

Chapter I: Introduction

Carson McCullers and Her Literary World

Carson McCullers was born Carson Smith in 1917, in Columbia, Georgia. She studied at Columbia and New York universities and at the Julliard School in the late 1930s before marrying James Reeves McCullers in 1938, who was a corporal in the U.S. Army. They soon divorced, only to reconcile and remarry in 1955.

In 1940, when she was twenty-three years old, she published her first novel, *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, which caused a sensation and assured her status as one of the nation's premier prose artists. The book told the sad tale of the desperately lonely people living in a small Southern town during the Depression. Her next novel, *Reflections in a Golden Eye* (1941) proved ahead of its time for its frank exploration of the tribulations of a latently homosexual army captain. Next novel came *The Member of the Wedding* (1946), which she adapted for the stage in 1950 and which won the New York Critics Award. Other works include her collection of short fiction, *The Ballad of the Sad Café* (1951); a play, *The Square Root of Wonderful*; another novel, *Clock Without Hands* (1961); and a collection of articles, stories and poems in *The Mortgaged Heart*.

Her work shares much in common with another Southern writer, Truman Capote, who wrote *Other Voices*, *Other Rooms* and *In Cold Blood*, among others. They both write with a deceptively simple style that relies more on the resonance of its imagery and the richness of its characters than the use of any definite mode of writing, such as that of the Modernists. Capote and McCullers lived together at one time in the prestigious writer's colony, Yaddo, in Saratoga Springs, New York. Though the two started out as friends and she helped him find an agent and an editor, she eventually grew to resent his fame and became a vitriolic enemy. Her work has also been compared to Eudora Welty, another fellow Southern writer of the mid-twentieth century.

Most of McCullers's writing focuses on lonely, disconnected people who seek escape from their stifling, small town existences. Almost all of her work is set in the South, though a few of the short stories from *The Ballad of the Sad Café* are set in New York City. Her writing is simple in its structure and style, but rich in its empathy for the human plight and its ability to weave a complicated tapestry with vivid imagery.

Much of McCullers's ability to describe poignant sadness and discontent probably derived from her own life suffering and unhappiness. She was a fragile person and began to suffer from strokes as a young adult. By the time she was thirty-one, the left side of her body had been paralyzed. There was even a period during which she could only use one finger to type. After their second marriage, her husband killed himself. During the last years of her life, she was unable to even sit at a desk to work. She died in 1967, at the age of fifty.

The Member of the Wedding is set in August 1944, toward the end of World War II, which would finally come to a close the following summer. The war, which began in 1939, had dramatically changed the landscape of the United States during this time, sending American men overseas in the war effort while demanding for the first time in the country's history that women join the work force en masse. The book only deals with the subject of war peripherally, as news reports stream in over the radio. However, the young protagonist, Frankie's, growing awareness of its existence serves as a significant marker for her personal growth.

The present research aims at studying the representation of the protagonist's

psychological trauma in *The Member of the Wedding* by South American writer, Carson McCullers. This research intends to study the character that at the small age predicts the future and becomes worry of being mature.

In the novel *The Member of the Wedding*, Frankie Addams is a young, confused twelve-year-old adolescent living in the American south in 1944. The book is framed around her main frustration with feeling like she belongs to no group, that she is disconnected with the world around her. The daughter of a jeweler and a mother who died in childbirth, she is highly precocious and stubborn, but also naïve and unaware of the reasons for her own emotions. She dominates the main action of the book, which begins on the last Friday in August and ends two days later, obsessed with her brother Jarvis's wedding on Sunday to Janice Evans.

The themes with which McCullers was mainly concerned in the first decade of her career are the spiritual isolation of the individual and the power of love to free him from this condition. Ordinary verbal communication results in failure, it is only through ideal communication, or love that men can hope to escape from their cells. In *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, she dramatizes this idea by causing her protagonist Singer to be a deaf mute. This same idea was presented in her second novel, *Reflection in a Golden Eye*, where spiritual isolation is symbolized in the character of Captain Penderton, who is a homosexual, a sadist and a drug addict. But it was in *The Ballad of the Sad Café* (1967) that the related themes of spiritual isolation and the nature and function of love received their fullest and most mature treatment. Her protagonist here is a lonely manlike giantess, Amelia Evans, who falls in love with a dwarf who is also homosexual, hunchback and tubercular.

In all of McCullers's earlier work is concerned with the loneliness either results from a lack of rapport with other individuals as in *The Square Root of Wonderful* (1958) or as in *The Clock without Hands* it results from a lack of rapport with self. But in her later works such as *The Search for Self* (1969) we find the influence of existential doctrine. In the novel she focuses upon the necessity for moral engagement and upon the importance of choice. The existential crisis is at the very center of the book.

Another crucial theme we can find in her works is of identity, which is related to that of loneliness and also related to that of ideal love. Both Jester and Sherman, the protagonists of *The Search for Self* yearn to identify themselves with something bigger than themselves and outside themselves. It is thus by identifying themselves with something larger than themselves that all of them become conscious of their individual identities.

McCullers's works together offer a striking conformation of her intuition of an estrangement of the self, which cannot be defined in the normative terms of social alienation. In *The Member of Wedding* she executes her definition as the brilliant portrayal of Frankie, becomes diminished by pathos. With this novel McCullers virtually exhausted her insight into self's loneliness in time. Lewis P. Simpson in his essay "Southern Fiction" describes McCullers's works in accordance with the theme of consciousness of self. He says:

McCullers began her works with the idea that "consciousness of self is the first problem the human solves". But in her stories she is never at rest with her own dictum. She sees the problem of self –identity as less and less susceptible of solution. By implication she asks if the self is

definable as an entity. Is the self an abstraction of the human consciousness? Which is another way of asking if the self has become a casualty of history. (187)

McCullers in her early days of her career, according to Simpson, thought consciousness of self is solvable problem. But in course of time she found the problem of self identity lacks resolution. For herself is constructed out of history.

However, *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* is one of McCullers best known work which is regarded as a fitting introduction to her career. Critics debate whether the novel should be read as a realist work or an allegorical one. Many critics often take spiritual isolation as major theme in this novel. Similarly the religious imagery in the novel has been a recurrent topic of critical interest and several critics perceive the character of John Singer to be a Christ like figure. Commentators have also viewed this novel as an attack on social issues specifically Capitalism and Racism.

Louis Robins in his essay “Carson McCullers: The Aesthetic of Pain” explains loneliness as major theme in the novel. The novel is about man’s revolt against his own inner isolation and his urge to express himself as fully possible. For Robins, the novel successfully portrays this theme through four characters’ attempt to communicate with Singer, the central character. He asserts:

The McCullers, I believe, has at its center a fundamental premise: which is that solitude – loneliness – is a human consonant, and cannot possibly be alleviated for very long at a time. But there is no philosophical acceptance of that condition, and none of the joy in it that one finds in, say, Thomas Wolfe or even Hemingway. The solitude is inevitable and always painful. Thus life is a matter of living in pain and art is portraying of anguish. (270)

Robins finds the loneliness in the character of the novel is inevitable. Although their life is full of unbearable pain, this pain is the reality of life. One need to live with that aching solitude and art is depiction of that agony.

In the same manner, Laurie Champion analyzes the character Willie and Singer as black and white Christ respectively in his essay “Black and White Christ in *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*”. He finds the novel as metaphorical representation of Christian symbolism. He compares and contrasts the death of Willie and Singer with the crucifixion of Christ. He argues:

McCullers metaphorically represents Christ’s death, only because Willie hangs up side down, the crucifixion becomes crueler. Willie’s crucifixion, however, is not redemptive. His symbolic death, unlike Christ’s, does not offer salvation to his people. Singer represents the central Christ figure, and like Willie, his death lacks redemption. He forsakes his worshippers and they are left to suffer with feelings and desertion. . . .Singer as Christ demonstrates the individual’s isolation from humanity, her portrayal of Willie as Christ demonstrates humanity’s persecution and betrayal of the Negro race. (51)

Champion reads this novel as the reflection of Christian imagery. He takes Willie as Black Christ who remains innocent but is nonetheless crucified. Whereas Singer’s representation as White Christ, dies as a result of his own desires and he executes his own death, his symbolic “crucifixion”.

Like wise some critics have analyzed this novel from the perspective of racism.

