



ANALYZING MICHAELIDE'S *THE SILENT PATIENT* FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER PARADIGM

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ABSTRACT:

This study is aimed at analyzing Alex Michaelide's *The Silent Patient* from the perspective of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder as presented by Judith Herman in the book *Trauma and Recovery*. Accordingly, PTSD is a psychic disorder that usually occurs in those persons who have suffered from some traumatic events in their lives. The text under research deals with the psychic wounds of the protagonists such as Theo and Alicia whose unfortunate past brings about PTSD in their life. *The Silent Patient* revolves around the stories of two major characters namely Alicia and Theo. Both the characters have to bear the unhealthy relationship of their parents. Alicia witnesses severe treatment at the hands of her father which becomes the cause of PTSD in her psyche. Theo is mentally affected by the unhealthy relationship of his parent. Better halves prove fatal for the disturbed psyche of Alicia and Theo. The study explores the causes behind the symptoms of PTSD such as: hypertension, insomnia, hallucinations, impulsive disorder, nightmares and hyper arousal. This research is sure to help the researchers in studying the various psychic disorders of different characters, broadening their comprehension to understand the effects of traumatic experiences on the human psyche.

Key Words: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, *The Silent Patient*, Flashbacks, Hyper-arousal

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1. INTRODUCTION

This research is an attempt to explore Alex Michaelides' *The Silent Patient* from the thrust of psychoanalytic theory of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder as theorized by Judith Herman in his work *Trauma and Recovery*. According to Judith, PTSD is an abnormal condition of mind which has suffered from some horrific event, bringing about psychic wound. It is not only an injury of body, but it is an injury of mind too. The sufferer experiences intrusive symptoms such as: flashbacks, involuntary movements and distressing dreams. Negative thoughts and hyper arousal become quite common in this situation. The American Psychiatric Association included PTSD in its manual in 1980. Cathy Caruth (1996) defines PTSD as an overwhelming experience of disastrous events where the response occurs in uncontrolled appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive actions. Traumatic events of the past make the lives of their victims too frustrated to spend normal lives. Published in 2019, *The Silent Patient* is a psychological thriller by Alex Michaelides. He is a Cypriot-British novelist who has a few novels of worldwide accreditation to his name. The story of the text under research revolves around the two major characters Alicia and Theo; both with a traumatized past. Overwhelming catastrophic events make their lives too enigmatic to live. Theo's father has been harsh to him throughout his life. His wife Kathy betrays him and he suffers from the reenactment of past events with intrusive symptoms of PTSD. Alicia also has to bear the brutal treatment of her father and some drastic decisions of her mother in her life. She is also a victim of unfaithful husband. They find themselves resorted to countering strategies such as medicines, therapies and drugs. As the novel under discussion consists of the elements of PTSD in the major characters, it is a suitable work to be investigated through the lens of the aforesaid theory. This study contributes to the theory of psychoanalysis. This research may bring about awareness among the readers to adjust themselves in such circumstances.

2. Research Statement

Even a cursory scan over the novel *The Silent Patient* of Alex Michaelides creates an impression that this novel is quite a suitable text for the application of psychoanalytic theory of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. PTSD is basically an enigma of survival; it is a wound which destroys the psychic order of the sufferer. Traumatic experiences become one of the major causes in disturbing human psychology.

3. Research Questions

- What are the causes that contribute to PTSD in the major characters of the novel *The Silent Patient*?
- How do the characters resort to medication and counter activities against PTSD in the current novel?

4. Objectives of the Research

The main objectives of this study are:

- To analyze the causes behind PTSD in different characters of the novel
- To explore how PTSD is medicinized and countered by the characters

5. Theoretical Framework





Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is a theory which has been applied on the novel under research. According to American Psychiatric Association, it was first known as ‘shell-shock’ in the World War I and ‘combat fatigue’ during the World War II. It is a form of psychotic illness which forms after an exposure to some calamitous event that leaves indelible marks on the mentality of its sufferer. These marks later take the shape of a stress disorder which distorts the mentality of the sufferer to an indefinite period of time.

