of family in Afghanistan. Although it is not unusual for a man to take second, even a third wife in Muslim community, they usually keep relationship with each of them. But the familial problem and the Taliban policy implemented over his family forced him to live only with his second wife, Sonya. Only because of such rules Sultan's first wife Sarifa has lack of sound conjugal life. To justify Seierstad writes; "but she misses the life she once had as the wife of an enterprising bookseller, respected and esteemed, the mother of his sons and daughters; the anointed" (35).

Sultan, a war infected protagonist, is haunted by the traumatic experiences. His traumas are physical as well as psychological one. The psychological trauma is more painful than physical and remains long lasting in terms of its effects. When Taliban came in power in Afghanistan in the autumn of nineteen hundred ninety six, they broadcast their law and order through radio Sharia which are the major laws for complicated and unhappy life. As a bookseller books are his beloved one but it is Taliban law and order which never support to sell books to read and write. Instead of assisting to sell books the authorities burnt his books, looted his bookshop, and imprisoned him for his anti- Islamic manner. To make clear Seierstad writes:

Finally only ashes remained, caught by the wind swirled with the dust and dirt in the streets and sewers of Kabul. The bookseller, bereft of his beloved books, was bundle into a car, a Taliban soldier on either side. The soldier closed and sealed the shop and Sultan was sent to jail for anti-Islamic behavior. (18)

What these lines make clear is that, the torture given to him by those warlords has made him mentally disorder. He finds pain, sorrow, frustration, depression everywhere which makes him anxious and fearful person. This fear of emotional consequences is the result of traumatic reaction. Not only this, trauma strikes the person's attitude towards progress achievement and better life. Sultan Khan is an optimist protagonist but his life is triggered by traumatic experiences and the instable contemporary politics. That is the basic cause for the doomed perception of his life which haunts a lot to make his life better and prosperous.

In the chapter named Suicide and Song, Seierstad elaborates social taboo made for women by the authority. Longing for love, meeting young people in the public place are some of the social taboo. In the war infected Afghan society young women are above all objects to be bartered or sold. Marriage is regarded as the contract between families or within families. These underestimated women choose suicide or songs as the means of protest against the authority. Those songs are not meant for publication only because women's creation didn't get space in the publication house. To clarify the condition of forbidden love and their rebellious nature, Seierstad depicts the song they used to chants follows:

Give me your hand, my loved one, and we will hide in the meadow
 To love or fall down beneath the knife stabs.
 I jump in the river, but the current does not carry me away.
 My husband is fortunate; I am always thrown back on to the bank.
 Tomorrow morning I will be killed because of you.
 Do not say that you did not love me. (45-46)

These above depicted lines from the poem unmask the very idea of women's rebellious nature. They risk their life for love in the society where passion is prohibited and punishment merciless. None of the women's poems are of hope - on the contrary,

hopelessness reigns. The women have not lived enough, never tasted the fruits of their beauty, their youth, or the pleasure of love.

Seierstad in the chapter *The Business Trip* further exposes the pathetic conditions of traumatic figures who are either traumatized by the warlords or by the social norms and ethics. It is easy to say that in the war infected country, people are engaged in robbery, smuggling or any anti- social activities for their livelihood. The lawlessness is in action in the society. Sultan unfolds his trauma when he makes his way to the Pakistani border for his work. The authority has compelled them to obey those laws generated by them in order to fulfill their wish. In the name of implementing their laws and order they give tortures, beg unnecessary taxes and punish them in the name of Islam. For them it matters not that he has family, a house and a business. To become safe from them they had invented various ideas. To clarify Seierstad writes:

Sonya has sewn the money into the sleeves of his shirt and he carries his possession in the dirty sugar bag on a way to Pakistan. Pakistan has closed its border to prevent terrorists and Taliban from hiding away the country. (48)

These lines make clear that instead of providing security to the citizen's property, the authority has vulture eye on it. It even unfolds the very idea of traumatic whirlpool. In the war zone people although are not engaged in war they are regarded as terrorists, rebels and they have to suffer from pain, anxiety, sorrow, and problematic situation. Sultan is trapped in the circle of trauma and there is very thin possibility to release from it. Although he has a hope of better future, his all hopes are been ruined by the pro- war law generated by the authority.

