

I. Introduction to Sheldon's *Tell Me Your Dream* and the Concept of Trauma

This research probes into the issue of traumatic experience undergone by the major female characters in Sheldon's *Tell Me Your Dream*. Ashley passes through various traumatizing situations. Her father's coercive surveillance and her disordered psyche are crucial to the increasing traumatization of the protagonist. The main female character Ashley Patterson lives with the recurrent onslaught of traumatic experience. She was sexually abused by her father. The major argument of this research is concerned with her attempt to cope with her traumatic past by means of narrativization. To support the claim, the researcher draws some theoretical concepts forwarded by thinkers like Cathy Caruth, Dominik LaCapra and Kali Tal.

In her childhood Ashley had to face sexual molestation. Her father told her not to tell about her sexual molestation by him. So Ashley repressed the bitter and painful memories of sexual abuse. Now Ashley is eighteen. She works in the global computer system. She is now oppressed by the hidden fear of being followed by a man with the bad intention of murdering her.

At her apartment, she feels intruded by someone. But she later on assumes that it is her wishful thinking. Nobody has entered her bedroom. On her bed she struggles to sleep but anxiety attacks and the premonition of impending disaster overpower her. She gets deeply tormented by her father. He forbids Ashley to meet Jim Cleary whom she loves intensely. Her father's intervention into her private life inflicts more restlessness and pain in Ashley.

To her utter surprise, the boys who are well-acquainted with her are killed serially. The killer is not known. This event affects her disastrously. She falls into desperation, nightmare and phobic fear of self-annihilation. Once a man named Tibble pleads her to go his apartment then rapes her in a deceptive way. After she was raped,

she develops strong sense of self-loathing and self-hatred. Contrary to her assumption, Tibble who rapes her is killed. She does not have a hand in Tibble's murder. But the police arrest her on the charge of murder. All these adversity and perversity inflict traumatic onslaught on Ashley.

Sidney Sheldon is the most eminent writer of crime based thriller fiction. His crime fictions have got widespread critical acclaim. Even in his crimes fictions, serious themes can be traced. Beneath the surface of criminal subjects lie serious themes of literary importance. Focusing on the core event of the novel *Tell Me Your Dream*, the critic Troy Buerger makes the following remarks:

In the ruins of the house Ashley Patterson finds a body that tells a story of a violent and grisly murder. The members and detective come at the same time as, a killer who nearly destroyed the lives of Ashely and those closest to her, has escaped from a bureau of investigation department. Her psychological state of mind is unknown, but her ultimate destination is not above the power of conjecture and random guessing. (36)

Ashley is the main character around whose tact of handling serious cases and disasters the entire novel moves. She has lost the penetrating insight with which she can detect the elusive and cryptic cause of any disasters, murders and wreckage. For her extraordinary expertise in detecting mysterious cases of murder, she is hailed as the most important figure. But when murder is found in her own house there is no option other than holding her as responsible for the criminal act.

As the chief agent and representative of crime investigating bureau in Virginia, Toni works with utmost dedication and attention. For her, detecting the cause of murder, solving mysterious disaster and thereby helping the innocent victims

are the idylls which she has cherished. These ideals of Toni are praiseworthy. With respect to these ideals of Toni, the critic Carol Patton makes the following observation in brief:

The devastating fire tore through the horse farm, destroying everything it touched. Picking through the wreckage, Toni uncovers human remains- the work of an audacious and wily killer who uses fire to mask his brutal murders. And when Ashely learns that their old nemesis, the abusive nature of her father has escaped from a hospital for the criminally insane and is somehow involved, the investigation becomes personal. (46)

Apart from being the head of investigation and detection committee, Toni demonstrates genuine concern for the suffering of those victims who have lost their lives. She is empathetic to the extent of appreciation. Even in the face of impending threat of annihilation from the deranged killer, she tends to maintain the composure of her mind. In this regard, she seems to be an embodiment of exemplary employee endowed with empathy.

Stefanie Castillo is one of the leading critics of Sidney Sheldon. She goes so far as to seek elements of realism even in the crime fictions. She studies Sheldon's novels in proximity with the realistic novels of Charles Dickens. Castillo gives the following view in this regard:

Sidney Sheldon retains that finer Dickensian indignation with the ways of the world that had been neglected by the small landscapes of much so-called serious writing. His *Tell Me Your Dream* is her most engrossing effort in years. The world of crime and punishment, love and loyalty as created by Sidney Sheldon is fascinating, richly drawn

and truly memorable. She is adept in capturing crime-solving techniques. (55)

Within the world of crime and deception, revenge and retaliation, Sidney Sheldon has succeeded in dealing with the issues of love and loyalty, trust and the transaction of faith. Castillo assumes that Sheldon is far more ahead in diversifying scope of crime fiction by adding variety of issues and themes. It is this skill which has immortalized Sidney Sheldon.

In the professional life of Ashley Patterson, her personal life and private experiences have left profound impact. The loving and affectionate nature of Patterson has found reflection in her style of caring the victims of arson and murder. This kind of conception is developed by Kristian Herron. Herron contends that:

The ongoing character development of Alette continues to entertain the reader in this novel. Much of her personal life has come to light over the last few novels and this one adds another layer to the story. Alette, and those around whom she is surrounded, continue to grow and develop, entertaining the reader throughout. With some great plot and excellent storylines, Sidney Sheldon does not disappoint or leave the reader bored. (22)

To expose prominently the values, ideals and spirit of a character in the center of the novel is to prioritize the art of character portrayal. Apart from dramatizing events in this novel, Sidney Sheldon has given considerable degree of attention to the technique of character portrayal. The real strength of this novel arises solely from the perspective of character portrayal. Herron comes to conclude that Sheldon lacks substantial power to dramatize the decisive events of this novel. Rather she is well-versed in the art of portrayal character that is dramatically convincing.

Tracey Ray is a different kind of critic who adopts different angle of observation. He finds both the personality and professional commitment of Alette appealing and exciting. He becomes frank enough to say that Alette is driven by undying ideals. Her dedication to the tough and nerve-racking cases has softened her heart. Ray briefly expresses his judgmental view as follows:

Sheldon's fans who relish him are interested in stories for the postmortem findings will welcome this tale of twisted minds and the gory havoc they cause. Acronym fans will also be pleased. This tale opens with the complete destruction by fire of a Virginia horse farm, the owner of which was said to be in London. As consultant to the FBI and the ATF's NRT (that's the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms' National Response Team), Alette joins the investigation on site and discovers some remains of a young woman in the master bath.

(42)

Solving cases no matter how mysterious and cryptic is the superb achievement of Ashley's father. For this rare skill and expertise she is praised. Under the leverage of her professional mastery, other soft and humanitarian virtues of Toni are revealed more transparently. She is sympathetic to female victims who have fallen prey to unprecedented disaster. Her professional interest sounds somewhat feministic.

According to Jessie Daniel, Ashley Patterson is a multidimensional character. Yet she is endowed with all the typical qualities of a normal woman. Her power to remain cool and calm to the threat of multiple personality disorder, the deranged killer is extraordinary power. Under the pressures which can push characters to schizophrenic suffering, Ashley's father continues to work decoding the mystery of

murder and arson. Concerning unique personality of Ashley Patterson, Daniel discloses the following view:

Ashley Patterson, a multidimensional character, is believable with strengths and weaknesses. Her joys, sorrows, triumphs, and defeats become the reader's own. Facing a very difficult personal loss fuels her desire to solve this pattern of mystery before Lucy, or even she, is the next victim. She encounters difficulties as she races headlong toward the thrilling conclusion which moves at James Bond pace. And Ashley is involved at every step. (21)

Daniel claims that Ashley is the realistic character. Her own realistic disposition reflects superb ideals with which everybody is tempted to identify. She has both strength and weakness. This is what makes her a normal being. But her dedication to her normal side of existence is her distinctive merit. No one can deny the fact that it is her composure and perseverance that have demystified the puzzling case of arson and murder.