The American Psychiatric Association included PTSD in its manual in 1980. It was known as ‘shell shock’ first and later on it got the name of ‘combat fatigue’. It basically emerged after the First World War when the war veterans were diagnosed with certain psychological disorders. APA defines it as,

“Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a psychiatric disorder that may occur in people who have experienced or witnessed a traumatic event such as a natural disaster, a serious accident, a terrorist act, war/combat, or rape or who have been threatened with death, sexual violence or serious injury”. (American Psychiatric Association, 2013)

APA divides symptoms of PTSD into four categories these are:

- a. **Intrusion:** Flashbacks, involuntary memories and distressing dreams come under the category of intrusive symptoms.
- b. **Avoidance:** In avoidance symptoms, people tend to avoid any thing or situation that may become the cause of the remembrance of traumatic event.
- c. **Alteration in cognition and mood:** Negative thoughts often occur in this condition. The victim demeans his own self. He develops distorted beliefs about others.
- d. **Alteration in arousal and reactivity:** Arousal and reactive symptoms include irritability and angry outburst. The person behaves recklessly or in a self-destructive way. In these symptoms a person may experience sleeplessness and concentration problems.

6. Research Gap

The Silent Patient published in 2019, is a debut novel of Alex Michaelides. The novel has not been analyzed through the lens of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder so far. There is a research article on the text under research written from the perspective of theory of containment. It is a new psychological thriller that has not been analyzed by any researcher from PTSD point of view. The present study is an attempt to fill the research gap that has not been filled before this through the theory of PTSD.

7. Significance of the Research

This research helps the readers to understand the basics of PTSD by analyzing the text of the novel under research. This research is expected to give theoretical and practical contribution for the development of the literary study. The readers are sure to see and understand in depth about





PTSD. Besides this, the readers can understand well about how to cope with it in their real life. Different examples from the text have been taken to make this theory intelligible. The study of human behavior is a very interesting topic because it involves the analysis of human psychology. It is a theory belonging to the psychological paradigm of literary theories. In psychology, different aspects of human mind are explored in order to study the nature of psychic disorders. This research helps the researchers, in the field of psychoanalysis, to be better able to comprehend the effects of traumatic experiences on human psyche. The readers are sure to understand how to analyze a psychological thriller in terms of psychoanalytic criticism. Moreover, this research broadens the study approaches of analyzing a text from the spectrum of PTSD theory. There is a practical benefit for the readers too; they can realize the aftershocks of trauma to avoid them in their practical life. The sufferers tend to resort to the different medications in order to cope with traumatic stress disorder. This research analyzes the side-effects of different medicines used in the treatment of PTSD. The readers of this research are to know the damaging impacts of the countering medicines.

8. Literature Review

In order to develop the research gap of the present research, a number of research articles, dissertations, journals and other sources have been explored. Review of literature is based on the gist of the previous research works concerning the theory and the work under present research. Short of the research works is given as under:

A.C. Mcfarlane et al., (1994) in their joint research *Physical Symptoms in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder* attempt to explore the impact of PTSD on the physiological perspectives of the sufferers. The same physical symptoms are triggered at the very outset of flashbacks which give rise to the psychic disorder in the traumatized individuals and groups. Many a stressor brings about life-threatening situations i.e. accidents or combat. These physical injuries give rise to the psychological problems. Furthermore, anxiety disorders and depressive illnesses, physical concomitants of the ailment i.e. shortness of breath or palpitations in anxiety, constipation or weight loss in depression or somatization such as pain syndromes in depression shift the impact to mental agony. The sufferers opt for drugs in order to release pain of the sufferings. Alcohol consumption is widely used by the sufferers whose PTSD gives rise to some physical symptoms. War veterans are always taken as participants whose engagement in war enables the researchers to find out connection between the physical symptoms and trauma. This study confirms correlation between the traumatic incident and trauma. The people who were taken as a sample of the given study were far more mentally injured than physically. The physical injury had shaped itself into mental injury which formed PTSD. The physical injuries could be ignored as their pain was not as much lasting as that of mental wounds which were significant part of human psyche. Physical disabilities and the consequent pain could be cured by certain medical measures because medicines and painkillers could reduce the pain. On the contrary, traumatizing incidents leave lasting marks on human psyche.