It is quite clear that when people are not granted individual freedom, they are opposed to the law and order of the society. As they are traumatized psychologically, the characters are breaking the law and order in order to fulfill their wish. Its true example is Sultan's sister-

in-law, Saliqa. When she wishes to get engaged with her boyfriend, Nadim, it is the authority that prohibits their relation. Then she escaped with him to whom she loves the best. But the society doesn't approve the relation by forwarding the views as prostitutes, anti-Islamic manner and so on. Likewise it is hard to cope with the warfare state and work in that state where there is lacks of freedom, lawlessness is pervaded and there lacks the guarantee of progress. Seierstad as a war correspondent writer taking views from protagonist attitude towards Afghanistan writes; "Afghanistan is the most lawless; here foreign journalists, aid workers, and Afghans paid with their lives when, by accident, they stumbled upon outlaws. Soon after the Taliban fell four journalists were murdered" (69). Likewise Seierstad exposes the difficulty on the adjustment with the society where there is prohibition in every step of life to clarify Seierstad writes:

That's what I say. You have no experience of Taliban. All books containing will be burnt, and the same will happened to the whole of country's film archive, music archive, all instruments will be destroyed. You'll never again hear music, never dance again. All the internet cafes will be closed, TV is prohibited and confiscated. Girls are taken out of school and all women are sent home from work. Maybe they'll become warriors. (67)

From the above mentioned line it is clear that Afghan citizens are compelled to live the life without any means of information. They had to spend their life without music, pictures and so on. Even they never promoted to read and write and they have to spend monotonous life in the age of internet. So it is easy to say they are living pathetic life due to various forms of trauma.

Seierstad's novel *The Bookseller of Kabul* is a realistic portrayed of one rather unhappy Afghan family under the Taliban regime. The book begins with the cruel abuses, punishments, and the traumatic life of the protagonist Sultan khan. Such life of him gives the

seeds to Seierstad to write the causes of trauma. And in the last chapter Broken Heart she unfolds the unresolved trauma in the life of characters as Sultan's mother and sister left the house in the hope of better future. There is nothing as such which heals their problems. Neither they can protest against warlords nor assist terrorism. They find themselves restless, distorted and anxious. As a frustrated and war victim fellow, Sultan is presenting his life as an anti-optimist, traumatic and pathetic. Although he has a hope of rejoining his family, his dreams shatter when his own mother, Bibi Gul left house in the last part of the novel. As Seierstad writes:

An argument resulted in a fight and the words that fell between Sultan and two wives on one side, and Leila and Bibi Gul on the other, were so reconcilable that it would have been difficult to continue living together. (273)

These lines clearly unfold the basic idea of unresolved psychological trauma that the family should have to face. It is clear that as all happy families resemble each other, in the same way every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way. Sultan even thinking himself superior over the family members plaintively invokes the public good in an effort to justify his private behavior; "When they live in my house, they should respect me, shouldn't they?" (265). What makes this line clear is that Sultan as a male figure in the family is guided by patriarchal norms and values who think himself superior over his mother too.

This is much more a novel of character than that of event and the actions. Sultan Khan is not only a protagonist of the novel but he is an unconscious representative of the Taliban wounded Afghan society. The difficulties in peoples' life is still in action due to Sharia law, the decrees that Taliban broadcast on radio Sharia in order to materialize their dream of Islamification.

The traumas to characters have been further in action when the Taliban rolled into Kabul in September 1996. They broadcast sixteen decrees in Radio Sharia to which they

named "Sharia Law". Taliban is the group of politically inexperienced young students which is founded in southern Afghan province of Kandahar which aims to end political chaos that has been ongoing in Afghanistan since the Soviet withdrawal in 1989 and to impose the strict interpretation of Islam. As they were in power, they act in such a way that life become traumatic. Their laws and orders, punishments and maltreatment towards Afghan people show they are terrorists rather than the activists. When their rule begins in Afghanistan in 1996 they imposed so many laws and order that make peoples' life problematic. They are too rude towards women by ordering ban on various deeds. They never allow women to laugh loudly, to play any sports events, to use any cosmetics. Likewise they ban to watch movies, television, and to listen music. To impose the strict Islamic rule they even ordered people to attend prayers in mosque five times daily. They even ordered people to change their name to Islamic ones.

First decree forwarded by them is "the prohibition against female exposure" (84). It is such decree that prohibits women to wear inciting or attractive clothes and it advocates to wear burka. When females are compelled to wear burkas, they are psychologically detached to the society and even suffered from the socio-cultural trauma initiated by those cruel rulers. The restriction and mistreatment of women continued by Taliban in the name of ban. The ban on women's work outside the home compels them to live an alienated life. This ban is applied to female teachers, engineers, almost professionals. In the Taliban regime women are forced to lead the hellish life. They treated women worse than they treated animals. Although they declare keeping of caged birds and animals illegal, they imprison afghan women within the four wall of their own home.

In the name of no admission to heaven Taliban orders women to wear a long veil, burka, which covers them from head to toe. Seierstad in this regard writes:

According to the law of Sharia if women dressed fashionably, wear ornamented, tight, seductive clothes to show off, they will be damned by the Islam Sharia and can never expect to go to heaven. Burka women are like horses with blinkers, they can only look in one direction. Where the eyes narrows the grille stops and thick materials take its place ; impossible to glance sideways. The whole head must turn; another trick by the burka inventor: a man must know what his wife is looking at. (89)

Seierstad through these lines unfolds the female's pathetic life in the patriarchal society where they are treated as an objects or second class citizen who have to follow each and every direction initiated by male especially of her husband. Likewise they prohibit women to study ay schools, universities or any other religious institutions. To impose their rule effectively they converted these girls' schools into religious seminaries. To make life further traumatic they forwarded another decree in the name of "compel to live a life without music" (84). Taliban forbid to sell cassette and music, they forbid it in shop, hotels, and in vehicles. And if they do not follow the rules and regulations they are imprisoned and punished brutally. Likewise the prohibition against shaving, kite flying, reproduction of pictures are some decrees that create psychological trauma to the characters in one way or other.