Richard Wright has praised McCullers for unraveling the plight of blacks living in South during the thirties. He could not sense McCullers racist implication and admires her for humanistic treatment of Negroes in his review "Inner Landscape". He says:

To me the most impressive aspect of the novel is the astonishing humanity that enables a white writer, for the first time in southern fiction to handle Negro characters with as much ease and justice of those of her own race....[I]t seems to stem from an attitude toward life which pressures of her environment and embrace white and black humanity in one sweep of apprehension and tenderness. (195)

McCullers presents Doctor Copeland and his family as the Negro characters in the novel. Wright finds her portrait of Negro characters is so straight forward as of her own race.

Though these critics have analyzed this novel from different viewpoints, none of them hitherto acknowledges the representation of marginal voices in the text. It seems there is an urgent need to study the novel from subaltern's perspective. Therefore, the researcher is going to study the novel using subaltern theory and will analyze the portrayal of minorities by an elite writer.

Much of McCullers's ability to describe poignant sadness and discontent probably derived from her own life suffering and unhappiness. She was a fragile person and began to suffer from strokes as a young adult. By the time she was thirty- one, the left side of her body had been paralyzed. There was even a period during which she could only use one finger to type. After their second marriage, her husband killed himself. During the last years of her life, she was unable to even sit at a desk to work. She died in 1967, at the age of fifty.

Frankie Addams in *The Member of the Wedding* is a twelve-year-old adolescent who is on the cusp of sexual and emotional awakening. Her angst comes in the form of extreme isolation and loneliness, because she feels totally disconnected from the world around her. She is not the member of any group. So she becomes obsessed with the fact that she is to be a member of the wedding of her brother Jarvis. She places all her hopes and dreams on this event. She hopes not only to make a connection with another group of human beings, but also to shed herself of her childhood persona.

But the task of escaping childhood is easier said than done. Frankie attempts to make surface changes to give the outward impression that she has suddenly transitioned into a womanlier phase in her life. However, the reality stands that she is incredibly naïve and ill-prepared for the adult world. This is particularly evident when it comes to matters of sex. Frankie is utterly ignorant about the subject and reacts with horror when she experiences or witnesses anything remotely sexual. Through use of imagery, McCullers subtly hints that Frankie has not yet menstruated. And though Frankie probably does not know what menstruation is, she somehow knows to fear the coming of her period. In order to truly reach a greater level of maturity, she must use her experiences in the novel to end her naïveté and become less afraid of adulthood's many harsh realities.

A further reality Frankie must come to understand is what love is and what it means to be in a relationship with another person. In this quest, she is lucky to have the ever wise Berenice, who counsils Frankie on the nature of love. Berenice cautions Frankie not to make the mistake of deluding herself to believe that Jarvis and Janice are going to take her away with them after the wedding.

Frankie is the archetypal coming-of-age character. Young and naïve, she must go

through a relatively brief, but challenging experience of self-awakening in order to grow and learn. So that in the end one part of her has died—the child self—and another older version has grown and blossomed.

In the theme of the novel, this is a classic *bildungsroman* or coming-of-age novel. Therefore, Frankie's sexual development plays a central role in the resolution of the conflict. In the classic form of this kind of story, a young and innocent person on the brink of sexual or emotional discovery takes an abrupt plunge into the world of experience. This often involves a journey of some sorts. Frankie's sexual innocence is challenged by her encounter with the Soldier who attempts to sleep with her. And her emotional ignorance is shattered as she realizes that she was kidding herself to think that she could hook up with her brother and his wife. Both of these events take place within the context of a journey to another place: into town and to Winter Hill, respectively. At the end of the novel, we see a changed character, transformed by the mere forty-eight hour period of the novella.

McCullers makes repeated use of vivid primary colors to describe both the physicality of the characters and the landscape around them. She pays particularly close attention to eye color, repeatedly pointing out that Frankie has gray eyes while Berenice has one brown and one blue. The first sentence of the novel says that the summer during which the events take place is "green" (7). McCullers does not specify what she means by this, but we can assume it has to do with newness and the freshness of youth. Red is another important color, mostly because of its rare usage in the novel. When it does finally appear—describing the color of Frankie's blood and of the Soldier's hair, it has a sexual connotation. The reluctance to mention the color mirrors Frankie's fear of and ignorance about sex and menstruation.

Eyes are the window to the soul for these characters, revealing their secrets and the otherwise hidden facets of their personalities. When Berenice says Frankie is jealous of her brother's marriage, she says she knows because of the color in her eye. Berenice has one glass eye, which is blue, while the other is brown. This split plays on the major theme of division and reveals her inner conflict: she is torn between her desires to remain young and free or to settle down with T.T. Eyes also represent the difficulty in seeing things from another person's point of view, speaking to the theme of the division between people. At one point, Frankie tries on John Henry's glasses. She later comes to the conclusion that it is impossible to understand his point of view.

In Part Two, F. Jasmine reflects that her life is divided into three parts: the past, the immediate present, and the future. This may seem self-evident, but it points to the huge importance of this isolated part of her life as a defining moment in her development. This moment is all about moving forward, up and out...all the way into adulthood. McCullers employs the use of the imagery of clocks in order to add a feeling of suspense and anxiousness about the passage of time. McCullers toys with the concept of linear time, asking us to alter our usual concept of one event leading logically to the next in a straight line. She skips over a large section of time in Part One and then returns to it in Part Two. Furthermore, any of the parts including Janice and Jarvis are never described first hand, rather in reflection after they happen.

After F. Jasmine hits the soldier over the head, she has something of an epiphany in which she connects the moment to all of the other encounters she has had with sex. She has a distinct feeling of uneasiness, which she connects to times in her kitchen, "when,

after the first uncanny moments, she realized the reason for her uneasiness and knew that the ticking off the clock had stopped" (161). But she realizes that there is now no clock to shake and wind. The clock represents her sexuality, her biological clock, and her oncoming menstruation. We know that she has finally reached a certain development by the end of the novel because "the ringing of the bell" (190) interrupts her. The bell becomes the announcement that she has progressed through time and has made it into sexual maturity.

Playing cards are components in the theme of rules and regulations, because card games are governed by rules. Frankie, John Henry and Berenice play cards twice during the novella, and in the end, we learn about another series of failed bridge games. In the first game, Frankie is exasperated with John Henry for not being able to follow the rules when he refuses to put a jack next to a queen. What Frankie is really upset about is sex, because she knows that John Henry understands the sexual connection between the jacks and the queens. As we later learn, he once removed the jacks from the deck, and then the queens as well, so they could keep the jacks company. This in turn ruined the game, literally because the deck was not complete, but figuratively because he took the sex out of game. This informs us that sex is a fundamental quality of the game of life.

John Henry, Berenice and F. Jasmine hear a piano tuner working in the neighborhood. He keeps playing scales, but never actually finishes them, always leaving a dissonant sound as he stops on the last note between the G and A notes. F. Jasmine remarks that, "there is a curious thing that seems to make the difference between G and A all the difference in the world" (129). This remark touches on the dissonance that plagues her very existence. As she hangs on a hinge, waiting for what she wants to finally come to her. And what she desires is unity, or consonance, rather. She marvels that only one-step can divide her from that feeling.

Chapter II: Trauma as a Theoretical Tool

Etymologically, the term 'trauma' is derived from a Greek medical term denoting a mental condition caused by a severe shock, especially when harmful effects last for a long time. The term trauma refers to the action shown by the abnormal mind to the body, which provides a method of interpretation of disorder, distress, and destruction. Freudian concept of psychoanalysis is the major foundation for trauma theory with various accounts of memory and psychological disorder. Trauma theory, on the other hand, is a broad category which includes diverse fields with the specific focus on psychic, historical, cultural, philosophical, ethical and aesthetic aspects about the nature, subject and representation of traumatized events and situations. And, all these concerns of trauma theory "range from the public and historical to the private and memorial" (Luckhurst 497).

The etymological meaning of trauma is related to the physical laceration and wound but the meaning of the same term can be approved differentially. *Illustrated Oxford Dictionary* defines 'trauma' as "emotional shock following a stressful event, something leading to long-term neurosis" (885) which is extremely horrible and cause us to fell upset and anxious, often making him/her unable to act mentally. Gradually, the theorists extended trauma to denote those who were wounded and deeply infected by the problematic of complicated kind. Such a troubled psyche is called traumatic psyche and this psychic trouble of people is related with psychic trauma.