Peggy Antrobus takes *Tell Me Your Dream* as the dark psychological tale. Opposite experiences are juxtaposed side by side to intensify the psychological effects of incidents and events that occur in the daily professional life of several characters like Ashley, Alette and Toni. Antrobus's view regarding the psychological effect of character is mentioned below:

Writing one of her best, Sidney Sheldon has given us a dark psychological tale, wound tightly with familiar friends and foes. Followers of Ashley Patterson will revel in this undertaking. Her relationships with family, friends, and enemies --- as well as the truth and the imagined --- all collide in this intriguing story. Beautiful

women are dying in fires across the country, and Ashley and her niece Lucy begin to investigate these mysterious. (68)

Though characters are manipulated realistically; setting and other narrative atmosphere remain mysterious. Mystery is the most desirable component of crime thriller fiction. Without it, crime fiction loses its identity. But to introduce elements of realism within the framework of mystery is to show a great stroke of action too. Hiding serial details is another way to create aura of mystery.

Lurie Bell is highly appreciative of the hidden motive of Ashley's father. She says that the abusive father of Ashley Patterson is the most mysterious character in this novel. What shocks readers of this novel are the underlying motives of Ashley's father? It is utterly challenging to figure out the hidden motives of Ashley's father. It is incredible to know why Ashley's father is engaged in such a murderous act just for a small cause. Bell propounds her view frankly in the following citation:

As Ashley's father and his gang search for the murder, they must also deal with the return of deranged killer and his gruesome plans for vengeance. A reoccurring character dies violently, and other characters come close to mental and emotional destruction. Unsure of how Ashley's father is involved, she must probe deeper into his past which is a painful experience for Ashley's extended version of self. (37)

There are not strong reasons which have driven Ashley to take revenge on the unidentified murder. She goes to an extreme extent while harboring hatred and vengeance. For detaching her lover Lucy, Ashley is highly vindictive in taking revenge on whosoever her murder. Just for disrupting the strong lesbian bond between Ashley and Alette, Toni too does not deserve such treatment.

Dorothy Smith is amazed at the presence of both audacity and rational calculative sense in Ashley Patterson. She raises question about how her father happens to possess both the qualities which are polar opposite. The combined presence of both the qualities keeps at the bay the possibilities of her being an insane figure who intimates society without any reason. Smith gives rise to her opinion in the following extract:

With an onslaught of mysterious fires and deaths, Toni is increasingly bewildered but keeps her cool, even in the midst of a very personal tragedy. Evidently, an audacious and cunning killer is on the loose, but finding and unmasking him sets this mystery apart from the ordinary. Sheldon's mastery of suspense is notable, and *Tell Me Your Dream* is certainly no exception. A murderous act takes place in the house and horse barn of a prominent and wealthy man while he is away, destroying additional assets and properties. There is also a dead blonde in the bathroom of the main house. (32)

The coincidence is, according to Smith, the most vital part of this novel. The moment Ashley Patterson gives attention to coincidental event; she gets sharp insight into the nature of murder and suspense that is built around it. The moment barn is burnt into a head of ashes; Ashley's father also comes out of the confinement in police custody. Ashley Patterson seeks the reason behind coincidence. That is why she succeeds in solving the cases and mystery of murder.

Masuji Ono, the prominent literary critic, holds the view that anything that happens to produce unexpected consequences should not be taken lightly. The family members of Ashley take her suffering lightly as a result she has to undergo the incurable process in which the resolution of one suffering leads to the creation of

another more intense suffering. One happens to opine the following view with respect to this kind of problematic:

In *Tell Me Your Dream*, the domestic life and social culture of the then American society of the mid twentieth century are not portrayed as the factor that has hastened the origin of the problem of Ashley. That is why the old generation of Ashley's father did not stage active mode of protest. Only the new generation of Ashley's friends is found in the forefront of protest against the alienating factors of rigid society. The protagonist acknowledges this sort of reality and proposes the alternative model of social adaptation. (51)

The spirit of resistance is found in the new generation. But Ashley is too weak to raise her voice. There is something within her that has prevented her from adapting herself to the shifting mode of socio-cultural life. Especially it is found in the students like Ashley and Toni. The new generation is somewhat free from the cramp and confinement of life.

Although different critics and reviewers examine the film critically from different angles and arrive at different findings, none of them raise the issue of traumatic experiences in Sidney Sheldon's *Tell Me Your Dream*. Ashley Patterson's traumatic experiences are rarely addressed and enumerated by these critics. The complex process in which Ashley is traumatized appears to be mysterious and puzzling. Only the subtle and tactful nuance of diagnosing the inner traumatic agony of the major characters brings into light the root cause of trauma. It is incredibly puzzling phenomenon that a girl sexually abused by her own father during her childhood happens to develop such a state of multiple personality disorder. With the

burden of disordered psyche, the major character lives traumatically finding out no outlet for the enactment of her traumatic condition.

Wounds, once inflicted, continued to produce effects in a known way or unknown way. It is very difficult to chart a right track in the study of trauma. Elie Wiesel is a noted theorist of trauma. Wiesel says “time does not heal all wounds; there are those that remain painfully open” (222). Traumatic memories can come back in any kind of emotional upsurge or expression. It is difficult to point out in what veiled emotional form traumatic memories comes out. As Judith Herman pointed out in her book *Trauma and Recovery* “atrocities refuse to be buried” (1). The impact of atrocities is penetrating and excruciatingly painful.

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

Trauma is an emotional response to terrible event like an accident, rape, or natural disaster. Trauma consists of lacerations in both body and mind. In medical discourse, trauma refers to a serious or critical bodily injury, wound or shock. Another

side in psychiatry, trauma has assumed a different meaning and refers to an experience that is emotionally painful, distressful or shocking which often results in lasting mental and physical effects. Some causes of trauma are a serious injury or shock to the body as from violence or an accident. An emotional wound or shock that creates substantial, lasting damage to the psychological development of a person often leads to neurosis. The cause of trauma is an event or situation that causes great distress and disruption of human psyche.

Psychological trauma is a type of damage to psyche that occurs as a result of a traumatic event. When that trauma leads to traumatic stress disorder, damage may involve physical changes inside the brain and to brain chemistry which damage the person's ability to adequately cope with stress. Psychological trauma is an emotional or psychological injury usually resulting from an extremely stressful or life threatening situation. In psychological trauma, we can find a violation of the person's familiar ideas about the world and of their human rights, putting the person in a state of extreme confusion and insecurity.

Psychological trauma may accompany physical pain or exist independently of it. Typical causes of psychological trauma are sexual abuse, bullying, and domestic violence, the victim of alcoholism, the threat of either or the witnessing of either, particularly in childhood. War or other mass violence can also cause psychological trauma. Long term exposure to situations such as extreme poverty or milder forms of abuse, such as verbal abuse can be traumatic though verbal abuse can also potentially to be traumatic as a single event.

However, different people will react differently to similar events. One person may experience an event as traumatic while another person would not suffer trauma as a result of same event. Some theories suggest childhood trauma can lead to violent

behavior. They believe such violent behavior can be as extreme as serial murder. The quality of attachment bond between father and child (daughter) affects the child's ability even as an adult to feel safe in the world. If she has felt disrupted in her childhood, she may be cruel to others because she could not get from parents especially from father. Early life trauma disrupts this important attachment bond, resulting in adult relationship difficulties.