In the chapter named A Third Rate Wedding she presents the women's pitiable life after wedding. In the Afghan society wedding for women is supposed to be a social bonding which compels them to obey every law and order made by her husband. They have to live a life of lower grade in their own home. Seierstad clarifies the life after wedding through these lines:

Happiness would hurt the mother she is leaving, sorrow irritate the future mother-in-law. A bride's face must be non-committal, she is not supposed to turn her head or look around, but must stare fixedly straight ahead. (99)

It makes clear that wives are in complete control from the family where she wed. She has to be happy although there are pain and sufferings. But to the family where she belongs at first get hurt from her wedding. In a family wedding is supposed to be small death in which daughter is sold, lost or completely disappear. It creates the mourning in the family as if it is a funeral as well. After wedding women are in complete control from their husbands and they have no freedom to visit where they want, only when their husbands allow them. They are been traumatically haunted by the patriarchal social norms and values.

The trauma of the Khan family has been in extreme stage during the civil war. Their flat was pillaged and burnt. They hear the sound of rockets and bombs each and every day. Their lives have been in dilemma due to the control from the pro-war and the anti-war rebels. To show how they are victimized during war, Seierstad writes:

But during the civil war the flat was pillaged and burnt. When the family returned the flat had virtually been demolished and they have to make do as well as they could. Their rockets landed on other parts of the town. The fronts moved from street to street. The warlords fought for four years until at last the Taliban rolled into Kabul and the warlords fled to make way for the priestlings. (114)

To the Khan family the war stricken trauma has caused various pain, sleeplessness, alienation, irritability to life, physical and psychological wounds and so on. Sultan's youngest sister Leila is the most traumatic figure in the novel. She has lived an alienated life and doesn't have any feeling of pleasure in life. She is a virtual household slave who suffers from

dizzy spell in the city of Kabul; one of the world's sunniest city. To point out Leila's slave state in her house Seierstad writes:

Alone is an unknown idea for Leila. She has never, ever, anywhere, at any time, been alone. She has never been alone in the apartment, never gone anywhere alone, and never remained anywhere alone, never slept alone. (169)

These lines make it clear that Leila has never been provided any freedom to be an outsider. She has been psychologically traumatized from the norms and values launched by society towards unmarried woman. The familial and the socio-cultural laws and order compel her to live in the state of alienation.

Seierstad's portrayal of character from war zone and the expatriate Afghan itself shows the traumatic state of the characters. They are directly or indirectly involved in war and have a traumatic memory. They are expatriate in the sense that they are from Afghanistan but they have to move to Pakistan in order to fulfill the passion of spirituality and peace to mind which was lost in Afghanistan. But the very memory of the ruptured war, traumatic experiences of their life block their way to get resolution. They lose the social values, their identity in the society, and even the spectrum of life and become the traumatic figures. To overcome from the warlords' tortures, pain in life, depressions, frustrations, and traumas itself, they fled to Pakistan. But in Pakistan too instead of decorated life, they compel to live a life of refugee. In Pakistan too they have the feeling of bitter war experiences, physical and psychological tortures in the life which make their life traumatic. After the fall of Taliban era in 2001 AD many Afghan citizens who were living outside the nation came back to Afghanistan forgetting the bitter past experiences created by war. Seierstad writes the state of joy and freedom that have been flourished in Afghan people through these lines:

Leila would not even dream of going back. The Taliban might have disappeared but they were still present in Leila's head, and in Bibi Gul's and

Sharifa's and in Sonya's. The women in Mikrorayon were glad the Taliban era was over, they could play music, they could dance, paint their toe-nails-as long as no one saw them, and they could hide under the safe burka. Leila was the true child of the civil war, the mullah reign and the Taliban. A child of fear. She cried inside. The attempt to break away, do something independent, learn something, had failed. (180)

What these lines unfold is that the Afghan people do not want to remember the brutal war, Taliban and the tribal regimes. They are become happy over the fallen of Taliban era. They think themselves free to play music, to dance after the fall of Taliban. But the bitter past experiences of forbidden over education causes failure over learning and doing something independently.