The analysis of psychic trauma does not complete without mentioning the ideas of Cathy Caruth, a leading trauma theorist. In *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*, she argues about the idea of 'latency,' in other words, when trauma first takes place is uncertain, but that "the survivors' uncertainty is not a simple amnesia; for the event returns, as trend points out insistently and against their will" (6). She emphasizes that trauma can hardly be forgotten. She states on the part of latency of the temporary delay, which should not be misunderstood as repression because trauma by its very nature displays with a vengeance over a period of time, especially when triggered by a similar event. The term 'latency' means the period during which the effects of the experience are not apparent in trauma event. It has been described by Freud "as the successive moment from an event to its repression to its return" (Breuer and Freud 7). Caruth opines that the victim of a crash is never fully conscious during the accident itself. The experience of trauma, the fact of latency, would thus seem to consist, not in the forgetting of a reality that can never be fully known, but "as inherent latency within the experience itself" (8).

Trauma, for Caruth, is incomprehensible by nature and by the same token it is referential as well. The subtlest fact concerning it is referential. Caruth claims that victim of trauma, however, reluctant to express one's hidden traumatic truth, unknowingly reveals certain personal truth. Caruth in this concern writes:

By turning away as we have suggested, from a notion of traumatic experience a neurotic distortion, [. . .] Trauma is not experienced as a mere repression of defense, but as a temporal delay that carries the individual beyond the shock of the first moment. The trauma is a repeated suffering of the event but it is also a continual leaving of its site. The traumatic re-experiencing of the event thus *carries with it* what Dori Laub calls the "collapse of witnessing"; the impossibility of knowing that first

constituted it. (10)

Caruth identifies trauma as a momentous shock which is experienced throughout the passage of time. It is not 'repression' of the event but rather 're-experiencing' of the event. Furthermore, Caruth argues that latency is not so much concerned with the return of trauma as a departure from the knowledge and awareness of trauma: "For history to be 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 a history can be grasped only in the very inaccessibility of its occurrence" (18). Rather than the historicity, she more actively focuses on the individual psychic disorder out of certain shock in the past.

Ruth Leys, one of the pioneer theorists of psychological trauma, elaborates the idea of Sigmund Freud- -anxiety and repression- -and Cathy Caruth- -latency- -and focuses on psychic distress in her book *Trauma: A Genealogy*. Moreover, for the more precise and specific knowledge about the psychic trauma, the idea of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) must be at the core. The concept of PTSD was officially recognized by the American Psychiatric Association in 1980. PTSD is the human disorder of mind after the post-traumatic period like Vietnam War. Leys describes the concept of PTSD:

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is fundamentally a disorder of memory.

The idea is that, owing to the motions of terror and surprise caused by certain events, the mind is split or dissociated: it is unable to register the wound to the psyche because the ordinary mechanism of awareness and cognition are destroyed. As a result, the victim is unable to recollect and integrate the hurtful experience in normal consciousness; instead, s/he is haunted or possessed by intrusive traumatic memories. The experience of trauma, fixed or frozen in time, refuses to be represented as past, but is perpetually reexperienced in a painful, dissociated, traumatic present. All the symptoms characteristics of PTSD- -flashbacks, nightmares and other re-experiences, emotional numbing, depression, guilt, automatic arousal, explosive violence or tendency to hyperpervigilance- - are thought to be the result of this fundamental dissociation. (2)

Furthermore, PTSD is the historical construct, which is the result of the traumatic event and experience in the historical period and its surrounding. In the post war scenario,

people especially who were the observers suffered from mental breakdown, neurotic distraction, and the catastrophic hangover. Because of such horrific events they are still suffering from the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in psychic level.

Historic-Cultural Trauma

For more genealogical and precise knowledge about trauma, an individual's psychic distress should be analyzed in relation to historical trauma. The word 'historical' usually describes something that is connected with the past or with the study of history or something that really happened in the past and is likely to be remembered. The word historicism means the theory that culture and social events and situations can be explained in history.

While dealing with the historical trauma, Dominick LaCapra, a leading theorist of historical trauma comes to the fore. LaCapra, to clarify his intention about writing, in the preface of *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, writes:

In my account, moreover, not only should transhistorical or structural trauma be distinguished from historical trauma and its attendant losses; it should also be correlated with absence in contrast to loss, notably the absence of undivided origins, absolute foundations, or perfect totalizing solutions to problems. Failure to make these distinctions eventuates in a misleadingly hypothesized notion of constitutive loss or lack, which may well be a secular variant of original sin. (xiv)

What does the writing of history have to do with the writing of trauma? How can a historical writing of trauma attest to the specificity of a past event while attending to its ongoing reverberation (echo) in the present? These are some questions examined in LaCapra's *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. As the comma between them suggests, writing history (writing about past) and writing trauma (conveying the past's resistance to writing) respectively symbolize his main concern about trauma: 'acting out' and 'working through' a traumatic past, on the 'inevitability of transference' and of 'second-hand trauma' in this past's reception, and on the impasses of deconstruction with regard to historical trauma.

LaCapra proposes a historical approach to trauma that would include the particularity of historical wounds, while recognizing the way in which this unguidable past continues to shape our current experiential and conceptual landscape. However, this past and its losses would also be subject to a collective process of mourning, 'working through' and moving on, a course that would finally release us from a cycle of continuous retraumatization and allow us to turn to future-oriented ethical and political projects. In this regard, LaCapra further writes:

In post-traumatic acting out in which one is haunted or possessed by the past and performatively caught up in the compulsive repetition of traumatic scenes—scenes in which the past returns and the future is blocked or fatalistically caught up in a melancholic feedback loop. In 'acting out' tenses implode, and it is as if one were back there in the past reliving the traumatic scene. Any duality (or double inscription) of time (past and present or future) is experientially collapsed or productive only of aporias and double binds [. . .] 'Working through' is an articulatory practice: to the extent one works through trauma (as well as transferential relations in general), one is able to distinguish between past and present and to recall in memory that something happened to one (or one's people) back then while realizing that one is living here and now with openings to a future. (21-22)

In traumatic memory, the event somehow registers and may actually be realized in the present. In acting out, a tendency to relive the past in the form of dreams or hallucinations creates traumas. And an aspect of working through includes both back there and here at the same time, and one can easily distinguish them.

LaCapra more actively associates working through as the medium of remembering traumatic event. Working through includes the channelization or obliteration of such traumatic acting out. These processes of working through include lamentation or mourning of critical thought or practices that are recognized as traumatic ones. It requires going back to problem, working them over and perhaps transforming the understanding of them. For instance, "Germans wanted to do what they did to the Jews because their culture had made them almost Hitlersque in their anti-Semitism, but they nonetheless bore full responsibility for what they did because they wanted- and not forced- to do it" (115). Thus, working through includes perpetrators and victims in the past, working with that at the present. LaCapra prefers 'working through' of trauma to 'acting out' because 'working through' helps traumatized community to decrease the intensity of trauma, where as 'acting out' intensifies traumatic burden.

LaCapra, while focusing on the historical trauma, explores more specifically in

his book *History in Transit: Experience, Identity, Critical Theory*. He distinguishes between traumatic event and traumatic experience:

The event in historical trauma is punctual and datable. It is situated in the past. The experience is not punctual and has an elusive aspect insofar as it is related to the past that has not passed away- - the past that intrusively invades the present and may block or obviate possibilities in the future. (55)

Thus, trauma is related to anxiety which can be both the event and experience; only the difference is in the punctuation of occurrence. It is all because of the transitory nature of the history because "history in the sense of historiography cannot escape transit unless it negates itself by denying its own historicity and becomes identified with transcendence of fixation" (1).