Ronald Smith (1997) in his research work *Nick Adams and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder* explores the impact of combat experiences on the psyche of the soldiers hailing from United States of America. The veterans of two major Wars received mental injuries as consequences of their unfortunate experiences in the given wars. The same mental wounds were received by the soldiers who took part in Korean wars. The same wars gave way to psychiatry which gained more and





more acceptance in the succeeding years. It was the very first time when non-physical injuries of the war veterans were taken as part of psychoanalysis. The signs and symptoms of these psychic issues were identified as part of psychic disorders. From clinical perspective, such disorders or ailments were termed as Traumatic War Neurosis, Combat Neurosis, and War Neurosis. Consequent upon arrival of psychic knowledge, psychiatry in the United States ventured upon psychic issues. The people concerned with psychiatry took the initiative to improve the understanding of psychological trauma which soon led to the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Actually, it had resulted from the aftermaths of combat experiences during and after the Vietnam War. In 1980, the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 111 (DSM 111) added PTSD as a category in its manual. Apart from providing understanding into Nick's actions in *A Way You'll Never Be* and *Big Two-Hearted River*, where Nick is depicted as a victim of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, such characters also shed light on other characters in Hemingway's works. It may also fall in line with the character of Hemingway himself. Harold Krebs and Jake Barnes in *Soldier's Home* (1925) and *The Sun Also Rises*, (1926) respectively, do have similarity in characteristics of their literary cousin, Nick Adams. The neck injury which Nick receives causes a number of psychological issues which may be termed as the development of PTSD.

Yasuyuki Ohta et al. (2000) in his research titled as *Psychological Effect of the Nagasaki Atomic Bombing on Survivors after Half a Century*, explores the traumatizing impact on those people who survived the atomic bombing on Japan's two cities i.e. Hiroshima and Nagasaki which came under nuclear attack in August 1945. The inhabitants, who were fortunate enough to live through the horrible impact of bombings, were unable to escape the mental wounds as the flashbacks had impaired normal working of their mind. The survivors suffered from anxiety and depression which wakened their functioning in society. Those people were indifferent to social activities; they were weak in interpersonal relations; their life seemed to be disrupted at every step of their life and they were immune to aesthetic sense. Their life was devoid of any enjoyment, whatsoever. Recurring and distressing recollections of atomic bombings brought about psychological distress in the survivors' mind. Being witness to the massive destruction, they were under psychogenic disorders as they had seen their near and dear ones dying in utter desolation. The researcher based his findings as an example to prove his arguments. He gave a case study of a survivor who was a witness to the death of her sister with some other relatives. The impact of the incident was too pressing to be forgotten. Hence, she was in tears soon after recalling the incident, remembering her dear ones breathing their last. Consequently, the survivor was unable to forget the traumatizing impact of atomic incident which had affected her neurotically. The researchers of this article have interviewed 3756 different survivors aging from 51 to 99 years; and the survivors have shown symptoms of PTSD to a larger extent. Leukemia and cancer which were consequences of invisible radiation cast adverse impact on their psyche. In all the survivors, the very incident had enlarged their psychic wounds, giving rise to stress and disorder in their lives. PTSD developed in the attack survivors has been of acute stage and they have been suffering from nightmares, distressing thoughts and emotional imbalances.

Frans Orjan's (2003) *Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in the General Population* is an attempt to investigate the presence of PTSD and various relevant disorders in general population. This study looks deep into the evergreen presence of traumatic experiences and PTSD in the adult Swedish population. It also digs deep to explore the impact of different types of trauma such as trauma frequency and subjective distress. The researchers selected 1500 male and 1500





females who were aged 18-70 for the current research process. According to the findings, one out of every 10 incidents results in PTSD, having a lifetime frequency of 5.6 percent. Male members outnumber female by the ratio of 2:1. Whenever emotional impact of trauma rises, it gives rise to PTSD in the sufferers. Those victims who had gone through sexual assault as well as physical violence, were much prone to PTSD. Women are usually more emotional than men. This emotionalism makes women vulnerable to trauma more than men. Consequently, they are usually more victimized than the men. This shows that trauma prevails in majority of the women who are victimized in some way or the other. The findings show that the symptoms are linked to memory, emotion, attention, and motor coordination.