Though they try to get remedy of the traumatic experiences caused by war through indulging in opposing the warfare law and orders and disregarding those rulers, their traumatic memory does not overcome rather it is strengthened in the form of distorted memory. In the similar manner the strict Islamic code of conduct strengthen their trauma by reminding their bitter past. Those rebels faith upon god but their activities against human beings and the rules and order from the warfare rulers do not help Afghan people to overcome from trauma. In this sense, what is the fact is that they find nowhere to go and nothing to work against the so called Taliban regime. The khan families find themselves more anxious, more frustrated, and more depressed fellow only because of war. Seierstad in the chapter named "can God die?" (190) writes about the life of Prophet Muhammad to show the life that the Muslim people have to follow. She writes:

"The Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, always squatted on the ground. There was no furniture in his house. A man's life ought to be like that of a traveler, resting in the shade, then continuing on his way. A house must be

nothing more than a place to rest, a protection against cold and heat, against wild animals and a place where privacy is preserved. (193)

What these lines unfold the ideas is that religious Muslim rulers by taking Muhammad as an ideal figure insist to live a life of traveler, to follow his ways and have faith upon his works and his living standards. Instead of assisting to the progressive life, it compels them to live the traditionally guided life.

In the war zone people become doomed, their sympathy and feeling becomes harassed only because of war's violent and disgusting nature. The death of human being, death of own relatives, their own disabled conditions and the great depression of economic and livelihood created by war made Sultan a traumatic fellow. Seierstad presents him as a protagonist bitterly haunted by the war experiences and other disgusted phenomena. He is presented as a liberal intellectual in public but the war trauma makes him a tyrant in his family. He compels to live a suffocated life to his family members by forcing them to work 12/7, and by not allowing them to read and write. Seierstad in "the dreary room" writes about a lack of freedom and a suffocated life of his son Aimal through these lines:

He counts the money and is bored. He calls the shop 'the dreary room'. His heart bleeds and his tummy churns every time he opens the door. This is where he must sit until he is fetched at eight o'clock in the evening, when it is already dark outside. He goes straight home to eat supper and go to bed. (199)

These lines outline the idea of suffocation. Aimal, Sultan's youngest son of twelve years, has to work in hotel lobby for 12 hours a day seven days a week. He has no any freedom in his life and he never got any chances to study. Aimal's condition clearly unfolds the status of child in the war zone where they are psychologically and physically exploited by the ruler.

Seierstad even exposes the views and intention of Taliban upon foreign people and tourism. During the Taliban regime tourism industry is in the state of collapse. People engaging in tourism sectors have to take off their hand from it. They have to search new way of living. Taliban did not approve foreign investment and aid. They sharply oppose the foreigner's views upon their state, Afghanistan. By taking Khan family's views upon mullah toward tourism and foreigners she writes; "The mullahs too didn't care about developing tourism; on the contrary, they wanted the smallest possible number of foreigners in the country" (200). In this novel she even writes about the degrading stage of Afghan economy. During the civil war Afghan economy started to slide, so did the hotels. The rooms facing town were riddled by bullets, grenades landed on the balconies and rocket tore down the roofs.

One of the prominent themes of this novel is that the characters are unable to love each others. Traumatic figures suffer from the problem of trusting people. They pretend that they have love between each other but in the domain of actuality they are unable to do so. Some have internal pain, some face the emasculated condition, and some have false superiority which hinders their relationship. Sultan Khan finds the lack of love and affection between family members only because the whole family is triggered by political instability and the civil war. These issues undoubtedly lead the generation toward a traumatic dread. Sharifa's love towards Sultan is domed only because of her emasculated condition. On the other hand polygamy marriage by Sultan and Sharifa's emasculated condition block their way to lovemaking. Seierstad describes the lack of love and affection between these husband and wife when Sultan gets second marriage. She writes; "She is a disgrace to her family, often ostracized, and all her property falls to the husband. Sharifa would have to move to the home of one of her brothers" (32).

Traumatic figures often try to report instructive thoughts, efforts to avoid thinking about their traumas, somatic symptoms such as headache, nausea, sleeplessness, imagery and dreaming. Traumatic shock also increases the feeling of personal vulnerability, difficulty to trusting other, emotional numbing and flooding sexual difficulties due to the physical and the psychological wounds. Further irritability, alienation, changes in their beliefs about themselves and other, progressive loss of energy and idealism are consequences caused by traumatic shock. One of the prominent traumatic figures of the novel is Sultan's youngest sister, Leila. She has been tortured from her own family when she has made an attempt to attend school. When she go to school, her mother says; "you mustn't go there again"(180). It is the laws and order of the warlords which hinders to fulfill their dreams. Even after the fall of the authority, they did not get rid from those laws and orders. Leila's pathetic and sleepless stage is described by Seierstad through these lines:

Leila is at a stand standstill; a standstill in the mud of the society and the dust of tradition. She has reached the deadlock in a system which is rooted in centuries-old rooted traditions and which paralyzes half the population. The ministry of education is a half-hour bus ride away; an impossible half hour. Leila is not used to fighting for something –on the contrary, she is used to giving up. (189)

Leila is not treated as like as male figure in the society by the social system. She lives in a pathetic condition in her own family. Not only from rulers but also from her own family member she has been treated as slave. She has been psychologically traumatized, live an alienated life and paralyzed from the so called traditional rules and regulations.