So, emotional and psychological trauma is the result of extraordinary stressful events that shatter sense of security, making feeling helpless and vulnerable in a dangerous world. Traumatic experiences often involve a threat to life or safety but any situation that leaves feeling overwhelmed and alone can be traumatic even if it does not involve physical harm. It's not the objective facts that determine whether an event is traumatic or not. The more frightened and helpless the person feels, the more likely he is to be traumatized.

The psychological trauma caused by man-made and natural disasters, including war, abuse, violence, earthquakes, mechanized accidents, medical emergencies, etc. some people may be highly psychologically injured by the case, some may be less injured. It depends on their enduring capacity. All traumatic experiences affect how we experience the world around us and our relationships with other people.

The psychological damage resulting from uncontrollable, terrifying life events is a central focus of psychiatric interest around the turn of this century. Many early psychiatrists understand psychological trauma to be the ultimate source of much psychopathology. Freud at first has regarded many psychiatric problems as manifestations of early childhood traumas; for example, he has "interpreted the cognitive, emotional and behavioral symptoms of hysterical patients as symbolic

repetitions of early traumatic events” (49). After Freud has come to believe that the “development of neuroses is more intimately related to childhood fantasies and misinterpretations of childhood events, external psychological trauma loses its central importance in psychoanalytic thinking” (123). Freud continues to show interest in the consequences of actual over whelming experiences, until a recent resurgence of interest. Lacan maintained that The Real is "the essential object which isn't an object any longer, but this something faced with which all words cease and all categories fail, the object of anxiety par excellence" (34). In the past decades psychiatry has gradually shifted from a dynamic, intra psychic model to a biomedical model emphasizing genetic and biological determinants of major mental illness. Much of the present renewed interest can be attributed to a heightened concern about the impact of child abuse, the attention paid by the women’s movement to the consequences of rape and incest, the unexpectedly high incidence of delayed stress reaction and the recognition of psychiatric consequences of political persecution.

This thesis is divided in three chapters. In the first chapter, the researcher introduces the topic, elaborates the hypothesis, and quotes different critics’ views regarding to the film. In the same chapter, the researcher shows the point of departure from other critics. In the second chapter the researcher makes a thorough analysis of the novel *Tell Me Your Dream* by applying the methodology of gender and psychological trauma as well as testimony and analysis of novel from the view point of how females are sexually abused and suppressed. The last chapter contains the conclusive ending of the research.

II. Narrativization of Traumatic Experiences in Sidney Sheldon's *Tell Me Your Dream*

Sidney Sheldon's novel *Tell Me Your Dream* represents the traumatic experiences encountered by three leading female characters; Ashley Patterson, Toni Prescott and Alette Peters. They are all subject to the traumatic experiences. The thorough analysis of the novel yields the fact that these three female beings are the multiple versions of the persons of the main character Ashley Patterson. Toni and Alette both represent the disordered personality of Ashley Patterson. The problem faced by Ashley is almost same and similar to the problem faced by Alette and Toni. The occupations of Alette and Toni are also the same. Toni and Ashley work in the global network of computer. On the other hand Alette is a shy and submissive artist.

The researcher goes on to analyze the text by using the theoretical concept of trauma. Cathy Caruth proposes "that trauma compels us to imagine that traumatic events do not simply occur in time. Rather they fracture the very experience of time for the person to whom they happen. She states, the pathology cannot be defined either by the event itself" (*Unclaimed Experience* 121). Caruth makes the following point about trauma:

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

(124)

A psychical trauma is something that enters the psyche that is so overwhelming. It cannot be assimilated by usual mental processes. For those who suffer violence

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

All these female characters are haunted by traumatizing situations. In her childhood Ashley Patterson is sexually molested by her father Dr. Steven Patterson. Patterson is a doctor by profession. Ashley was twelve years old, her father and mother fought aggressively. The pugnacity of her father has stilled haunted her till now. The lingering traces of sexual abuse and molestation of Ashley by her father affects her in her adolescence and adulthood. Even in the midst of complacency and tranquility, Ashley is tormented by the unknown fear of be being chased by man. Once while taking a shower in her bathroom, she undergoes traumatic event. She has had the sinister premonition that someone has come to her lingerie wardrobe and rummaged her clothes. Did this event really happen or it is the projection of her troubled and traumatized mind-is difficult to know. The following lines describe how desperately and anxiously Ashley reacts to the situation:

She turned off the shower, listening, and her heart pounding. Silence, she stood there a moment, her body glistening with drops of water, then hurriedly dried her and cautiously stepped into the bedroom.

Everything appeared to be normal. It is my stupid imagination again. I have got to get dressed. She walked over to her lingerie drawer, opened it and stared down at it, unbelievably. Someone had gone through her

undergarments. Her bras and pantyhose were all piled together. She always kept them neatly separated. (35)

The fear of being followed by an unknown man Ashley persistently. But she dismisses it as the projection of her stupid imagination. In addition, she develops the phobic sense of being assaulted by an unidentified man sexually. Sometimes she takes such assumption lightly. But when the situations recur she could not help pondering on it seriously. Whether someone has rummaged her undergarments or it the manifestation of her fear- is difficult to guess. But it is obviously true that something has gone wrong in the operation of her mind. Her failure to figure out the building scenario is really striking.

The idea of Caruth is instrumental in examining the troubled and traumatic state of the protagonist's mind. When Ashley happens to experience unidentified interference into her private room, she guesses several possibilities. She thinks that someone has come to rape her. At another moment, she could not help making traumatic gestures. Her reflection yields several doubts in her. The way she makes nauseous and jerky physiological gestures prove that her mental makeup is disordered and traumatized. She decides to report the police that someone is following her and intruded into her house with the evil intention. But for the fear of being heavily interrogated by police she withdraws from her decision to report to the police. There are ample evidences in the text to prove that Ashley is deeply traumatized. Indecisiveness and fatal fear of being chased and assaulted by the stranger are symptomatic of her traumatic experience. The following lines exemplify this aspect of Ashley's traumatized psyche:

Ashley suddenly felt sick to her stomach. Had he unzipped his pants, picked up her pantyhose and rubbed them against himself? Had he

fantasized about raping her? Raping her and murdering her? She was finding it difficult to breathe. I should go to the police, but they would laugh at me. You want us to investigate this because you think someone got into your lingerie drawer? Someone has been following me. Have you seen who it is? No. Has anyone threatened you? No. Do you know why anyone would want to harm you? No. It is no use, Ashley thought despairingly. (36)

Ashley's breathing is suspended for a moment when she comes to know that the intruder must be rummaging her underwear and other private things. The thoughts of the intrusion of an unknown man into her house make her thoughts palpitate convulsively. She feels too insecure and helpless. Suddenly the idea of reporting police flashes across her mind. But she does not dare to go to the police office and report. She thinks again that if she reports police would interrogate her despairingly. Rather than being interrogated by police embarrassingly, she prefers to stay in the same condition of insecurity and fear. The traumatic trace puts her in the indecisive mood.

In the current case, the phrase or group's identity could be added to the last sentence. It is not the experience itself that produces traumatic effect, but rather the remembrance of it. As reflective process, Smelser argues that "trauma links past to present through representations and imagination. In psychological accounts, this can lead to a distorted identity-formation, where certain subject-positions may become especially prominent or even overwhelming" (65). Trauma always engages a meaning struggle, a grappling with an event that involves identifying the nature of the pain, the nature of the victim and the attribution of responsibility. Alexander calls this the trauma process, when the collective experience of massive disruption, and social

crises, becomes a crisis of meaning and identity. In this trauma process carrier groups are central in articulating the claims, and representing the interests and desires, of the affected to a wider public.