Sulaeman (2014) in his research thesis, *The Analysis of Trauma in Staub's Novel Sacred to Death* has attempted to investigate two main characters through the lens of PTSD. The main focus is on two characters i.e. Elsa and Marin who have been seen passing through such symptoms which are termed as PTSD. It is because both these characters have undergone some horrific experiences which have shattered them mentally as well as physically. Elsa is a witness to horrifying murder of her adopted son, Jeremy. The same event wounds her badly and leaves her at the threshold of her identity as she feels helpless before the unbearable memory of her son's death. The present research investigates presence of PTSD in the life of Maria whose husband is in jail on account of corruption charges. The same event marks deep effect on her psyche and leaves her in pitiable condition.

As far as the side effects are concerned, these characters face nervousness, frustration, anxiety and depression. As they are psychologically disturbed, they develop PTSD. Unfortunate past arouses the abnormal sensations, making them behave unusually. Elsa suffers from intrusive symptom soon after she recalls her son who suffered from undeserved death. Continuous thoughts drag her into the world of hallucination where she re-experiences horrible events. These dreams disturb her mentally. Likewise, Elsa races towards her past whenever she visits the place where her family has been living happily for years in the past. She can imagine her son who was killed after being kidnapped.

Marin, too, experiences the symptoms of PTSD whenever her mind races towards her past which is intact and is wholesome. For her, it is impossible to get rid of unfortunate memories of her deceased husband. Both these characters try to avoid such symptoms as may worsen their life.

From the given discussion, it is evident that the researchers have investigated PTSD in other works of art and literature. Different psychologists have conducted various researches on PTSD in the war veterans and their families; earthquake victims; rape victims and other psychotic patients. Researchers in the field of literature have written research articles and dissertations on different literary texts applying the theory of PTSD. Their findings are much important in the field of research. But the fact remains that their research has been conducted on the works other than *The Silent Patient*. This work under present research has not been investigated through the theoretical lenses of PTSD. Hence, significant research gap is present. It needs to be fulfilled by studying this novel through the theoretical lenses of PTSD. It is hoped that the present research is a sincere effort to fulfill this research gap.

9. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The present discussion is an attempt to investigate *The Silent Patient* through the lens of PTSD as given by Judith Herman in his theoretical work titled as *Trauma and Recovery*. This data





analysis is an answer to the two research questions as given: (i) What are the causes that contribute to PTSD in the major characters of the novel *The Silent Patient*? (ii) How do the characters resort to medication and counter activities against PTSD in the current novel? The entire discussion is a comprehensive debate, focused on these research questions and subsequent research objectives. In order to provide thematic analysis of the current book in the light of PTSD, extracts have been quoted from the novel under discussion.

There are various factors that contribute to the development of PTSD in the lives of major characters especially Alicia, the central character of the novel under present research. The story deals with the traumatic lives of the two major characters: Alicia and Theo. Theo is an antagonist of the story while Alicia is the protagonist. Theo, a psychotherapist by profession, has been a patient of psychic disorder for a long time. The very psychic disorder that he faces is not without reasons. There are numerous incidents that make him vulnerable to traumatic disorder. Childhood traumas and wife's betrayal are some of the reasons that contribute to his psychic wounds. He recalls how in his childhood, his father used to beat him and admonished his mother for apparently no reason at all. The severe treatment traumatically affected him very much. Being witness to all such factors, he becomes traumatized and gives rise to the symptoms of PTSD.