LaCapra distinguishes historical trauma from the trans-historical or structural trauma. He shows different kinds of testimonies, events and traces to depict the real picture of traumatized history. While portraying the historiographic traumatic event and experience, he opines:

In historical trauma (or in the historical, as distinguished from trans-historical, dimension of trauma), the traumatizing events may at least in principle be determined with high degree of determinacy and objectivity. This would include the holocaust, slavery, apartheid, child abuse, or rape. In practice the determination of such events in the past poses problems of varying degree of difficulty for the obvious reason that our mediated access to such events is through various traces or residues- - memory, testimony, documentation, and representations or artifacts. (116-17)

LaCapra opines that in historical trauma, the event should objectify the certain historically traumatized situation with higher stress. Those events can be considered as historical traumas which can leave scars in present because of various reasons; like testimony, documents, memory or other artifacts. The traumatized events like Nazi genocide, Nigerian Civil War, apartheid and slavery can be exemplified under historical traumas.

LaCapra in *Representing Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma* describes two important implications of his view regarding the historical trauma. Firstly, trauma provides a method of rethinking postmodern and post structural theories with the historical context. LaCapra writes: "The Post-Modern and Post-Holocaust become mutually intertwined issues that are best addressed in relation to each other" (188). Secondly, he provides the theories in order to elaborate historicity of the traumatized events and experiences. Canonical texts should not help permanently install an ideological but should, rather, "help one to foreground ideological problems and to work through them critically" (25).

James Berger, a critic, in "Trauma and Literary Theory," writes that LaCapra is concerned primarily with the return of the repressed as discourse, rather than with physical returns (such as genocidal repetition in Cambodia and Bosnia). According to him, in the structure of traumatic experience the repressed is said to have returned in an uncontrollably wild way. The victim of trauma while undergoing traumatic experience works as if s/he is a puppet of his/her hidden urges and impulses. S/he hardly becomes the agent of his/her own experience instead of pursuing for certain creative and fresh venture, the victim of trauma repeats the similar things as though s/he is too compulsive

to do it. Berger comments on trauma theory basing on *Representing Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma* of LaCapra:

But “trauma” is not simply another disaster. The idea of catastrophe as trauma provides a method of interpretation, for it posits that the effects of an event may be dispersed and manifested in many forms not obviously associated with the events. Moreover, this dispersal occurs across time, so that an event experienced as shattering may actually produce its full impact only years later. This representational and temporal hermeneutics of the symptoms has powerful implications for contemporary theory [. . .] The idea of trauma also allows for an interpretation of cultural symptoms—of the growths, wounds, scars on a social body, and its compulsive, repeated actions. For instance, a sense of the dynamics of trauma offers a new understanding of the insistent returns of family disasters on talk shows that goes beyond discussion of market share and public taste. (572-73)

Following the idea of LaCapra, Berger treats trauma as an event which can be manifested variously as symptoms of dreams, amnesia, shattering family, fragmenting social structure and forming national disasters. Although trauma is not a distinct disaster, it is the regularity of the past catastrophe. Trauma, thus, is effect of past covering from private to public in the present.

Thus, LaCapra’s theory of trauma focuses on three topics: the return of the repressed, acting out versus working through and the dynamics of transference in relation to the historicity of the events and experience. For the further analysis, it is necessary to deal with other trauma theorists like Kali Tal, Avishai Marglit, Jeffrey C. Alexander, Neil J. Smelser, and other related critics and theorists.

Kali Tal in *World of Hurt: Reading the Literature of Trauma* defines trauma as the threat to life or bodily integrity or personal encounter with death and violence. Trauma is a life-threatening event that displaces one’s preconceived notion about the world. So, she writes about trauma:

The writings of trauma survivors comprise a distinct “literature of trauma.” Literature of trauma is defined by the identity of its author. Literature of trauma holds as it centres the reconstruction and recuperation of the traumatic experience, but it is also actively engaged in an ongoing dialogue with the writings and representations of non-traumatized authors. It comprises a marginal literature similar to that produced by feminists, African-Americans, and queer writers – in fact, it often overlaps with these literatures, so that distinct subgenres of literature of trauma may be found in each of these communities.(17)

The literary works on trauma revolve around the traumatized or disturbed events and situations. Generally, those traumatized authors identify trauma writings. Trauma writings are similar to those marginalized writings of females, African-Americans and third world people.

This brief survey indicates some of concerns that can be conceptualized under the category of trauma. It stretches from psychic life to public history, reading materials that can include romantic poetry, psychiatric histories, accounts of sexual abuses, memories, testimonies, documentaries, the symptoms, silences, omissions and so many other aspects

in individual psyches and national histories. Trauma theory can be understood as a 'terrain' where different critical approaches converge. In a way, it is cross-disciplinary in which different disciplines contest with each other.

For the further analysis of trauma theory and its approach, the cultural aspect, and the necessity to study the cultural side of trauma is the most significant factor. Jeffrey C. Alexander, a professor of sociology at Yale University, foregrounded the concept of 'cultural trauma' through his essay "Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma". The main objective of Alexander's cultural trauma is to show ongoing affair: "Societies expand the circle of the we" (1). According to Alexander, throughout the twentieth century, people always have focused on the traumatic situation caused by an event, an experience, bloodshed, violence, and war in relation to certain organization or institution. The shift of concern from individual to collective, to a certain cultural location is the foreseen demonstration. Because of this kind of shifting, people think sociologically. In the traumatic level too, the common experience and event is internalized by certain community or group. Thus, trauma is something covering the matter not only minds: "For trauma is not something naturally existing; it is something constructed by society" (2).

In general, psychologists and sociologists agree that trauma and event are 'separate'. Trauma is an act of signification, hence something social, and event is an act of occurrence therefore something individual. Alexander, as a sociologist writes:

Cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to horrendous event that leaves indelible mark upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways. Cultural trauma is first of all an empirical, scientific concept, suggesting new meaningful and casual relationship between previously unrelated events, structures, perceptions and actions. (1)

Alexander indicates that cultural trauma is a result of the group practicing for distinct collective identity. The aim with Alexander's notion of cultural trauma is to criticize both what he calls 'lay trauma theory,' which focuses that "traumas are naturally occurring events that shatter an individual or collective actors' sense of well being" and to offer a perspective for considering social and cultural processes of collective traumas (2).

Moreover, Alexander gives cultural trauma an ethical dimension although he does not explicitly use the notion of ethics. So far, Alexander gives the social process of cultural trauma as an ethical dimension though he does not address directly about ethics:

For traumas to emerge at the level of the collectivity, social cries must become cultural cries. Events are one thing, 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 core of the collectivity's sense of its own identity. Collective actors "decide" to represent social pain as a fundamental threat to their sense of who they are, where they came from, and where they want to go. (10)

Thus, Alexander's aim to deny that trauma is grounded in something objective (external or real), becomes a way of stressing the ethical character of the cultural trauma process. However, one of the key questions is how to expand the circle of 'we' and still withhold the ethical imperative.

The collective consciousness is not the final to determine the event and

representation in 'trauma process' but it is agents who do. So, the crux of his idea can be as follows:

Experiencing trauma" can be understood as a sociological process that defines a painful injury to the collectivity, establishes the victim, attributes responsibility, and distributes the ideal and material consequences. Insofar as traumas are so experienced, and thus imagined and represented, the collective identity will become significantly revised. This identity revision means that there will be a searching re-remembering of the collective past, for memory is not only social and fluid but deeply connected to the contemporary sense of the self. Identities are continuously constructed and secured not only by the facing the present and the future but also by reconstructing the collectivity's earlier life. (22)

Cultural traumas are experienced, imagined and symbolized as a sociological domain. Collective identity is the main factor of such trauma. Peoples' search for the collective life in the present and future evokes cultural trauma. The identity revision is the symbol of the traumatic events ever seen.

Another prominent theorist Neil J. Smelser in his essay "Psychological Trauma and Cultural Trauma" appreciates cultural trauma comparing it with psychological trauma. He brings the relevance and generates insights about cultural trauma. He stresses both the promise and limitation of theory and research at the psychological level for understanding it at the cultural level. He, in doing so, does not avoid psychological reductionism. He prepares the avenues of psychic trauma while defining cultural trauma. Smelser relates his idea with Sigmund Freud's psychic trauma and its relation to hysteria: "Freud conceived of hysteria as having a definite cause, course of development, outcome, and cure" (32). Smelser further supports that the memory related with an event or experience repressed from consciousness involves catharsis and working through which transfers into the memory of trauma as argued by Freud. Moreover, for Smelser some events like natural disasters, massive population depletion, and genocide are themselves traumatic.