Ashley continues to think upon this possibility of being interfered and intruded by a monstrous man with evil intention. Soon she comes to guess different truth. She says to herself that it is she who might have mixed those things. Her fear dwindles down for some time. In her interior monologue she says “it is possible that I mixed my lingerie up myself. That is probably what happened. Or is it a wishful thinking” (36). She is mentally divided. She does not know what to do or not to do. She thinks about keeping a gun for protection. Soon she alters her decision to keep the gun beside her bed. How lost she is in the thoughts that clash persistently. She herself says “But I need some protection now. She refused to keep a gun in the apartment because she hated violence” (36). In this way, she is divided between conflicting thoughts due to the traumatic traces that lingered in her mind.

Kali Tal's *Worlds of Hurt* is a significant pioneering venture into an area deserving serious attention. *Bearing Witness: The Literature of Trauma* contains new material and further insights into the field it explores. Tal begins by “commenting on the irony of Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel's designation of Henry Kissinger as a fellow survivor in 1991. This leads the author to question the process whereby Wiesel becomes the voice of a survivor” (54). Tal concentrates upon three main areas of traumatic representation. They are Holocaust survival, the Vietnam War, and narratives of rape and incest victims. The subject of this work is psychic trauma. She says that:

Its cultural-political inquiry moves back and forth between the effects of trauma upon individual survivors and the manner in which that

trauma is reflected and revised in the larger, collective political and cultural world. Three main strategies of cultural coping usually occur. Mythologization often reduces a traumatic event to a set of standardized narratives. Medicalization regards traumatic victims as objects who can be cured within existing institutional structures. (129)

Disappearance works at undermining the credibility of the victim and refusing to admit the existence of a particular trauma. To her credit Tal interrogates the dominant mechanisms of these three discourses and argues for the crucial role of the victim's identity and testimony. Tal critiques various attempts to place the unique nature of the conflict into convenient literary and mythological categories making the event another tragic episode in the fall of the American insularities.

Self hatred is the chronic problem from which Ashley has been suffering since she reaches into adolescence. When she stands in front of the mirror, she could not help being affected by the sudden onrush of self-hatred. In the beginning of the novel the novelist has not mentioned the root cause behind Ashley's growing self-hatred. When the real reason is revealed, it becomes quite clear about the reason behind her growing self-hatred. The following lines throw light on the mysterious victimization of Ashley by the sudden irruption of traumatic trace:

I hate my looks, Ashley thought. I am too thin. I must start eating mores. She walked into the kitchen and began to fix breakfast, forcing her mind to forget about the frightening thing that was happening, and concentrating on preparing a fluffy omelette. She turned on the coffeemaker and put a slice of bread in the toaster. Ten minutes later, everything was ready. Ashley placed the dishes on the table and sat

down. She picked up a fork, stared at the food for a moment, and then shook her head in despair. Fear has taken away her appetite. (3)

At any time, fear can overtake Ashley. She spends a great of time preparing breakfast. By the time she sits on the table to eat, fear attacks her. In the sudden onrush of fear over her, she loses her appetite. She fails to eat the breakfast as ravenously as she could have done if fear had not come. But the most puzzling and ironic fact is that she herself does not know why fear has overpowered her. Without knowing the reason of her fearfulness, she yields to the fit of fear. Traumatized mind can hardly sustain and prolong the moment of happiness and comfort. Even a momentary extension of the gesture of happiness and tranquility is challenging to those who are traumatized. In Ashley's case the same principle holds true.

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

Ashley's father had abused Ashley sexually when she was still a child. The lingering trace of trauma gets projected in a sporadic way. That is why Ashley is

haunted and tormented by the sporadic and unexpected irruption of fear and anxiety attack. When Ashley reaches the age of eighteen, she begins to date with a boy named Jim Cleary. Cleary is the most famous football player of Pennsylvania team. Many girls die for him because of his handsome body and gamesmanship. But it is Cleary who is passionately attached to Ashley.

Sociological and historical approaches avoiding certain postmodernist pitfalls of dismissing valid testimony and denying the specific effects of trauma on the process of narration are definitely needed. Tal has performed a valuable task in depicting this painful world and arguing for its inherent relevance. Traditional conceptions of literature and taste are irrelevant toward understanding the nature of these different voices. She cogently argues, “Literature of trauma is written from the need to tell and retell the story of the traumatic experience, to make it real both to the victim and to the community” (87). Such writing serves both as validation and cathartic vehicle for the traumatized writer.

When both Cleary and Ashley entered into romantic tie, Ashley's father Dr. Steven becomes violently opposed. He openly ridiculed Ashley for dating with good for nothing fellow like Cleary. Ashley is amazed at the rude temperament of her father. Stevenson is disdainful and doubtful of his daughter's growing friendship with the boss of her office. He dislikes his daughter's romantic overture. The pugnacity of her father pushes Ashley to the matrix of misery and desperation. She could not help remembering how he callously and aggressively treated her mother. Ashley is not free to pursue her own life because her father exercises fierce will and forces on her. He threatens her boy friend Jim Cleary. He warns him that if he is found loitering before his house he will break every bone in his body. The following lines represent how wild, aggressive, interfering and bossy the narrator, Stevenson is:

Ashley cringed with embarrassment. She had forgotten how savage her father's temper was. He had once punched an intern during an operation for making an error in judgment. Ashley remembered the screaming arguments between her mother and father when she was a little girl. They had terrified her. Her parents had always fought about the same thing, but try as she might, Ashley could not remember what it was. She had blocked it from her mind. (8)

From the way Ashley's father imposes his interfering and harsh view on her shows that there is something wrong in the father-daughter relationship. It is genuine true if a sincere and responsible father examines his daughter's activities for the sake of her own well-being. But he does what he does in excess. From his interfering, aggressive and bossy nature it becomes gradually clear that he has the devilish intention to possess her and if possible to exploit and abuse her. Behind the mask of his parental duty to observe his daughter's activities, the jealousy, dreadful jealousy lies. Such activities of her father push Ashley on the paralyzing and desperate situation, which is traumatizing incredibly. Even the voice of her father is jarring to her.

The victims of trauma are miserably haunted by depressive inclination, identity problem, guilt and shame. Kathleen Miriam argues about the traumatic disaster:

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

.Trauma typically exists along a spectrum which ranges from global, when an event may affect many individuals, to individual, when the trauma impacts only that individual. (13)

The depthless trauma involves repeated traumatic events occurring over a period of time. Simply trauma usually refers to a single event, such as a rape or a shooting. Simple trauma is more likely to lead to posttraumatic stress disorder. Post traumatic stress disorder refers to the sporadic outburst of hidden traumatic trace. Complex trauma leads to a deeper and more pervasive set of changes. Those changes involve emotional deregulation, distorted thinking, and behavioral dysfunction. It also consists of patterns of dysfunctional interpersonal relationships. Early researchers noted that exposure to trauma may lead to feelings of anxiety, helplessness, dissociation and behavior. These symptoms are now included within the broad category of traumatic disorder. These symptoms may be consequences of trauma. They do not always occur following trauma. Additionally, risk events can moderate the influence of exposure to trauma and the development of psycho-pathology.