The relationship between a husband and a wife plays a pivotal role in the psychological development of their children. Theo grows up feeling nervous, afraid and anxious because he has been under the constant suppression from his parents whose unequal relationship has affected him badly. All this originates in him due to the unsafe relationship with his father. He thinks that his father's impulsive and illogical rages always turn a compassionate situation into a potential minefield. He seeks no refuge from the series of his father's angry explosions that echo in the house with a deafening noise. He describes the attitude of his father in these words:

‘The house shook as he shouted, chasing me upstairs into my room. I'd dive under the bed and slide under it, against the wall. I'd breathe in the feathery air, praying the bricks would swallow me up and I would disappear but his hand would grab hold of me, drag me out to meet my feet’.

The harsh treatment at the hands of his father results in psychological hysteria with threats and tears. This ill-treatment has traumatized Theo who is unable to cope with the circumstances. These stressful events contribute to the development of PTSD in his personality. He has to consult a psychotherapist later on in order to heal his mental wounds, creating an impact on his personality. He and his mother always feel eclectic and happy when his father is not at home. The only presence of his father is enough to instigate feelings of terror and horror in his mind, creating psychological problems for him as well his mother. He always wishes in his childhood that his father may not come to home forever. They make a statue of Theo's father with the ice flakes and then pelt that statue in a jaunty mood to have a catharsis of their disgusting feelings for him. He gets married to overcome his stress disorder. He loves his wife Kathy, but she in return betrays him.

A patient suffering from PTSD feels himself downcast, shameful and worthless. The same happens with Theo whose past experiences make him worthless in his own eyes. He feels downcast, shaken and perturbed. He has been living with these feelings since his childhood. He considers himself insignificant and useless. He feels irritated whenever he recalls unfortunate





experiences of his past life. He compares his past with his present and realizes that his past has much to do with his present condition. He cannot get rid of his past, filled with agony.

PTSD patient avoids social gatherings. Theo admits this thing, ‘Immobilized by fear, I was unable to go out, socialize or make any friends’. PTSD has made Theo inactive and passive. Whenever he remembers his childhood, he always feels a wrenching pain through his insides. He always waits for death because PTSD makes the patient yearn for it. Wishing for death is common among the sufferers of PTSD. Theo’s anti-social status indicates presence of PTSD as he avoids meeting his near and dear ones. Most of the time, he is found daydreaming, imagining something ideal which is out of his reach at present moment.

Another thing which shows PTSD in the life of Theo is his sleeplessness. He suffers from insomnia. He feels restlessness and this thing makes him seek refuge in psychotherapy. Theo goes to his psychotherapist, Ruth, and tells her about the childhood traumas, suicidal impulses and painful memories. His father always reprimands him of nothing and says that he is not up to any job. These remarks create negative impact in his mind to become the cause of PTSD in him. He cannot get rid of this stress and disorder throughout his life. These conditions force him to remain awake during nights. Meanwhile, he has to join a psychotic unit to keep himself busy.

A patient of PTSD suffers from impulsive disorder which makes him imbalanced mentally and physically. The same impulsive disorder is in plenty in Alicia whose actions are out of balance and harmony. It is a kind of an impulsive disorder which leads Alicia to kill the most beloved person of her life i.e. her husband. Theo comes to know about a traumatic incident that occurred to her in her childhood. Her mother, in order to get rid of the husband’s brutal treatment, tried to commit suicide by crashing her car against a wall while Alicia was also with her in the car. Luckily, Alicia survives, but that traumatic event casts a deep psychological impact on her mind. Theo thinks, ‘that trauma must have affected the little girl profoundly’. This car crash becomes one of the many reasons of the development of PTSD in her. Whenever in her life she sees yellow color, she starts trembling because yellow color flashbacks that yellow car accident. In PTSD, seeing similar things related to trauma works like stimuli that causes emotional outburst in the patients.