Feeling pleasure in others' pain or trouble is basic characteristic of traumatic person. In order to forget their own pain, they regard others' trouble as means of solution. This is the way of assimilating troubles and pains. Sultan does not show mercy upon a destitute

carpenter. As he jailed for three years, his wife and seven children were starve but Sultan does not have mercy upon him. When Sultan provides low wage to the carpenter, he obliged to sell postcard illegally for his livelihood. The traumatic and economic trouble to carpenter is explored by Seierstad through these lines:

Jalaluddin had not changed since those days; he was still thin as a rake, with large frightened protruding eyes. He was possibly even thinner than before.

And although he was only forty, he was already stooped his family was poor, but well regarded. His father had also been a carpenter, but his sight failed a few years ago and he could no longer work to run his family. (209)

Regarding the meaning of these lines is that trauma and the various forms of trouble in life of traumatic figures occur respectively. Trauma caters the bitter past experiences into present through the medium of memories, dreams and the activities. The carpenter has neither the better past experiences nor the present. In the beautifully decorated life of future, he has been traumatized in every step. In another words his traumatized past haunts and blocks his way to bright future.

Actually this novel is an exploration of characters' traumatic experiences caused by war. Their present life has not moved smoothly because of war anguish, destructive and the devastating nature of war and the warfare laws and orders. Sultan has been psychologically as well as physically traumatized figures during the civil war. The sustaining Afghan values, religious norms and values and even ethical as well as philosophical values have been exploded. They are continuously beset with traumatic memory. They have been totally rootless since their root has been ruptured during the war. The rootless stage in characters' life, compel them to live a life of refugee. In search of root and better future, they indulge in the opposition of the law and order initiated by Taliban but their effort to overcome from such life is blocked by traumatic shock of their past.

Sultan, does not trust his family members, nor believe that his family members will pose a stable core to trust them. Lack of trust within the family members causes hurdles and pain in his occupation of bookselling. His desire of collecting and selling books to run his family causes him pain and makes him anguish. The more he tries to ignore his desire, the more these are overwhelming. To live better and prosperous life, there should faith and trust between characters and they should forget their traumatic memories of past. But in this novel as they try to forget memories, these memories hunt them in one way or other. It is only because of war that has been in action makes life traumatic, problematic and restless of the citizen. In one hand in the name of eliminating terrorism, foreign commanders torture to the afghan people by interrogating about various issues. But on the other the Taliban and tribal rulers threats them to assist to achieve their goal. These above activities from those rulers who suppose and oppose terrorism makes Afghan peoples' life even more traumatic and problematic. Seierstad writes:

The car is on its way out of Kabul. It is headed east, towards the restless borderlands between Afghanistan and Pakistan, where there is still support for the Taliban and al-Qaida, and where, according to the Americans, terrorists are hiding out in the inaccessible mountain landscape. Here they comb the terrain, interrogate the local population, blows up caves, looks for caches of weapons, find hiding places and bomb and kill a few civilians, in their hunt for terrorists and the trophy they all dream of- Osama bin laden. (237)

In the period of 'Operation Anaconda', Afghan civilians are traumatized by giving punishments even to the extent of losing life. The rulers and the foreign commandos create sleeplessness and pain in the life of afghan people. They are regarded as a terrorist and compel them to live a life of refugee in the foreign state. It is clear that Afghan people's

traumatic dilemma is not limited with behavior and activities but it is extended to the issue of survival.

Afghanistan is one of the most terrorized nation all over the world. During the civil war Taliban destroy the infrastructures, customs, norms and values to reach in the governing position. But after the fall from the authorial state in 2001, they even adopt the same policy and the activities. Seierstad as a war correspondent chooses Afghanistan to write about the pains, sufferings, and the trauma that the Afghan people have been enduring. She is a journalist by profession too so she has to be aware of journalistic ethic. In this novel she writes as it is what people thinks, feels, and says about the rulers. When she is with Tajmir in the restless borderland between Afghanistan and Pakistan, Tajmir says:

Allegedly, several al-Qaida soldiers are still to be found in these border areas, areas where warlords have never recognized a central authority, but still rule according to the tribal law. It is difficult for Americans and central authorities to infiltrate villages that lie in the Pashtoon belt on either side of the border.

Intelligence experts believe that if Osama bin Laden and the Taliban leader, Mullah Omar is still alive and in Afghanistan, then this is where they are.

(237-238)

These lines expose the very fact of trauma most of the Afghan people have to face. In the name of dismissing terrorism, various forces from nation and international sector are engaged in the battle. The inhabitants have to follow both central as well as tribal authority. Civilians are extremely tortured in the name of terrorist and even demolish their life by the drons and the rocket attacks.