Smelser shifts his idea to cultural trauma demanding prerequisites of cultural trauma. As he argues that several accomplishments should be made before an event gets termed as cultural trauma. These situations are as follows: firstly, the event must be remembered or made to be remembered. Secondly, the memory of such event must be culturally relevant, i.e. it must work as integrity in affected society. Finally, the memory of the event must be associated with negative aspects like disgust, shame, filth, horror or guilt. For example, American history is full of such aspects, such as the institution of slavery qualifies for a cultural trauma. Thus, for cultural trauma, there should be traumatized historical events. In this concern Smelser adds:

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 event or situation arises. [. . .] Historical events that may not be traumatic for other societies are more likely to be traumas in afflicted societies. [. . .] then, that cultural trauma is for the most part historically made, not born. (36-37)

Smelser expands cultural trauma relating it with psychological and social trauma. Some historical events can be regarded as both cultural and social as well as the psychological

ones. For instance, The Great Depression of Thirties qualifies this kind of trauma. This historic event is not limited within the boundary as it traumatized at various levels: at social level, at psychological level, at cultural level and at national level: “Furthermore, once a historical memory is established as a national trauma for which the society has to be held in some way responsible, its status as trauma has to be continuously and actively sustained and reproduced in order to continue in that status” (38).

Smelser, in this process also, shows the difference between cultural trauma and psychological trauma in terms of the mechanism. The mechanisms related with psychological trauma are the intrapsychic dynamics of defense, adaptation, coping and working through but the mechanisms at the cultural level are mainly those of social agents and contending groups. Psychological adaptation, intrapersonal emotions, and working with individual’s depression are some major symptoms of psychological trauma. Anxiety, mental disorder, guilt, shame, humiliation, disgust, anger are the category of psychic situation which, according to Freud, work to communicate between ‘perceptual apparatus’ and ‘adaptive apparatus.’ While, certain community, group of agencies/institutions, and mass affected out of some historical event is related with cultural trauma. Presenting all these ideas and evidences, Smelser gives the formal definition of cultural trauma:

A memory accepted and publicly given credence by a relevant membership group and evoking an event or situation which is a) laden with negative effect, b) represented as indelible, and c) regarded as threatening a society’s existence or violating one or more of its fundamental cultural presuppositions. (44)

For a trauma, a related group of same race evoking some horrible event or situation should be at the core. Furthermore, Smelser necessitates three kinds of requirements within such event: full of negativity, having irremovable motif, and the disorder of the fundamental cultural presuppositions.

With the passage of time, trauma theories have been getting broader. Such practices have added more fuel to this new theory a speedy establishment in the literary avenue. Catastrophic events like WWII, September 11 or other terrorism have grown the necessity of such traumatic analysis more relevant to understand the national, societal or individual existential undercurrents. Great Depression was one of such event in history, which had a great impact on the nation, society and individual psychologically. It is true that nation or social trauma have at the very root individuals' suffering. This work of fiction by Carson has a drill subtly into the psychic state of the different characters, though societal traumatic element on the housemaid, Berenice could be unignorable. It is worth mentionable here that trauma is the affliction of powerless.

So far, psychological traumatic portraiture of the protagonist is the real concern of this thesis, Judith Herman in her work *Trauma and Recovery* points out an exact depiction of such a subject. Frankie (name changes during the course of the narrative) undergoing on:

Traumatized people feel utterly abandoned, utterly alone, cast out of the human and divine systems of care and protection that sustain life. Thereafter, a sense of alienation, of dislocation, pervades every relationship, from the most intimate familial bonds to the most abstract affiliations of community and religion. (52)

Frankie is having such lonesome and cast out feeling for a long time all along the storyline.

The novel is heavily interspersed with the adjectives like "unjoined"(56) , "crazy" (26), "Freakish" (71) "Queer" (87) and other similar signifying terms to bring out the very psychology of the subject. All her belief systems about the world come collapse at a thud, engineering in her a crazy solution i.e. to escape with her married brothers to that distant, Alaska. Here, Herman's apt words make a perfect theoretical tool to understand the very turmoil state of the psyche of the same:

Traumatic events call into question basic human relationships. They breach the attachments of family, friendship, love, and community. They shatter the construction of the self that is formed and sustained in relation to others. They undermine the belief systems that give meaning to human experience. (51)

One of the main aspects that can be found in trauma literature is that such works would utilize stylistic features like fragmented narrative voice, indirection, temporality and chronology collapse, weird characters and images all to do with the traumatic atmosphere establish. Often the protagonist, Frankie's speech would not come from the real self of her, but some other dissociated self-carries out all behavior and conversation on behalf of her with the characters. A waking dream, indirection and contextless response techniques are aplenty in the novel. Judith finds in such trauma works, "traumatic memories lack verbal narrative and context; rather, they are encoded in the form of vivid sensations and images"(38). Frankie's remark as her brother and Janice walk in the house before getting married come as "queer" (87), sounds this is not her real self remarking and, improper to the marriage context. Rather it would reveal something queer image agent lodging deep in her, and working such comment for her. Such formal qualities have been utilized in much post modern literature especially in trauma works to capture the traumatic psychology of the involved.

Chapter III: Trauma in *The Member of the Wedding*

Traumatic Overview of the Novel

The Member of the Wedding is set in August 1944, toward the end of World War II, which would finally come to a close the following summer. The novel provides the psychological trauma of the main character Frankie from beginning to the end. The war, which began in 1939, had dramatically changed the landscape of the United States during this time, sending American men overseas in the war effort while demanding for the first time in the country's history that women join the work force en masse. The book only deals with the subject of war peripherally, as news reports stream in over the radio. However, the young protagonist, Frankie's, growing awareness of its existence serves as a significant marker for her personal growth.

Frankie is not able to adjust with the grown up age. She thinks that she is still young but her psychological behavior shows that she is already grown up. The narrator understands this and says:

There was a watery kitchen mirror hanging above the sink. Frankie looked, but her eyes were grey as they always were. This summer she has grown so tall that she was almost a big freak, and her shoulders were narrow, her legs too long. She wore a pair of blue track shorts, a B. V. D. undervest, and she was barefooted. (8)

The main action of the novel takes place over a few days in late August. It tells the story of 12-year-old tomboy Frankie Addams, who feels disconnected from the world—an "unjoined person". She dreams of going away with her brother and his bride-to-be on their honeymoon, following them to the Alaskan wilderness. She has no friends in the small Southern town in which she lives. Her mother died giving birth to Frankie and her father is a distant, uncomprehending figure. Her closest companions are the family's African American maid, Berenice Sadie Brown, and her six-year-old cousin, John Henry West.

Frankie has the psychological trauma being the grown up in the sense that she takes differently when her brother, Jarvis, is going into seal in the knot of matrimonial alliance:

For only yesterday Frankie had never thought seriously about a wedding. She knew that her only brother, Jarvis, was to be married. He had become engaged to a girl in Winter Hill just before he went to Alaska. Jarvis was a corporal in the army and he had spent almost two years in Alaska. (11)

The novel is more concerned with the psychology of the three main characters and an evocation of the setting than with incident. Frankie does, however, have a brief and troubling encounter with a soldier. Her hopes of going away having been disappointed — her fantasy destroyed — a short coda reveals how her personality has changed. It also recounts the fate of John Henry West, and Berenice Sadie Brown's future plans.

Regarded by many critics as Carson McCullers's most accessible work, *The Member of the Wedding* is a sensitive portrayal of twelve-year-old Frankie Addams. McCullers was able to finish the novel with the help of a Guggenheim Fellowship, a National Institute of Arts and Letters grant, and several summers at Yaddo, a writers' colony in New York. Much of the material for the novel is autobiographical. The town in which Frankie lives is based on McCullers's hometown of Columbus, Georgia.

McCullers's father, like Frankie's, was a jeweler, and her family had employed African-American servants in her childhood home.

Many of Frankie's feelings of awkwardness are drawn from McCullers's own memories of what it was like to be twelve years old. She, like Frankie, felt like a gangly misfit whose tomboyish ways made it difficult to fit in with boys or girls her age.

At the urging of her friend Tennessee Williams, McCullers's adapted the novel into a play. The play was highly successful, opening on Broadway in 1950 and lasting for fourteen months and 501 performances. In addition, the play received a number of prestigious awards. Despite the popular and critical success of the play, most critics agree that some of the insight into the characters is lost on the stage. It is just such insights, along with believable characters, a smooth writing style, and an un sentimental tone that continue to impress readers and critics alike.