Part two of the novel starts with Sigmund Freud’s famous quotation, ‘unexpressed emotions will never die. They are buried alive, and will come forth later, in uglier ways’. Here, starts Alicia’s life story in the form of her diary. Alicia describes a prolonged heat season which has psychologically affected the lives of the inhabitants of Hampstead Heath. Environment affects human psyche and excessive heat has created psychological tensions and anxiety for the inhabitants of Hampstead. The grass looks like as if it were on fire. Alicia writes about Gabriel’s complain against the noise of electric fan which Alicia buys for the home. Sizzling heat has impacted his mentality and he has started suffering from clinical depression. Alicia then remembers a traumatic event of past. Her mother fed up of her husband, commits suicide by colliding her car against the wall while Alicia, a small child, is also with her in the car. She narrates it in this way,

‘I thought of my mother. Was she crazy? Is that she did it? Why she trapped me into the passenger seat of her yellow Mini, and sped up towards that red brick wall? I always liked that car, its cheerful canary yellow. The same yellow as in my paint box, now I hate that color- every time I use it, I think of death’.





Alicia's life is sandwiched between her present and her past, causing unbearable frustration in her life. At times, she behaves abnormally. She feels unable to think normally. The frustration reaches a point where she starts hating those things which have been dear to her in the past. The given lines express anxiety which prevails in the life of Alicia who wishes for death instead of praying for sound and prolonged life. This is the incident which has painted indelible traumatic effects on the mind of Alicia. She cannot shake the psychological impacts of this incident and it becomes the cause of the development of stress disorder in her.

In PTSD, a single or multiple events can disturb the psyche of the sufferer in a way that he cannot get rid of the disturbing impacts of traumatic events. Same thing happens with Alicia when she suffers from this traumatic incident. Impulsively, she gets indulged in stressful activities. Such are the buried alive emotions which are there in the unconscious mind of Alicia. After sometime, such thoughts have come to her conscious level to have their outlet in an uglier ways. Her suicidal attempts, silence, anxiety and hyper-arousal are some of the manifestations of these emotions. After that incident, she walks up the hill, and says, 'Tears collected in my eyes as I walked up the hill.' Such an emotional state of mind is due to the fact that she is unable to cope with the recollections of her past. She re-experiences her past whenever she goes back to her past. This develops a traumatic stress disorder in Alicia's life which becomes more stressful and upset.

Alicia becomes afraid of herself and this is what happens in PTSD when a patient becomes terrified by his/her own presence. The trigger of the gun that kills Alicia's husband becomes one of the many causes of the development of PTSD in Alicia. It triggers psychic disorder in Alicia who recalls the use of gun against her husband. She has already been suffering from the aftershocks of childhood traumas and Gabriel's betrayal adds salt to her injuries. When Theo meets Paul, her cousin, Theo comes to know how Uncle Oren and his sister used to be dreadful to Alicia. She has a very terrifying and spiteful childhood. Gabriel is supposed to be her wound healer, but he also proves fatal for her already distressed and disturbed life. Alicia and Theo are the major victims of PTSD in the text under discussion and they both have to resort to different medicines and therapies for the treatment of psychic disorder caused by different traumas of life.

It is a custom among the people suffering from PTSD to opt for some or the other defensive measures to lessen its impact. Use of drugs, medicine or other pleasure giving options are termed as defense mechanism. The protagonists in the novel under current study also adopts medicines as defense mechanism to heal their wounding psyche. Theo goes from shop to shop, buying paracetamol to treat himself. He is under the great pressure due to his father's remarks. His father calls him worthless and shameless. He is under the impulse of suicidal thoughts which are outcome of painful memories. Paracetamol can relieve him of his painful feelings to a smaller extent. As other defensive measures cannot heal his wounds, he takes refuge in the world of medicines such as paracetamol in order to decrease his headache and frustration.