Traumatic shock not only blocks the way of better progressive life but it also challenges the matter of survival. Sultan engages in the profession of bookselling in order to get rid from the economic burden of running family and to forget the bitter past. But his

efforts to create progressive, happy and the beautifully decorated life become doomed only because of the past trauma that follows him continuously. Even his usual life is being ruined by the tribal authority. The deteriorated life of Sultan is reported by writer through these lines: "The soldiers had often menaced him, seized a few books and then left. Threats had been issued from the Taliban's highest authority and even been called to the Minister of culture"(18). Sultan is a traumatic protagonist who lives a life in dilemma. He fails to find out the skill of life that is living skill, due to traumatic dread. So he lives with pain, sorrow, anguish, and much more than that in a traumatic whirlpool. He became illusive figure only because he cannot handle the life in a proper way. Sultan's illusive and dilemmatic life make him strange. Above all, at the same time his life became frustrated, depressed, and anxious too.

In the time of civil war, many children have lost their parents and became orphan. Khesmesh is an orphan adopted by Feroza, Sultan's sister. During civil war in Kabul there are many orphanages where children from war infected territory are living. It is Taliban law and order which prohibits various child rights basically to girls. They are not allowed to play with boy in street and school. Seierstad writes about the impact of Taliban law and order towards child as follows

Like all children, Khesmesh quickly learn about the Taliban. The Taliban were those people who never let her to go school with the boys in Mikrorayon, they were the people who forbade singing or clapping, stopped people dancing. The Taliban were those people who prevented her from playing outside with her dolls. Dolls and furry toy animals were banned because they portrayed living creatures. When the religious police searched people's homes, smashed up the televisions and cassette players, they might well confiscate children's toy if they found them. (241)

These lines unfold the torturous life child has to spend. They are strictly prohibited to play with dolls, to listen music and to live a life of freedom. It is the warlords who never assist children to live a glorious life but compelled to live a monotonous life under those cruel rulers.

Almost all of the characters in *The Bookseller of Kabul* are not far from traumatic whirlpool. They are living a life without any hope and glory. By nationality they are Afghan but they are not treated well by the rulers. In one hand they are oppressed from central authority, on the other from the tribal rulers. It is the cruel authority that compels Sharifa, Sultan's wife, to live a life of refugee in Pakistan. She is disgraced and ostracized to her family and all her property belongs to her husband. She is a rootless figure who suffers from alienation, pains and various problems in her life. The characters' uneasy relationship, their severe pain in life and their isolated life make them traumatic. Traumatic figure cannot think properly whenever they do something and later laments about their previous activities. Leila is a pathetic fellow who laments upon her attempt to attend school when she knows about the education system that is being followed by central and tribal rulers. The government printed books are useless. To engage school children in terrorism, warfare rulers forces teacher to teach in their own way. As Seierstad writes:

This is how the first year school children learn the alphabet: J is for jihad, our aim in life, I is for Israel our enemy, K is for Kalashnikov, we will overcome, M is for Mujahedeen, our heroes, T is for Taliban. . ."(62).

It is clear that warlords put war in centre. They give emphasis to engage in war, fight against enemy and became heroes of the nation. Traumatic shock unmasks the turmoil of character in the form of nightmares, flashbacks, and dream. Leila dreams every time to get rid from her slavery status. Seierstad to make clear writes; "The only thing she wishes is for is a bit more peace of mind" (162). As trauma is a working through rather than acting out

phenomena, traumatic memory continues to resurface from past memory. Tajmir comments about the situation that make their life traumatic in a following way: "I didn't feel sleepy. I want to return home as quickly as possible" (247). It is the civil war and the terrorism that causes death of civilians and the destruction of the socio-cultural norms and values of Afghanistan which is the basic cause of anguish, pain and trauma in the life of Afghan people.

The trauma experiences occur when the traumatizing events interact with human nature. It is the war that makes life traumatic in the novel. It is clear that human being need love and peace, security, order and connection in their life. But when there lacks these feelings, human beings suffer from trauma. In the novel Seierstad writes about the lack of love, security and order in the character's life. Sultan although is an intellect in public, broke his connection to his family. He does not assist his child for their schooling and compel them to work in a hotel lobby. As his son Aimal says: "But I, I who have a father who has read all the books in the world, I have to work twelve hours a day. I should be playing football, have friend round" (205). His wife Sharifa is another pathetic figure who has been treated as a divorced wife and living alienated life without any love and affections. Likewise his sister Leila's life is not in order. She never got any freedom to go to school and bazaar. To justify her condition, Seierstad writes; "she cannot stand it any longer. The house is a prison. 'Why is everything so difficult?' she moans. She normally hates to go out, but she feels she cannot stay inside" (257).

Seierstad simplifies the very concept of traumatic experiences through the portrayal of war infected, painful, wandering and alienated characters. The depressed and alienated lives of the characters have been caused by the brutal war and terrorism. On the other hand it is the rude traditional norms and values that make their life traumatic. Afghanistan is the Muslim country. Islam religion does not allow equal status between male and female in the society.