When she was only twenty-three Carson McCullers's first novel *The Member of the Wedding*, created a literary sensation. She is very special, once of American's superlative writers who conjure up a vision of existence as terrible as it is real, who takes us on shattering voyages into the depths of the spiritual isolation that underlies the human condition.

"Rarely has emotional turbulence been so delicately conveyed," said The New York Times of Carson McCullers's achingly real novel about Frankie Addams, a bored twelve-year-old madly jealous of her brother's impending marriage. Frankie was afraid of the dark and envious of the older girls. However, as F. Jasmine, in a pink dress, she looked sixteen. No longer a child, she accepted a date with a red-haired soldier and purchased a sophisticated gown for the wedding. F. Jasmine had plans. Bantam 1985 Paperback edition:

What makes this story so unusual is the fact that most of it takes place through the medium of desultory conversations between three really weird people sitting in an even weirder kitchen. Nothing or almost nothing occurs here, and yet every page is filled with a sense of something having happened, happening, and about to happen. This in itself is a considerable technical feat; and, beyond that, there is magic in it. (3). Saturday Review. March 30, 1946.

Out of the poignant loneliness of adolescence and the strange bond between Negro and white in the American South, Carson McCullers has fashioned one of the most beautiful plays ever to appear on the Broadway stage. In the role of Bernice Sadie Brown, the colored cook who mothers the motherless Frankie Addams, and who is so magnificently portrayed by that great actress and great human being Ethel Waters, Mrs. McCullers has created a figure on the classic scale. As Brooks Atkinson has written (in the New York Times): "Everything of basic importance to the truth of life seems to have been gathered up into the personal experience of this simple housekeeper who has loved and lost more than once in her lifetime and can now view the trouble of her juniors with wisdom"(2).

Writing in The Saturday Review, John Mason Brown said of *The Member of the Wedding*: "Mrs. McCullers's study of the loneliness of an over-imaginative young Georgian girl is no ordinary play. It is felt, observed, and phrased with exceptional sensitivity. It deals with the torturing dreams, the hungry egoism, and the heartbreak of childhood in a manner as rare as it is welcome. Quite aside from the magical

performances its production includes, it has a magic of its own. The script shines with an unmistakable luster. Plainly it is the work of an artist, of an author who does not stoop to the expected stencils and who sees people with her own eyes rather than through borrowed spectacles. Common speech becomes uncommon in Mrs. McCullers's usage of it. The girl Frankie, the Negro cook, and the young boy, are as vividly drawn as any characters to have come out of the contemporary theatre." -

Psychological trauma is the condition of human beings which is extremely painful and destructive. Once one has such experience, he/she can never come out of this. At the time of grown-up, such behaviors are seen in the persons. Keith Green and Jill LeBihan write: "The traumas that have been repressed are extremely painful and damaging the unconscious acts as a protective mechanism to prevent the subject's realization of these agonies" (149).

Frankie Addams is a young, confused twelve-year-old adolescent living in the American south in 1944. The book is framed around her main frustration with feeling like she belongs to no group, that she is disconnected with the world around her. The daughter of a jeweler and a mother who died in child birth, she is highly precocious and stubborn, but also naïve and unaware of the reasons for her own emotions. She spends the main action of the book, which begins on the last Friday in August and ends two days later, obsessed with her brother Jarvis's wedding on Sunday to Janice Evans.

As the story begins, she expresses her fears, anxiety and confusion about marriage to her housekeeper, Berenice and her six-year-old cousin, John Henry. Berenice passes off her feelings as masked jealousy. Frankie later asks John Henry to sleep over, claiming he looks scared. However, as we know, Frankie is really the one who feels that way. She is relieved to have a person to sleep next to, since she used to sleep next to her father, until he recently said she was too old.

In the first part of the novella, the narrator describes the following Saturday morning, but then skips right to the early evening of that day. Only in the second part does McCullers return to Saturday afternoon to describe the events that took place. Before then, we are given a lot of character background about Frankie. We hear about her various attempts to become more worldly, to pay attention to things like the fact that World War II rages all around her. Through her various brushes with sexual experiences, we discover how completely unaware of the facts of life she is. Eventually, Frankie has a revelation that she belongs to her brother and his future wife.

Frankie has psychological trauma that can be seen in her behavior in the beginning of the novel. Although she is with her family, she does not feel she is the member of the family. We can understand her psychological trauma in this way: "this was the summer when for a long time she had not been a member. She belonged to no club and was a member of nothing in the world. Frankie had become an unjoined person who hung around in doorways, and she was afraid" (7).

A Traumatized Subject

In historical trauma, individual's psychic distress should be analyzed in relation to historical experience of crisis. The word 'historical' usually describes something that is connected with the past or with the study of history or something that really happened in the past and is likely to be remembered. The word historicism means the theory that culture and social events and situations can be explained in history. Lois Tyson says:

Trauma is also used, of course, to refer to a painful experience that scars

us psychologically. Thus, I might experience the childhood trauma of losing sibling to illness, accidental death, or suicide and, in later life, experience the trauma, or crisis, of being flooded by all the guilt, denial, and conflict I have repressed concerning the death. (21)

The traumatic behavior, thus, are prevalent throughout the life. If anyone wants to remove them consciously, in the unconscious level they are not able to do so. In the novel, Frankie, has been suffering from the past trauma. Therefore she shows such strange behavior with other people. She is closer to the children than her peer. It may be because of her childhood trauma of losing her mother. the author writes about Frankie:

Now, as F. Jasmine (Frankie has become now F. Jasmine) crossed her yard, she saw in her mind's eye the swarming children and heard from down the street their chanting cries – and this morning, for the first time in her life, she heard a sweetness in these sounds, and she was touched. And, strange to say, her own home yard which she had hated touched her a little too; she felt she had not seen it for a long time. (64)

Thus, the children's sounds are sweet for her because she has experienced her childhood from them.

Similarly, Frankie has the traumatic experience of the past that she wants to be male like characters. Her traumatic behavior always drives her to be the male. Therefore, she feels jealousy towards her brother who is going to be married. Her use of the weapon knife shows that she has been suffering from the not-being-male. This type of manner can be looked through the traumatic wound:

She (Frankie) was walking home when all at once there was a shock in her as though a thrown knife struck and shivered in her chest. F. Jasmine stopped dead in her tracks, one foot still raised, and at first she could not take in just what had happened. There was something sideways and behind her that had flushed across the very corner edge of her left eye; she had half-seen something, a dark double shape, in the alley she had just that moment passed. (89)

In this way, Frankie walks around the house but she is shocked by the past experience and wants to fulfill it by the knife. Here, knife symbolizes two meanings. One is the dream symbol of desiring to be male and the second is the representation of the aggression, she feels.

Dream Symbols: Psychological Reaction

Dream Symbols are the expression of repressed psychological effects in the dream during sleep. When one has such bitter experiences in the day time, he/she cannot express frankly. They are remained repressed in the mind in the unconscious level. Lois Tyson writes:

During sleep, the unconscious is free to express itself, and it does so in our dreams. However, even in our dreams there is some censorship, some protection against frightening insights into our repressed experiences and emotions, and that protection takes the form of dream distortion. (18)

Therefore, in dreams no one is free to express the ideas. What comes in the dream it is the manifestation of the psychological repression.

In the literature, we find such expression of dreams in the writing. The characters use such things in the expression without knowing that they have used. In other words

they do not have control over the words. Tyson further says: "Male imagery, or phallic symbols, can include towers, rockets, guns, arrows, swords, and the like. Similarly, female imagery is different from the male ones. She says:

Female imagery can include caves, rooms, walled-in gardens (like the ones we see in paintings representing the Virgin Mary), cups, or enclosures and containers of any kind. If the image can be a stand-in for the womb, then it might be functioning as female imagery. (20)

In the novel, Frankie has many dream symbols which are the reflection of the psychological trauma or repression.