Alicia's case is no different than that of Theo. She remains under constant threat which worsens her day by day. Recollections are pressing upon her. In order to treat Alicia, Theo joins The Groves a psychotic unit. He finds Alicia in a very horrible condition. She looks very pale and thin. In the past, she used to be very clean with a symmetrical face, but now, she looks very unclean now. She is having chewed and torn finger nails. These chewed and torn finger nails manifest the frustration which has overpowered her. Theo notices faded scars on her wrists. She is trembling,





Theo, through the help of his psychotherapist's experience, derives a conclusion that 'Risperidone' and other 'heavyweight anti-psychotics' have cast their side-effects on Alicia. Risperidone is used to treat schizophrenia (a mental illness that becomes the cause of unusual thinking, lacked interest in life and inapt emotions). (**Risperidone: MedlinePlus Drug Information, n.d.**)

There is a use of drugs i.e. Risperidone. This shows that the traumatized character uses certain medicine for treatment of her psychic wounds. Constant use of such drugs causes some side-effects too. According to Theo, she is probably suffering from the side-effects of the overuse of the drug. This drug can produce anxiety, agitation, restlessness, too much saliva in the mouth along with dry skin and giddiness. She has the same feelings after the overuse of drug. Alicia's mouth is full of saliva as she is drooling. Side-effects of the medication can be seen quite visible in her. After watching her in this condition, Theo has an attack of psychotic disorder too. At one place, Theo is dazed at seeing the use of sixteen milligrams of Risperidone, He utters, 'A horse's dose'. Most of the patients suffering from psychological turmoil sometimes frantically crave for cigarette. Same is the case with Theo when he leaves The Grove after meeting Alicia first time in the psychotic unit. He searches for cigarettes in his pockets but finds nothing there. Nicotine dependence is common in the patients of PTSD. According to a research of McFall, Mackay and Donovan conducted in 1992; nicotine is sometimes used to alleviate PTSD symptoms (Thorndike et al., 2006). Theo time and again in the text is seen smoking; it is because he thinks that smoking can reduce his depression and anxiety.

Theo always feels safe, relaxed and at ease after smoking marijuana. He says, 'It became my best friend, my inspiration, my solace'. Theo always feels elated and relaxed while smoking marijuana. His father's remarks about his worthlessness and uselessness always disappear after and while smoking marijuana. His world seems to be changing while puffing marijuana. Theo explains various theories about drug addiction in the text under research. He talks about the possible origins of addiction. He is of the view that addiction can be 'genetic'. It can also be 'chemical'. There are also chances that addiction is psychological. Drugs lull their addicts but marijuana works more than this. Marijuana has changed the experience of Theo's emotions. Marijuana cradles him and keeps him safe like 'a well-loved child'.

Trauma is an injury inflicted not upon the body but upon mind. In the text under discussion, major characters have to undergo several traumas in their lives. The husband-wife relationship also creates psychological impacts on their children. The parents of both Alicia and Theo have a quarreling relationship and this has created a bad impact on the psyche of the children. Moreover, Theo's father is all the time strict and harsh towards Theo from beginning till the end; so is Alicia's father with her. The brutal treatment becomes the cause of the development of PTSD in both the characters. The stress disorder further develops into ripen form with the happening of more traumas. Theo's wife Kathy is in illicit relationship with Gabriel the husband of Alicia. In a way, both Alicia and Theo are the victims of the same misfortune i.e. the harsh treatment of the fathers and the betrayal of the partners. Alicia has a tormented childhood as she has been a victim of the strictness of her father and suicide of her mother while she is also with her in the car. These two traumatic episodes of her life result in the development of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in her psyche. She loves her husband Gabriel to the core of her heart but Gabriel's illicit relationship with Kathy adds salt to Alicia's injuries and proves a nail in her coffin of psychic disorder. Theo has a traumatic past and Kathy's betrayal aggravates his mental retardation. After the analysis of the text





under discussion, it is revealed that the development of PTSD in both the characters has its roots in the past and the ongoing events water the flourishing tree of stress disorder in them.