Women in the novel are confiscated within the four walls of a room. They are not allowed any freedom. Polygyny is another crucial issue that traumatizes their lives. Muslim religion advocates for polygamy that creates alienation for the female figure. Wedding is taken to be a contract and wives are taken as a good. Giving birth to a daughter is the cause of polygamy. Seierstad, by depicting these issues from the Muslim community, writes this novel. She writes:

The most important thing on Sonya's mind is to have children, or rather, sons. She is pregnant again and terrified it will be another daughter. When Latifa pulls her shawl off and starts playing with it, Sonya slaps her and ties it round her head. When the last-born plays with the mother's shawl, the next child will be a girl, so the saying goes. 'If I have a daughter, sultan will take a third wife,' she says after the two sister-in-laws have been squatting sometime in silence.

(183)

These lines show how rude the tradition they have to follow. Sonya is mentally sick of giving birth to a son. She has a fear that if she gave birth to a daughter, her husband will take a third wife. Such traditional norms and values are the basic cause of the psychological trauma to the female figure in the novel.

Likewise to analyze the novel from a traumatic perspective, it is important to note the motives of the novel. To show the dishonest communication between characters, to depict the pathetic status of characters in the war zone, and to show the failure in each and every aim that they choose are the major motives Seierstad has chosen to write the novel. These motifs directly or indirectly provide the clues to claim that the novel is not far from the traumatic experiences. Traumatic characters face the problem of trusting others. When Leila is with her daughter-in-law, Sonya, she expresses her anxious and unhappy condition to stay with her. Seierstad writes: "she no longer appears to be listening to the conversation" (63). The characters in the novel are unable to connect within the family members due to the war

infection. Leila is living a life in severe suffering. She not only suffered from memory gaps but also from the repeatedly re-experienced extreme events in flashbacks, dreams, and from the slavery state. She is in frightened state which invokes dilemma to choose aim in her life.

When Karim asks her about his propose to be her wife, Seierstad writes:

'What is your answer?' he asks

'You know I cannot answer you,' she says.

'But what do you want?'

'You know I cannot have a desire.'

'But do you like me?'

'You know I cannot answer that.'

'Will you say yes when I propose?'

'You know it is not me who answer.'

'Will you meet me again?'

'I can't. My family will decide whether I like you or not.' (268)

It makes clear that in Muslim community women are compelled to subordinate their desires, they have to live within the four wall of the room. They have not granted any freedom and their dreams are shattered due to patriarchal laws and orders.

There is close affinity between trauma and dream. Regarding this fact Geoffrey Hartman in his essay "On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies" opines, "Where there is dream, there is (was) trauma" (546). In this novel characters are not strange from dream. It is dream that does not allow them to go far from the traumatic dread. The dream of better future, dream of exposing themselves in public, living life in peaceful environment where there is no pain problem, trauma and alienation are the basic dreams of the characters. Leila has the hope of king's return after the falls of Taliban regimes where they can expose themselves in public and able to live in the peaceful environment of the country. Seierstad

writes Leila's hope through these lines; "When the King returns, I will never use my burka again. Then we'll have a peaceful country" (168).

Trauma is a life threatening event that displaces the preconceive notion of people about the society, nation and the whole world. Seierstad through the characters who are directly or indirectly experiences the war, unfolds their traumatic life. How they are frightened, what are the threats befalling in their life and what is the status of the society and infrastructures which is infected by the brutal war are the important issues included in the novel. Seierstad writes the condition of airlines during the terrorism through these lines; "Many planes were destroyed during the civil war, the remainder were bombed to bits by Americans in their hunt for Osama bin Laden and Mullah Omar" (201).

It is clear that the destruction of infrastructure, threats to the life and bodily integrity, and the close personal encounter with violence and death are the basic cause of the trauma. In the name of controlling terrorism, how Afghan people are being threatened, alienated, tortured and more importantly lost their life are the significant issues that the novel chose to write. In this sense it can be said that those extraordinary events closely affects the victims. Even those events come fundamentally as the trauma itself which blocks or hampers the psychological as well as physical development of the characters.

To conclude Seierstad writes this beautiful piece of novel through the realistic portrayal of Afghanistan during the Post Civil-War era. By writing about the contemporary disillusioned society, war victimized pessimist characters, characters' indulgence in opposing the warfare laws and orders, gossiping, females' pathetic condition under the Muslim religious norms and values, their subordinated and alienated life under the patriarchal Taliban rule are the major issues that the novels deals with. Further the destruction of infrastructures and the death of many Afghan citizens are others point that helps to evaluate the novel from the traumatic perspective. Seierstad unfolds the traumatic experiences of the Afghan people,

which strengthen to claim that Afghan people are highly traumatized during the civil war and the terrorism. Not only this, she even presents the traumatic worldview through the behavior of characters, their alienated and suffocated life, their endurance of pains and problems, and the anxious life that they are compel to live. Last but not the least, Seierstad's use of simple language to describe the war infected Afghans, her use of symbols, and the motives that the novel that is actually written by war correspondence undoubtedly directs the novel towards the traumatic direction.