The tragic perception that someone is going to kill her has weakened Ashley tremendously. Once she was in work cubicle of global computer network. The boss of the office, Shane Miller is observing the workers and their performance. Ashley turns on her computer. She lingers in front of the screen. She sees several dots on the screen. All of a sudden, Ashley gets frightened because the dots combine digitally to constitute her own image on the screen. The image is too horrible to frighten her. She screams and yells at the looming image of computer screen. Shane Miller comes to her aid asking what happens to Ashley. She tells him that a horrible image of her looms threateningly from the screen to kill her. Miller is amazed. He chuckles at the fear of Ashley. He convinces her that there is nothing haunting and frightening on the

computer screen. The merging of dots on the screen and looming image that seeks to kill Ashley are the enactment of her traumatic agony and experience. The following lines illustrate how the omniscient narrator describes the inner psychological malaises of Ashley:

When Ashley returned from lunch, she walked into her work cubicle and turned her computer on. To her surprise, a sudden hail of pixels began rolling down the screen, creating an image. She stared at it, bewildered. The dots were forming a picture of her. Ashley watched, horrified, a hand holding a butcher knife appeared at the top of the screen. The hand was racing towards her image, ready to plunge the knife into her chest. Ashley screamed, not. She snapped off the monitor and jumped to her feet. Shane Miller had hurried to her side. Ashley! What is it? (39)

So much traumatic memories are repressed in Ashley's mind that it is difficult to know when those memories come out forcibly and problematize her. From her computer screen, the dots join and looms as the image which resembles her. This image happens to take a dagger and comes out of the computer threateningly to put an end to the life of Ashley. In the office desk she reacts in a violent way. She yells and screams loudly. Shane Miller comes to her aid and suggests her to consult Dr. Speakman.

Klein Parker is another eminent theorist of trauma. He puts forward the new notion of the transmission of trauma. He is of the opinion that there are some of the methods whereby traumatic legacy get transmitted via interpersonal relation, mutual sense of communication and sharing of parental stories and legend. The survivors of traumatic events tell and re-tell their children those catastrophic situations which

they faced in the concentration camp. Through this way, the legacy of trauma continues to get disseminated, affecting those who are the part of broader range of the history of Holocaust trauma. Parker makes the following remarks regarding to the transmission of trauma:

Unconscious and conscious transmission of parental traumatization always takes place in a certain family environment, which is assumed to affect a major impact on the children. Though Holocaust survivor families certainly differ from one another in many ways, the more pathological families are described as tight little islands in which children came into contact only with their own parents, with their siblings and with other survivors. In such highly closed systems parents are fully committed to their children and children are overly concerned with their parents' welfare. (46)

The effects of trauma diffuse from one generation to another. One example of the transmission of trauma is the trauma. Several years after the camp inmates got freedom following the fall of political torture, the survivors of trauma remained tormented. Even their progenies are affected to some extent as their parent narrated stories about their difficulties and sufferings in the concentration camp. In lesser form or in severe form, the effects of trauma remained in them. Oral narration, written discourse and search for relief via confessing about the sufferings and trauma are the usually practiced means whereby trauma is supposed to get transmitted. The effects of trauma are invincible.

Dr. Speakman diagnoses her mental illness. He says that she is compelled to react in this way due to the pressures of stress resulting from hard work. He advises her to take rest from work. When Speakman asks her to tell about her problem, she says “I

do not know. I think I am being followed, Dr. Speakman, it sounds crazy, but I think someone wants to kill me. He studied her a moment. Who would want to kill you? She says she has no idea” (40). From this evidences, it becomes clear that she is haunted by the repressed memories of trauma. Causes of her fear are difficult to trace.

The various psychic journeys undertaken in trauma literature “involve a move from fragmentation to wholeness marked by struggle in which survivors fight ideological battles over a struggle for meaning. Tal often sees remarkable unities between the diverse narratives she examines” (65). Notions of the representation of trauma have been plaguing philosophers, historians, psychologists and others, each in their respective fields, as they attempted to solve problems on the subject. The questions range in complexity from. As claimed by Tal, “Representation is an aesthetic quality in which one can attempt to manifest the intangible into the tangible” (83). The purpose of representation is replication of a thought and emotion into another person’s mind. These representations are commonplace and completely conscious to our minds. Tal delivers the following view:

However, a traumatic affect, the mind and body’s response to an extreme event, cannot be represented directly in the same manner as common thoughts and emotions. The complexity of traumatic damage on the brain separates the traumatic event to the unconscious mind, thus the commonplace first-person narrative that conveys both the historical and emotional context of an experience becomes unusable. (48)

While the two approaches contrast in methodology and medium, each allows various aspects of trauma to be represented. These theories will also attempt to show that the

representations yielded by these means will not cause identification for the subject attempting to understand the traumatic event and further suffering in him or her.

Once, Ashley was in deep love with Jim Cleary. Jim is the famous football player. He is the center of attraction in the bevy of beautiful girls. When he expresses his love for Ashley, she is profoundly shocked. At first she rejects his proposal. Later on she reconsiders it and falls in love with him. Cleary takes her to different places for dating. They romanticize their time and promise to remain together. When their budding romance is detected by her father, he reacts aggressively. Cleary promises that he will come to take her to the railway station so that they could go to California and live forever together. As planned, she goes to the station, but Cleary is not found there. She feels betrayed by him. Having seen the chance of Ashley's elopement, her father takes her to London. Now also Ashley sighs for the reunion with her ex-flame. The disastrous betrayal and its shock in Ashley are beyond recovery. When she sees the prospect of getting reunited with Cleary, she is still confused and confounded. The following lines shed light on this aspect of the trauma of the speaker:

During the following week, Ashley could think of nothing but the reunion. I wonder if my going is a mistake. What is Jim Cleary does show up? Does he have any idea how much he hurt me? Does he care? Will he even remember me? The night before Ashley was to leave for Bedford, she was unable to sleep. She was tempted to cancel her flight. I am being silly, she thought. The past is the past. (41)

She is uncertain as to how Jim Cleary reacts to her if she encounters him. She is tempted to be loved by him in an affectionate way. The desire to meet him and get reunited with him is strong in her. Yet she is doubtful as to this possibility. She

flinches back from moving confidently in the direction of meeting Cleary. She is torn between the impulse towards reunion and humiliation. By the time she develops an intense passion for Cleary, she hears a threatening voice of her father. The words uttered by her father come torturously in her mind. She is affected by the voice which rings within her. Her father had said “You keep your god damned hands off my daughter, do you understand? If I ever see you around here again, I will break every bond in your body” (44). Ashley’s father had warned Jim Cleary in a rude and aggressive way. This harsh voice comes torturously from the corner of her mind, breaking her normal schedule dangerously.

The researcher makes use of the Holocaust trauma. Natan P. F. Kellerman is the leading theorist of trauma. In his book *Psychological Effects and Treatment of Trauma*, Kellerman points out the long-term effects of trauma experienced by the survivors of Holocaust concentration camp. According to Kellerman, trauma produces far-reaching effect. Its traces can hardly be erased with the passage of time. Not only the survivors of trauma but their progenies are also detrimentally affected by the harsh fallout of traumatizations. Kellerman has made the following observations with respect to the traumatic fallout of genocidal execution that happened in the camp:

The long-term after-effects of traumatization are far-reaching. More than half a century after the war, trauma continues to make its presence felt on survivor families and others in a variety of ways. Like an atom bomb that disperses its radioactive fallout in distant places, often a long time after the actual explosion, trauma continues to contaminate everyone who was exposed to it in one way or another. When retiring from work or experiencing deteriorating

health, terrifying nightmares and flashbacks reappear in ageing survivors who over the years had kept themselves excessively busy in order to repress their painful memories. (23)

Exposure to the horror and brutalities contaminate the souls of those who survived it. The inability of the narrator to return to the normal world is embedded in the consciousness of those who survived the genocidal massacre in concentration camp. The fate of the narrator stands as the sufferings of those who were forcibly confined in the camp. Insecurities and prolonged mourning are the daily routines of those children who are affected by the indirect realization of horror. Genocide damaged family, disintegrated and shattered the root of family.