At the country house of an uncle of John Henry, Uncle Charles, she had seen old blindered mules going round and round in the same circle, grinding juice from the sugar cane for syrup. In the sameness of her tracks that summer, the old Frankie had somehow resembled that country mule; in town she browsed around the counters of the ten-cent store, or sat on the front row of the Palace show, or hung around her father's store, or stood on street corners watching soldiers. (59)

Here, psychological dream symbols are functioning in her expression of words. The 'house' is the example of the female imagery. In the house she has experienced that she wants to be free but she finds the house is the place where she feels entrapped. The word mule also refers to the mixture of the society. That one feels unconsciously moving without the specific purpose.

Moreover, as Ruth leys pointed out the symptomatic characteristic of PTSD, this is a nightmarish analogy. "Old blindered mules" represent her existential angst, her desperation of not being free. There was no way for her to escape from this hopeless state. Her suitcase is always ready to take a flight from that ugly house.

Instances of re-experience symptom under PTSD can be found in similar sense. "Those moths could fly anywhere. Yet they keep hanging around the windows of the house"(20). Moths like mules are not free, but anchored to the windows. Repeated use of such images though different in different occasion captures her perpetually re-experiencing in a painful, dissociated, traumatic present. Caruth, too, points out trauma is not 'repression' of the event but rather 're-experiencing' of the event.

Frankie Addams is a twelve-year-old adolescent who is on the cusp of sexual and emotional awakening. Her angst comes in the form of extreme isolation and loneliness, because she feels totally disconnected from the world around her. She is not the member of any group. So she becomes obsessed with the fact that she is to be a member of the wedding of her brother Jarvis. She places all her hopes and dreams on this event. She hopes not only to make a connection with another group of human beings, but also to shed herself of her childhood persona.

The three of them sat at the table again and Berenice dealt the cards for three-handed bridge. Berenice had been the cook since Frankie could remember. She was very black and broad-shouldered and short. She always said that she was thirty-five years old, but she had been saying that at least three years. Her hair was parted, plaited, and greased close to the skull, and she had a flat and quiet face. There was only one thing wrong about Berenice - her left eye was bright blue glass. It stared out fixed and wild from her quiet, coloured face and why she had wanted a blue eye

nobody human would ever know. Her right eye was dark and sad. (9)

But the task of escaping childhood is easier said than done. Frankie attempts to make surface changes to give the outward impression that she has suddenly transitioned into a womanlier phase in her life. However, the reality stands that she is incredibly naïve and ill-prepared for the adult world. This is particularly evident when it comes to matters of sex. Frankie is utterly ignorant about the subject and reacts with horror when she experiences or witnesses anything remotely sexual. Through use of imagery, McCullers subtly hints that Frankie has not yet menstruated. And though Frankie probably does not know what menstruation is, she somehow knows to fear the coming of her period. In order to truly reach a greater level of maturity, she must use her experiences in the novel to end her naïveté and become less afraid of adulthood's many harsh realities.

A further reality Frankie must come to understand is what love is and what it means to be in a relationship with another person. In this quest, she is lucky to have the ever wise Berenice, who counsels Frankie on the nature of love. Berenice cautions Frankie not to make the mistake of deluding herself to believe that Jarvis and Janice are going to take her away with them after the wedding.

Frankie was the different girl. Her taller height than others of the same age has made her unconsciously abnormal. She thinks that she is different from the society. As the trauma develops in her mind, she finds herself aloof, separated, and alienated in the society. Because of such things, she even does not categorize herself in the member of the wedding. As the wedding date is drawing near, she gets afraid:

She stood before the mirror and she was afraid. It was the summer of fear, for Frankie, and there was one fear that could be figured in arithmetic with paper and a pencil at the table. This August she was twelve and five-sixths years old. She was five feet five and three-quarter inches tall, and she wore a number seven shoe. In the past year she had grown four inches, or at least that was what she judged. Already the hateful little summer children-hollered to her: 'Is it cold up there?' (25)

Moreover, the six-year-old John Henry serves as a precise foil for Frankie. Where she is hysterical and bizarre, he is calm and collected. Where she is not rational, he is even-minded. Most of all, where she is a young soul attempting to grow up, he is an old, wise soul who is very much a child. Frankie uses John Henry as something of a soundboard onto which she can project her fears and insecurities. Furthermore, she attempts to pass her childhood onto him, in some respects. When she gives him the doll she says she does not want, she is taking a representational step to distance herself from her childhood years. John Henry is safely half her age, so there is no ambiguity in claiming him to be the child and her to be the older age. When she claims that John Henry should stay over because he looks scared, Frankie is merely displacing her own fears and projecting them onto John Henry, to take a Freudian angle on the situation. Then, there is an ironic turn when the two of them sleep together, which only further proves Frankie's continued youth and innocence despite her efforts. Here she is, sleeping with another male, but with no concept of how this might be strange and inappropriate for a purported adult woman to be sleeping with a little boy. She is grown up to be taller than her peers. However, her childhood age seems to be inherited with her. In this sense, her sleeping with father can be the symbol of the sexual desire with the father.

One night in April, when she and her father were going to bed, he looked

at her and said, all of a sudden: 'Who is this great big long-legged twelve-year-old blunderbuss who still wants to sleep with her old Papa.' And she was too big to sleep with her father any more. She had to sleep in her upstairs room alone. She began to have a grudge against her father and they looked at each other in a slant-eyed way. She did not like to stay at home. (32)

John Henry has such desire. He has also dream symbols and sexual desires. He expresses not directly but his behavior shows the emergence of sexual passion:

. . . John Henry wailed and F. Jasmine banged around the kitchen in the wedding dress and Berenice got up from the table and raised her right hand for peace. Then suddenly they all stopped at once. F. Jasmine stood absolutely still before the window and John Henry hurried to the window also and watched on tiptoe with his hands to the sill. Berenice turned her head to see what had happened. And at that moment the piano was quiet. (113)

John Henry's death happens with just a whisper, much in the way that childhood just disappears one day and one wakes up older without even realizing it. In fact, so little is said about his death, that one might argue that he never existed at all except as a metaphorical representation of Frankie's lingering youth. After all, he is seldom engaged into conversation in any concrete manner, except when he makes isolated interjections. When he tags along with Frankie into town to get her fortune taken, he is so invisible; it is easy to forget he is there. So his eventual death is totally unsentimental because he was really only the shadow of a character to begin with, or a shadow of Frankie's character.

Berenice is a foil for Frankie in another way. She represents all Frankie has to learn and know. Firstly, she knows about love, sex and relationships, not necessarily in that order. And secondly, she knows about the real world, about the harsh realities of racism and how it divides people. She serves as a reality check for the delusional Frankie, always questioning Frankie's suspect motives and explaining Frankie's feelings to her, as if she understands the workings of the girl's mind better than Frankie does herself.

Berenice helps flesh out the novel's theme of bifurcation: the separation between two entities. She is herself split. She has one dark eye and one glass blue eye, thus her physicality has both black and white attributes. She discusses with Frankie what it means for a black person to be trapped in a white society. And we see how well she must understand this, what with her own body divided as such.

Considering that the novella was written in the 1940s, it is significant to recognize that a close, empathetic relationship between a white girl and a black woman would have been provocative. This novel seeks to break down stereotypes about black people and to try to give a wide audience a certain understanding and appreciation for the African-American struggle against oppression. Berenice's wise and likable character aids in this message of acceptance for people's differences, giving mid-20th century readers a chance to accept someone their prejudices might otherwise dismiss.

Psychological Change in Frankie

Frankie's sexual development plays a central role in the resolution of the conflict. In the classic form of this kind of story, a young and innocent person on the brink of sexual or emotional discovery takes an abrupt plunge into the world of experience. This often involves a journey of some sorts. Frankie's sexual innocence is challenged by her

encounter with the Soldier who attempts to sleep with her. And her emotional ignorance is shattered as she realizes that she was kidding herself to think that she could hook up with her brother and his wife. There is the development in the name, psychology, thinking, body structure with the passage of time in Frankie. In the part two her name changes to other F. Jasmine to indicate that she finds totally different in this grown age from earlier age.

The day before the wedding was not like any day that F. Jasmine had ever known. It was the Saturday she went into the town, and suddenly, after the closed blank summer, the town opened before her and in a new way, she belonged. Because of the wedding, F. Jasmine felt connected with all she saw, and it was as a sudden member that on this Saturday she went around die town. She walked the streets entitled as a queen and mingled every-where. It was the day when, from die beginning, the world seemed no longer separate from herself and when all at once she felt included. (59)

Here, F. Jasmine, the new name of Frankie, has been used for the first time. This shows the psychological change and trauma of Frankie in her life.