Chapter 4: Addressing Trauma to Maintain Equilibrium in Life

The Bookseller of Kabul is a realistic portrayal of Afghan life after the fall of civil war and Taliban era. This novel vividly unmask the traumatic experiences of Afghan people during the civil war and the Taliban regime. Further it unfolds the devastated, destructive, and disillusioned contemporary worldview of the characters which compel them to live in fear, horror and illusion. Taliban, in the name of establishing their law and order, forces citizens to follow the Sharia law, the laws which are generated to make their rule stronger. For Seierstad, the issue is how Afghan women and other vulnerable people are treated in the Afghan society. The thesis pictures out the traumatic experiences through the means of war infected characters, their shady past, their immature relationship with each other and the alienated life they are living.

Sultan Khan, his sister Leila and other major figures of the novel are terribly haunted by the war memories which are reflected in the forms of nightmares, flashbacks, and other repetitive phenomena. In the novel present consequences of devastation and destruction created by war is more importantly picked up than that of past. It is in this sense Seierstad writes the novel by preserving the journalistic ethics of presenting events as it is. But the bitter and horrible past memories, their dream of prosper life, brutal punishments and psychologically tortured past life of characters, not only block their attempt to forget their bitter past but it even hunt their present livelihood. In fact, here in this novel, physical and psychological suffering of the characters are deteriorated due to the emasculated, paralyzed and traumatic experiences of civil war and terrorism spread all over Afghanistan. In this regard traumatic experiences are extended when one try to escape from suffering. It is also clear that haunting from the past to the present become traumatic when characters fail to meet success in life. As characters are beset with the traumatic experiences of civil war, Taliban

regime and contemporary terrorism that has created devastated worldview, they are unable to maintain psychological as well as physical equilibrium.

Trauma is defined as a severe emotional shock and a physical pain. It is an unpleasant emotional and physical experience with variable and more or less permanent effect upon the mind and personality of the victim. Trauma even ruined the beautiful and decorated life of characters through the emotional shock created by various war effects. In the novel not only the protagonist, Sultan Khan but also female characters in the novel are true representation of traumatic figures. Leila, Khan's nineteen years old sister, suffers psychologically as well as physically in the Afghan society from the war infected trauma. She is a virtual household slave who suffers from dizzy spells only because she never got the sunlight in Kabul, world's sunniest city. Her attempt to be a teacher is deteriorated due to the patriarchal norms and values.

Nowadays, it is clear that various forms of traumas in the life of characters do not get resolved due to the contemporary worldview. Afghan culture is not an exception from it which is slowly accepting modern worldview but the Afghan people are still traditionally guided. In this sense, this novel is able to show the clash between traditional with modern values. It is the traditional norms and values that compel Leila and her mother, two modern figures, to move out of the house after the family disputes in the final chapter. The Khan family wants to live better life in the modern era, but the clash between traditional with modern values, superiority over inferiority patriarchal norms and order, and much more than that from the warfare law and order between traditionally guided modern figures that causes to live an alienated life.

This novel is the denunciation of the war infected society where characters are traumatized from civil war, terrorism, warfare laws and orders of the Taliban and tribal rulers and the socio-cultural norms and values. It is the realistic portrayal of a society which make

women psychologically traumatized figures by denying their dignity and autonomy, forcing them to wear burka, compel them to stay within the four walls of house and insisting them to support blindly the patriarchal laws and order no matter what are the outputs. Seierstad is hardly a first author to point out that Afghan people are highly traumatized and suffered from the war and terrorism especially to women. This book is even a timely reminder of the famously misogynist Taliban and Mujahedeen who were only an extreme manifestation of a basic reality. Further as in many traditional societies, Afghan women are remained structurally subordinate and traumatized to Afghan men no matter whose government happens to be in power. Such are the issues that help to analyze the book from the traumatic perspective.

Last but not the least, from the strictly literary perspective *The Bookseller of Kabul* is an effective portrait of one rather unhappy family due to the various war, warfare laws and orders, terrorism and the tribal rules. It is certainly the most intimate description of a traumatized Afghan peoples' life ever produced by the western writer. Works of art written on any theme should have to carry out certain purpose. The underneath theme should not be providing pleasure only it should deliver a message to change life, to establish law and order in the society with creating awareness. Through this research, though not in totality, one became able to address trauma befalling in the life and able to maintain beautifully decorated bright future by maintaining equilibrium in life. Much more than that it will assist to build up a citizen with moral ethic and code of conduct in the society where one will play significant role to prevail law and order, peace, progression, stability and so on.

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