When Ashley is torn between her desire to meet Cleary and the fear of her father's violent way of interference, she comes to know that some has killed Jim Cleary and left his body. The news about Jim Cleary's news inflicts any traumatic agony in her. Only the image of dead of body of Jim Cleary continues to rupture the tranquil state of her mind. The following lines give a glimpse of how much traumatized she is:

The next few months were misery for Ashley. The image of Jim Cleary's bloody, mutilated body kept going through her mind. She thought of seeing Dr. Speakman again, but she knew she dare not discuss this with anyone. She felt guilty even thinking that her father might have done such a terrible thing. She pushed the thought away and tried to concentrate on her work. It was impossible. She looked down in dismay at a logo she had just botched. (47)

In every step of her struggle, Ashley is tormented by the things that happened to her. The known and unknown events that happened to her life traumatize her. From the

working place to the solitary life in the residence, she is constantly affected by the painful reminiscence and sudden irruption of repressed traumatic memories. She is aware of Dr. Speakman's advice to take relief from the work that brings stress in her. Yet she knows that such a mere advice does not solve her problem. Her psychic condition degenerates into the worst level.

Throughout this novel, plenty of evidences can be found to claim that Diana has a less developed personality. If she had mature and reliable personality, she would not have taken self-destructive decisions. But even if her personality is held as the most accountable factor for her traumatic condition, it becomes necessary to ask explore the factors that hindered the growth of her personality. Barbara Smith views woman's trauma from the angle of feminist concern. Her view is listed below:

In recent years, feminist theorists have proposed a new model of personality development based upon the construct of relational self. This self-in-relation model proposes that personality development for girls and woman can be described, not as a process of increasing separation and individuation, but rather as a growing capacity for empathy and connectedness. This process of development of relational self has been posited to lead to an enhanced capacity of empathy in girls and women as well as to more permeable ego-boundaries in women. (149)

According to Barbara Smith, the process of individuation leads a girl taking on her mother's experiences towards the process of projective identification. What this model suggests is that daughters of trauma survivors may be more vulnerable to the trans-generational transmission of parental or familial trauma. The female children have their greater emotional openness and the capacity for identification with parental

feelings and experiences. This sort of emotional vulnerability may unconsciously become the carrier of traumatic experiences that parents wish to disown or suppress. The real problem lies in the process of personality cultivation and social individuation. Thus Smith concludes that proper attention should be directed towards this situation if a productive agenda for the management of trauma comes.

The approach of Piotr Sztompka sounds relevant in this research. In this approach, cultural trauma is connected with the negative consequences of rapid social change and its collective acknowledgement is also recognized. When enriching the original psychiatry-related notion of 'trauma' with social content, Sztompka stresses "the social agent's ability to cope with unfavorable social changes through recognition, its reactive creation of collective coping strategies and consequent establishment of a consistent social becoming" (124). Beginning with Jeffrey Alexander, the Enlightenment and psychoanalytic interpretations are mentioned in the contemporary theoretical literature of the phenomenon of cultural trauma (Alexander, 2004:3). The social actors perceive traumatic events consciously.

Dennis Tibble is a man who is madly in love with Ashley. Tibble follows her obsessively. Ashley rejects his proposal several times. She wants to confine her relation with him only within the boundary of friendship. She declines to go beyond friendship in his acquaintance. He follows her persistently. His persistent follow-up annoys and irritates her. He leaves no stone unturned in wooing Ashley. But Ashley does not move an inch. So he decides to rape her. Under the pretext of taking some advice from her, he takes Ashley to his apartment. Thinking that if she gives him good suggestion, he would leave her free and does not torture her, Ashley follows him to his apartment. Tibble pretends to talk to her in a friendly way. He tells her to take a soft drink. He had mixed a drug in the drink. After taking a few sips, she becomes

unconscious. He rapes her. The seduction of Ashley by Tibble devastates Ashley mentally. She is mentally so devastated that she lost control over her life. The following lines describe how she is raped by Tibble and how she reacts to it after she gains consciousness:

He had put something in her glass of wine that had made her temporarily lose her memory. She had read about incidents where a drug like that had been used. It was called the date rape drug. That was what he had given her. The talk about wanting her advice had been a ruse. And like a fool, I fell for it. She had no recollection of going to the airport, flying to Chicago or checking into this seedy hotel room with Tibble. And worse-no recollection of what had happened in this room. (50)

Tibble is obsessively attached to Ashley. He always tells her to go to dinner with him. He does his level best to woo her. His sole purpose of always moving round her is to seduce her. But he outwardly pretends to love her, care her and befriend her. Ashley does not like him. She always avoids him. She has had a crush on Cleary who betrayed her. Even the boss of her office is crazy to take her to bed. But she denies his sexual advance. The boss of her office finally remained as the best friend of Ashley. Even Ashley is happy to limit her relation with Miller in friendship. But Denis Tibble is madly kin on her. He is bent upon seducing her. She succeeds in taking her to his apartment and drugs her and then finally seduces her.

It is the punitive practices of society that puts an individual in a state of insanity. The patriarchal society is oppressive towards women. Women with delicate sensibility like Isadora cannot endure the jolt and lacerations which the rigid

structures of society generate. This sort of analytical insight is expressed by Judith Herman. To quote Herman once again the following excerpt is used:

Despite these differences, there is often little recognition or understanding in the literature on trauma treatment and theory of the actual conditions of many women's lives or of the effects of gender inequality, sexism, female socialization, class and race that influence women's psychological development. In other words, most trauma theory ignores the role of gender. Yet a failure to take these factors into account leads to a failure not only in understanding the mental health issues women face, but in providing effective therapeutic interventions.

(141)

So long as the society is harsh and exclusionary, individuals should identify the hostile factors which are detrimental to them. In such a structure of society those who want to walk on the path of autonomy must be cautious. It is really difficult to guess at what time hostile forces of society erupt and ruin the delicate society. That is why it is necessary to be cautious about the time in which unprecedented hazards and pitfalls occur in life.

When Ashley comes to recollect the day on which she has gone to Tibble's apartment, she could not help getting desperate. She has had the faintest memory of being raped by Tibble. The feeling of extreme nausea, self-loathing and self hatred well up in her heart. She could not help feeling miserable. She is emotionally devastated. Most of the time, she is found hovering on the verge of traumatic tension. The following lines describe how she is crushed by the traumatic tension which builds up after she is raped by Tibble:

I have got to get out of here, Ashley thought desperately. She felt unclean, as though every inch of her body had been violated. What had he done to her? Trying not to think about it, she got out of bed, walked into the tiny bathroom and stepped into the shower. She lets the stream of hot water pound against her body, trying to wash away whatever terrible, dirty things had happened to her. What if he had gotten her pregnant? The thought of having his child was sickening. She is repelled by the thought of putting on the clothes, but she had no choice. She dressed quickly and glanced in the mirror. She looked like a prostitute. (51)

Ashley is badly affected by the sexual assault inflicted by Tibble. She feels as though she is a prostitute. The feeling of sexual inferiority and moral degeneration overpower Ashley. So far she has maintained her moral chastity. Despite Miller's caring and compassionate nature, she has declined to go to bed with him. Even to her dearest lover Cleary she had not slept. But now she is sexually assaulted and then raped by Tibble. She feels like a prostitute. The feeling of sexual inferiority on the part of Ashley is extremely unimaginable. She does not have any rational control over her life which is badly hampered by the monstrous situations. Haunted by the seduction inflicted by Tibble, Ashley lies on her bed and cherishes monologues. She lay in bed that night, too drained to sleep, her thoughts chaotic. She talks to oneself "if what Dennis did to me becomes public, it will be humiliating. Everyone at work will know what happened. But I cannot let him do this to anyone else. I have to inform the police"(54). In this way, Ashley is deeply wounded psychologically by Tibble's sexual assault.