McCullers makes repeated use of vivid primary colors to describe both the physicality of the characters and the landscape around them. She pays particularly close attention to eye color, repeatedly pointing out that Frankie has gray eyes while Berenice has one brown and one blue. The first sentence of the novel says that the summer during which the events take place is "green." McCullers does not specify what she means by this, but we can assume it has to do with newness and the freshness of youth. Red is another important color, mostly because of its rare usage in the novel. When it does finally appear—describing the color of Frankie's blood and of the Soldier's hair—it has a sexual connotation. The reluctance to mention the color mirrors Frankie's fear of and ignorance about sex and menstruation.

Eyes are the window to the soul for these characters, revealing their secrets and the otherwise hidden facets of their personalities. When Berenice says Frankie is jealous of her brother's marriage, she says she knows because of the color in her eye. Berenice has one glass eye, which is blue, while the other is brown. This split plays on the major theme of division and reveals her inner conflict: she is torn between her desires to remain young and free or to settle down with T.T. Eyes also represent the difficulty in seeing things from another person's point of view, speaking to the theme of the division between people. At one point, Frankie tries on John Henry's glasses. She later comes to the conclusion that it is impossible to understand his point of view.

Stepping out again, F. Jasmine feels that her life is divided into three parts: the past, that day, and the future before her. At one point, she has a strange kind of flash forward, in which she hears the way Berenice would later describe her behavior that afternoon.

The narrator changes Frankie's name again, this time to Frances. John Henry, Berenice and Mr. Addams and Frances leave the house early Sunday morning and board a bus for Winter Hill, where the wedding is held. Frances remarks to herself that they were supposed to be going north, but instead the bus seemed to be going south. The environment becomes more and more "southern" as they travel the four-hour journey. In this sense, southern is a derogatory term to mean hokey, ugly and provincial. Now her age has developed to be the complete women. Her psychological characteristics have

been developed. Still, she is alienated in the world. She has not been able to adjust with the world where she dwells.

Frances wanted the whole world to die. She sat on the back seat, between the window and Berenice, and, though she was no longer sobbing, the tears were like two little brooks, and also her nose ran water. Her shoulders were hunched over her swollen heart and she no longer was the wedding dress. She was sitting next to Berenice, back with the coloured people, and when she thought of it she used the mean word she had never used before, nigger -for now she hated everyone and wanted only to spite are shame. For John Henry West the wedding had only barn a great big show and he had enjoyed her misery at or end as he had enjoyed the angel cake. (168)

In the same way that she skips over all of Saturday in Part One and never directly describes Jarvis and Janice's visit, McCullers skims over the wedding in a few vague sentences, describing the event as "like a dream." The only concrete detail she gives us is that Frankie calls out for the married couple to take her with them as the wedding car drives away.

Frances wishes the death of the whole world as they make the journey home. She resents John Henry and her father for not understanding the significance of the wedding. She reflects that the wedding had been much like a series of failed bridge games she had played with John Henry and Berenice earlier in the year. No one ever drew a good hand. Then, finally, they counted the deck and realized that the queens and jacks were all missing. John Henry then admitted that taken out the jacks and subsequently the queens, to keep the jacks company. Unfortunately, Frances cannot explain the failure of the wedding so simply.

"The changes" McCullers mentions could be any number of things: Frances's newfound friendship, her lack of interest in the freak house, and her maturity (27). But most fundamentally, the word "change" probably suggests that she has finally had her first period. The expression brings to mind the expression "the change of life," often used to describe women going through menopause. So the word has a certain resonance to it that suggests that Frances has finally entered her childbearing years. The bell that rings in the last sentence is like the clock that announces that her biological clock has started to tick forward.

In conclusion, the novel mainly emphasizes on the psychological trauma of the main protagonist Frankie. She shows strange behavior in the every stage. With the development of her age, her consciousness seems to change. However, in the deep level her psychological trauma does not let her come out of the present situation. The author, McCullers, has changed her name three times to indicate that the name influences her character. From the beginning of the novel to the end, Frankie, has not become satisfied with the present world and the situation. Therefore, she is looking for the way to come out of the chaos.

Chapter IV: Frankie: A Traumatic Subject

This research studies Carson McCullers's novel *The Member of the Wedding* from trauma theory and tries to see whether it truly represents the trauma of the main character, Frankie and other characters. The heart of the thesis is the situation of the psychological trauma in most of the characters of the novel. The majority of the characters of the novel shows such traumatic behaviors or not is the study of the thesis. Although, Frankie has been born with the privileges in her house, she cannot cope with the family members. Because of her mother's death in giving birth and the father not playing a good parental role turned her into an orphaned child only there she gets spiritual companionship from Berenice, who herself is a victim of racial inequality. Thus living through in such atmosphere 'repeated event' brought up in her traumatic dissociated psychic only to be triggered by the stressor as the wedding of her brother. Here to be traumatized is to mean possessed by an image or event (Caruth) and "act out"(Freud) repeatedly without conscious knowledge by the traumatic subject as one of the sexual image like her discarding her for her sleep habit with the father even at the age of 12 years old exposes her total naivety in the real sexual encounter with the soldier. Because of the traumatic wound she cannot adjust with the age. As Sigmund Freud claims trauma is the crisis which begins from the childhood and it remains throughout life, we can find such traumatic behavior in Frankie as she is suffering throughout her age.

McCullers's *The Member of the Wedding* depicts the life of the main character Frankie, whose name has been changed time to time by the author, shows her changing experience in the society. Frankie Addams is a young, confused twelve-year-old adolescent living in the American south in 1944. The book is framed around her main frustration with feeling like she belongs to no group, that she is disconnected with the world around her. The daughter of a jeweler and a mother who died in childbirth, she is highly precocious and stubborn, but also naïve and unaware of the reasons for her own emotions. She spends the main action of the book, which begins on the last Friday in August and ends two days later, obsessed with her brother Jarvis's wedding on Sunday to Janice Evans.

When the story begins, Frankie expresses her fears, anxiety and confusion about marriage to her housekeeper, Berenice and her six-year-old cousin, John Henry. Berenice passes off her feelings as masked jealousy. Frankie later asks John Henry to sleep over, claiming he looks scared. However, as we know, Frankie is really the one who feels that way. She is relieved to have a person to sleep next to, since she used to sleep next to her father, until he recently said she was too old.

The main action of the novel takes place over a few days in late August. It tells the story of 12-year-old [tomboy](#) Frankie Addams, who feels disconnected from the world—an "unjoined person". She dreams of going away with her brother and his bride-to-be on their honeymoon, following them to the [Alaskan](#) wilderness. She has no friends in the small Southern town in which she lives. Most of the settings of the novel take place in the kitchen. The kitchen becomes the homely place her. The spending of her aloofness

in the kitchen shows her alienation from other world. Her mother died giving birth to Frankie and her father is a distant, uncomprehending figure. Her closest companions are the family's [African American](#) maid, Berenice Sadie Brown, and her six-year-old cousin, John Henry West.

The novel is more concerned with the psychology of the three main characters and an evocation of the setting than with incident. Frankie does, however, have a brief and troubling encounter with a soldier. Her hopes of going away having been disappointed — her fantasy destroyed — a short coda reveals how her personality has changed. It also recounts the fate of John Henry West, and Berenice Sadie Brown's plans.

Many of Frankie's feelings of awkwardness are drawn from McCullers's own memories of what it was like to be twelve years old. She, like Frankie, felt like a gangly misfit whose tomboyish ways made it difficult to fit in with boys or girls her age.

When she was only twenty-three Carson McCullers's first novel *The Heart Is A Lonely Hunter*, created a literary sensation. She is very special, once of American's superlative writers who conjure up a vision of existence as terrible as it is real, who takes us on shattering voyages into the depths of the spiritual isolation that underlies the human condition.

Regarding the issues and its portraiture in *The Member of the Wedding*, the story moves along the very line as those earlier works by the author. Psychological sick life lies beneath the story course. Responsible parental and the societal actors' insensitivity towards such powerless' life turned into traumatic existence, destroying their defense mechanisms overwhelmingly in the face of the world around.

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