10. CONCLUSION

Victimization and feelings of jealousy often occur in Post-traumatic stress disorder. Putting Alicia into seclusion further deteriorates her psyche. She attacks Elif and blinds her in one eye. Suicidal impulses flush up in her and she tries to commit suicide at The Groves. She is given an overdose of drugs and this thing lacerates her retarded psyche. She has been overdosed with Resperidone which has made her pale and thin. She loses her appetite and becomes disinterested in life. Resperidone creates saliva in the mouth, anxiety, tension and restlessness. She suffers from all these conditions and Theo after seeing her in this condition shows his disgust for the staff. Ten milligram Resperidone has been called a horse's dose by him. Theo under the attack of PTSD always yearns for nicotine because it is a proven fact that PTSD victims often resort to nicotine to alleviate their mental anxiety. Theo is also an addict of marijuana; he has a long history of using marijuana to reduce his mental stress. Theo always feels relaxed and satisfied after puffing the drug. That drug does the work of containment for him. It contains him and soothes him whenever he finds himself in the trouble of anxiety and frustration. Containment is a mother's ability to make her children relax in the time of restlessness and difficulties. If a mother fails to contain her children, the children are sure to develop some nameless dreads in their lives. Using drugs and alcohol works like a container that protects a sufferer from those nameless dreads. Besides using drugs, PTSD sufferers also consult different psychotherapists for the treatment.

The victims of PTSD adopt numerous measures to counter this psychic disorder. Theo and Alicia consult psychotherapists to relieve themselves off psychotic disorders. Theo goes to Ruth for psychotherapy. Alicia is also psychologically treated at The Groves. She is put in seclusion for some time because seclusion in some cases becomes inevitable for a victim. Dr. Christian first treats her when she has her first bouts of hallucinations. He visits her house on the request of her husband. Her complaints about the movement of an unknown person outside her house makes her mentally retarded in the very eyes of her husband. Following the deaths of her parents, Christian describes Alicia's handicapped mental condition. 'She was crazy, deluded, even psychotic.' Following the horrific events in her life, Alicia exhibits unusual behavior. Her mood swings have been going on for a long time. She is a 'classic borderline' who is continually up and down. Christian also informs Theo that she has been suffering from a "psychotic episode" and has a history of psychosis. Alicia's complaint about the man who is constantly observing her turns out to be true: the man is blind. She gets erratic. Christian comes to the conclusion that Alicia's thinking has been influenced by her father's suicide. She has hallucinations, which are common in people suffering from PTSD.

It is quite evident that after analyzing the text from PTSD point of view, traumas occurred in childhood and at later stages of life lead to the development of PTSD. PTSD takes its virulent form when a person keeps facing one trauma after another. Same is the case with the major characters of the novel which is being discussed for the research purposes. Pent-up emotions do not die; they are rather buried alive and come forth in uglier ways. This coming forth of the unexpressed emotions in uglier ways is basically the development of PTSD. The major characters of the novel under discussion have to suffer from certain traumas in their lives which ultimately become the cause of PTSD. Life becomes unpredictable and the victims yield to the psychological





repercussions of traumas with the development of the said psychic disorder. Related symptoms of PTSD keep disturbing victims in a way that they normally succumb to that stress disorder. Suicidal impulses, numbness, sudden outburst, flashbacks and drugs abuses are some of the common practices among PTSD victims.

In the light of the above study, the researcher suggests that the future scholars will get help from this research in the fields of literature in general and psychoanalytic analysis in particular. Characters in literature can serve as topics for psychological research in a variety of ways. Instead of conducting field research on a certain group or culture, we might employ the characters from that community's literature to find the desired outcomes. Literature tells about the psychology of a society. For the students of psychology, the researcher recommends to do the reading of the psychological novels to see the developments of the people portrayed as psychotics, psychopaths and people with other mental disorders. The literary productions provide a strong data to learn the art of psychoanalysis and the psychotherapy techniques. Due to time and other restraints, this research is specified to the exploration of PTSD in the major characters of the novel under discussion. However, different outputs can also be obtained by applying other theories. The readers can know much about PTSD, its causes and the measures to counter it. Psychology of the humans is one of the most discussed topic of the current literary studies. The researchers in the field of psychoanalytic study are sure to get ample help from this research in their psychological study of literary texts. The literary productions provide a strong data to learn the art of psychoanalysis and the psychotherapy techniques. The researcher suggests the other researchers to study psychological novels with the help of this research to collect more information about the reasons behind depression, anxiety and restlessness among general masses.

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