Jeffrey Alexander is the leading theorist of trauma. He is of the opinion that it is through the narrativization of trauma that traumatic effects spread like wild fire. Alexander gives emphasis upon the narrativization and representation of trauma rather than the core content of trauma whether it is cultural or psychological or national. In every collective memory there are several specific moments. These moments are crystallized as turning points. These points evoke a sense of rupture with the past. The sense of rupture is inextricably bound up with a sense that a rift has occurred in memory. Conversely, every collective memory also includes templates for handling traumatic events.

Jeffrey Alexander examines any kind of traumatic terror within the context of socio-economic parameters. He links traumatic assault in relation with the fragility and vulnerability of identity. Jeffrey Alexander delivers and divulges the following insight into the core idea of trauma:

The paradigm of trauma first of all assumes the existence of an original culture, which has clear and maintainable economical, institutional, and spiritual systems and mechanisms for storing and transmitting the experiences of the pre-aggression period. Additionally, it is supposed that the offensive culture could radically alter the identity and sustainability. Emerging from the challenge of the unknown and alien value-constellations of the trespasser, the rapid changes within the systems of original culture could lead to dissolution, but may also be the basis for unforeseen revitalization and reorganization. (85)

Alexander says that cultural trauma is a gives an outlet of the original deviation. These deviations are necessary for reinforcing the identity and keeping the continuity. The need for utilizing trauma becomes acute during these periods when natural

balanced development becomes strongly disturbed. The continuity is ensured by widely accepted and followed norms, customs, and rituals.

The most shocking and startling events unfold one after the other. Though Cleary had betrayed her, she is still pining for his love. But her pining emotion dwindles down when she comes to know that Cleary is killed. She thinks again and again who can be the murderer of Cleary. When she is struggling to sustain the blow of Cleary, another tragic event happens. The person who rapes her is killed. Everyone holds Ashley accountable for the murder of Tibble. Tibble is arrested on the charge of murdering Tibble. Ashley's father is sexually jealous of her growing relation with boys. He is violently angry when Ashley develops close intimacy with other boys. For no reason at all, she is arrested on the charge of murdering Tibble who had rather raped her. The unfolding shocking events lacerate Ashley's psyche. Later on she is released because the constable and other detective involved in the investigation of Tibble's murder do not find any solid evidence of Ashley's involvement in the murder.

Apart from Ashley, there are other female characters who are victims of traumatic situations. Like Ashley they are too traumatized. They are also passing through difficult circumstances. Actually they are the manifestations of Ashley's disordered psyche and personality. The author has portrayed them as the extended manifestation of Ashley. Toni Prescott is vivacious and extroverted. She is fond of skiing, bobsledding and ice-skating. In addition, she is enamored of surfing on the internet. She enters the world of internet and befriends several friends from different continents. In the midst of enjoying surfing and browsing on the internet, she feels suddenly haunted by terrible memories. Her heart begins to pound. It would be difficult for her to take breath. The jolt and slings of trauma weaken her completely.

She could not concentrate on her work in the global computer system. The following lines describe how she is traumatized in the midst of joyous experience:

Toni angrily signed off. A doctor! Terrible memories came flooding through her. She closed her eyes a moment, her heart pounding. She took several deep breaths. No more tonight, she thought, shakily. She went to bed. It seems someone gives Toni an advice saying cannot you ever do anything right, you stupid child? Toni thought about the terrible accident in which her mother had died. Toni could still hear her scream for help. The memory of it made Toni smile. (23)

While surfing on the internet, Toni happens to chat with a man who says that he is a doctor by profession. The word doctor opens the closed door of her mind. The word doctor makes her frightened. She loathes hearing the word doctor. The flood of memories comes to her painfully. Since her father had molested and abused her sexually, the bitter memories of being sexually abused by one's own father are repressed in her. Her father is also a doctor. That is why the word doctor makes her extremely disturbed and disordered. The repressed traumatic memories seek outlet violently and sporadically leaving the victim in the lurch.

Alette is another female character who not exempt from traumatic agony. She is a shy and submissive artist. She is lost in her own inner world. It is difficult for her to establish contact with the outer world. In the age of almost twenty, she is prone to the problem of mood swinging. In sequences of her art objects, there is random gap and striking clumsiness. The worse problem is that she is manic depressive. She is so traumatized that she lost control over her emotion. The following lines refer to this aspect of Alette's troubled and traumatic psyche:

There was only one cloud hanging over Alette Peter's lie. She was manic depressive. She suffered from anomie, a feeling of alienation from others. Her mood swings always caught her unaware, and in an instant, she could go from a blissful euphoria to a desperate misery. She had no control over her emotion. However talented she might be, an unidentified inner voices makes a mockery of her artistic pursuit. She hears the voice; you are wasting paper and paint! You have no talent. (26)

Alette is a manifestation of Ashley's traumatic personality. She is an extended version of Ashley's disordered personality. She, Toni and Ashley are going through the same traumatic lot. None of them have identified the root cause of their traumatized existences. That is why they are all facing similar circumstances. Alette longs to strike acquaintances with the external world. But their repressed traumatic memories do not allow them to move towards this direction. Alette has lost so much self-confidence that she could not help being mocked by her split mind. She is neither able to forsake her shy nature nor capable of adopting new trend and fashion. Her main problem is anomie. Anomie results from her inability to pursue the new trend and also from her incapacity to cling to the obsolete past in a loyal way.

Trauma bears certain resemblance with historical trauma as well. Thus it becomes imperative to quote Dominick LaCapra. LaCapra is pinpointed the difficulties faced by the interpreters of trauma. He maintains that it is not possible to gain an insight into the disastrous event by just applying theory like psychoanalysis or any other postmodern theories. Even the psychological trauma of camp inmates has socio-cultural implications. Trauma has to be worked through. LaCapra mentions the following view:

Defying comprehension, the tragic history has been alternately repressed and canonized in postmodern Western culture. Recently our interpretation of the trauma has been the center of bitter controversies. From debates over Paul de Man's collaborationist journalism and Martin Heidegger's Nazi past to attempts by some historians to downplay the trauma's significance. Many of our efforts to comprehend the fatal effect of trauma, he shows, continue to suffer from the traumatizing effects of its events and require a working through of that trauma if we are to gain a more profound understanding of the meaning of the Holocaust. (54)

LaCapra is a major voice in the domain of historiographical discussions. Dominick LaCapra projects a new clarity to the issue of trauma as he examines the intersections between historical events and the theory through which we struggle to understand them. LaCapra dwells upon the problematic that are involved in the historical mode of understanding trauma. He explores the problems faced by historians, critics, and thinkers. According to them, the efforts of theorists to understand Holocaust trauma is vain and fruitless. He considers the role of canon formation and the dynamic of revisionist historiography. Throughout, LaCapra demonstrates that psychoanalysis is not merely a psychology of the individual, but that its concepts have socio-cultural dimensions. It can help us perceive the relationship between the present and the past.

Events contrary to her expectations happen and continue to happen ruining the entire life of Ashley. She does not have hand in the murder of Cleary and Tibble. She ponders a lot. At last she is found guiltless and innocent. But this case is settled and investigation is over she is held in custody. In the custody she is rudely and roughly

treated. Even her father does not come to inspire and cheer her up when she is lost deeply in the pensive and hopeless mood. Ashley is harshly interrogated by police. She could not help thinking why only those boys who are associated with her are killed. She also asks to herself why her father does not come to meet her in the custody. In other time he acts kindly with care. Now he is simply far away from her life. All these questions crop up in her mind. She does not find any kind of answer to all these questions. She develops the symptoms of hysteria. Her psychic integrity degenerates into maelstrom of hysteria, phobia and constant torture. The following lines reveal some additional aspects to Ashley's quandary:

In the cell, Ashley thought, they have sentenced me to death. A long death in an asylum filled with crazy people. It would have been kinder to kill me now. She thought of the endless, hopeless years ahead of her, and she began to sob. The cell door opened, and her father came in. He stood there a moment, looking at her, his face filled with anguish. Honey, he sat down opposite her. You are going to live. (259)

So long as the investigation over the murder of Tibble and Cleary continued, nobody had guessed that Ashley would be alive. When the public perception is about the probable execution of Ashley, she feels as if she is far detached from the real world. At last when the inquiry ends in the vindication of her innocence, she is released from the jail. Even the police officers are delightfully excited at the exoneration of Ashley. But Ashley is dreadful even now. To her the world of freedom is also full of threat. From her own father she has not felt secure. The sequence of unidentified murderers continues to pose threat to the psychological integrity of Ashley. It is very difficult for her to expect security and dignity in the outer professional world.

At last the police come to find out that it is Ashley's father who molested Ashley when she was still a child. But Ashley's father is shrewd enough to hide the truth. She shifted the blame on someone else. He defends himself by saying that it is my wife's elderly cousin John who molested Ashley sexually. His account is totally absurd and unbelievable. In the last moment also he does not hesitate to blame John and defend himself. The following lines describe how Ashley's father does his best to save himself from the charge of sexually abusing his daughter by shifting blame on his wife's elderly cousin:

It happened when Ashley was six. I had to go to England. My wife could not go. I took Ashley with me. My wife could not go. I took Ashley with me. My wife had an elderly cousin over there named John. I did not realize it at the time, but John had emotional problems. I had to leave to give a lecture one day, and John offered to baby sit. When I got back that evening, he was gone. Ashley was in a state of complete hysteria. It took a long, long time to calm her down. After that, she would not let anyone come near her, she became timid and withdrawn and a week later, John was arrested as a serial child molester. (302)

Ashley's father is giving a false account of how Ashley is molested. His account is not credible. He tells all these things just to save himself from the impending punishment. It is he who abused Ashley. In addition, it is he who interfered into the private matters of Ashley. He has had hand in the killings of Cleary and Tibble. Of course Tibble is guilty of raping Ashley. But that does not mean he should be murdered. He needs to be punished. There must be some darker motive behind Dr. Ashley's over-smartness in the case of Ashley.

Dr. Ashley's false account is countered by Alette's remarks. Alette is the projection of Ashley's disordered personality. Ashley has had multiple disordered personalities. Alette represents one of such disordered personality. Alette tells how her father used to come naked to her bed and slept with her telling her that she should not tell about it to others. The following lines show how Alette's remarks reveal the reality associated with the false account of Dr. Ashley:

Papa came into her room while she was asleep, and he was naked. And he crawled into her bed, and this time he forced himself inside her. She tried to stop him, but she could not. She begged him never to do it again, but he came to her every night. And he always said, this is how a man shows a woman he loves her, and you are my woman, and I love you. You must never tell anyone about this. And she could never tell anyone. Ashley was sobbing, tears running down her cheeks. (306)

Finally, the person who abused Ashley is found and then punished. It is Alette who is frank enough to say what was between her and her father. Alette's abusive father is none other than Ashley's father too because Alette is one disordered personality of Ashley Patterson. From Alette's words it becomes clear that the prime mover behind the traumatic life of Ashley is none other than her own father. He is the person who hatched conspiracy against Cleary and Tibble.

Even in the asylum of inmates and psychotics, Ashley could not sleep completely. After knowing that her father is the root cause of her troubled and traumatized life, she could not rest and lie comfortably on her sleeping bed. The line "Father came to her every night and got into bed with her" (305) jerks her mind. This line lacerates her torturously. The following lines reflect the acuteness of her traumatic torture:

Ashley was afraid to go to sleep at night because she knew papa was going to come to her room. He used to make her touch him and then play with himself. And he said to her, Do not tell anyone about this or I won't love you anymore. She could not tell anyone. Mama and papa are yelling at each other all the time, and Ashley thought it was her fault. She knew she had done something wrong, but she did not know what. Mama hated her. (305)

All the lines uttered by Alette produce traumatic jolt, jerk and grates on Ashley's mind. The effects produced by Alette's words lacerate Ashley's mind. Now Ashley's mind has begun to react normally. She comes to know the truth. The haze of trauma gradually disappears. She gradually knows why her father was so aggressive when he finds her being on friendly terms with some boys like Cleary, Miller and others.

Thus it is obviously true that almost all the female characters in *Tell Me Your Dreams* are living traumatized lives. All the three female characters are prone to the same and similar kinds of traumatic tragedy. The reality about Alette's trauma helps Ashley to cope with her life full of nightmare. Alette is the projection of Ashley's disordered personality. Toni is the alter ego of Ashley. The abusive father is the worst prime mover who renders the life of his daughter formidably traumatic and tragic.

III. Sheldon's Concern with Woman's Suffering

The primary thrust of this research is that the repressed traumatic memories, if not tactfully and properly handled, can lead the lives of the victims to unanticipated level of misery. In Sidney Sheldon's *Tell Me Your Dream*, the main female character Ashley Patterson is desperately anxious. The bullying and intimidating scenario in which she lives is the instrumental in the inception of her traumatic existence. Her father's ruthless and pugnacious behavior tortures her immeasurably. He does not like to see her being intimated with smart and intelligent boys. She feels deeply tortured by her father's rude and pugnacious behavior.

Tormented by fear, sinister premonition, false charge of murder and parental pugnacity, Ashley is psychologically disordered, mentally lacerated and physiologically weakened. She had repressed the traumatic memory of being sexually abused by her father. The repressed traumatic memories come out sporadically, ruining the happiness and harmony of Ashley's life.

Ashley is under the illusion that Ashley was sexually abused by her father in her childhood. She had threatened her not to tell about it. Right from her childhood, she has been witnessing the harsh quarrel between her father and mother. When Ashley began to reach her adolescence, her father started doing all the terrifying things to her without her knowledge. One day someone is suspected of entering her lingerie ward and rummaging her.

Ashley has been haunted by the invincible fear of being followed by unknown man. Her mind is tight with questions whose answers are difficult to find. Her heart pounds at a rapid pace due to the hidden fear of being chased by the man of murderous instinct. She could not control her shipwrecked life. The boys whose names are associated with Ashley killed one after the other. This event overpowers

her traumatically. Tibble is the man who is obsessively infatuated towards her. But Ashley has been avoiding him. Drugging her soft drink, Tibble rapes Ashley.

The moment Ashley harbors the illusion that she is raped, she is mentally devastated. She is upset that misery, desperation and nightmare encircle her life. In a rapid pace, catastrophic events occur in her life serially. Even the rapist Tibble is killed. Ashley is shocked to know about the murder of her rapist. On the false charge of murdering Tibble, Ashley is arrested. She is put on trial. Everyone is confirmed that Ashley would be executed if she is proved to be the murderer of Tibble. Ashley is confined in custody for further investigation. She expects her father to come to her aid and defence.

Ashley is psychically divided. She has dissociative identity. Personality disorder is her root ailment. She embodies multiple personality disorder. Toni is her alter ego. Alette is the manifestation of her traumatized personality. The torturous and traumatic experience of Toni and Alette refer to Ashley's own trauma. The deviant psyche of Ashley's father and his undying passion for possessing Ashley are the root cause of the traumatizing conditions of female characters like Ashley, Alette and Toni.

The striking aspect their lives in the present condition is that the repressed memories come out sporadically making them the pathetic victims. Ashley passes dark and fearful days in custody. At last, no concrete and authentic proof is found against Ashley. So she is released from custody. Investigation continues. At last it is Alette, another female character who tells everything about how she is sexually abused by her father. Ashley's father is held in custody on the charge of molesting his daughter sexually.

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