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REDEFINING OF TRAUMA
IN IRIS MURDOCH'S *THE BLACK PRINCE* AND *THE SEA, THE SEA*

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ÖZET

Travma gerekleŖtiđi sırada Ŗokun etkisiyle tam anlamıyla anlaŖılamayan ancak daha sonra etkisi garip imgeler ve srekli hatırlamalar Ŗeklinde ortaya ıkan bir olgudur. Yıkıcı ve beklenmedik travmatik bir olay kiŖinin algısını bulanıklaŖtırarak onu hassas ve gsz hale getirir. Bu tez aŖk ve sevdiđin bir kiŖiyi kaybetme konuları zerinden travma kavramını irdeler. Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan'ın psikanalitik metodlarına ve travma teorisinin prensiblerine dayanarak Iris Murdoch'ın *The Black Prince* ve *The Sea*, *The Sea* adlı romanları incelenecektir. Murdoch'ın kitaplarının klasik travma anlatılarının dıŖında kalması travma kavramına yeni bir tanım kazandırır. Aslında Murdoch'ın bu iki eserinde sıradan diye tanımlayabileceđimiz herkesin baŖına gelebilecek travmalar iŖlenir. Ancak savaŖlarla, dođal afetlerle, ya da ciddi kazalarla karŖılaŖmayacak kadar Ŗanslı olsalar bile birok insan bu "gnlk travmaların" trajik sonulara sebebiyet verdiđini deneyimlemiŖtir. Bu tez bu tr travmaların Murdoch'ın *The Black Prince* ve *The Sea*, *The Sea* adlı eserlerinde nasıl yansıtıldıđını ve iŖlendiđini irdeler.

ABSTRACT

Trauma is a phenomenon which is too shocking to be fully registered upon occurrence and which instead only manifests belatedly and somewhere else in intrusive images and compulsive re-enactments. An overwhelming and unexpected traumatic event renders its victim vulnerable and powerless by shadowing his or her perception. This thesis examines trauma from a psychoanalytic perspective, with a specific focus on the issues of love and death of someone beloved. Using the psychoanalytic theories of Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan and principles of trauma theory as a starting point, a close textual reading of Iris Murdoch's *The Black Prince* and *The Sea, The Sea* will be presented. The concept of trauma will be redefined because of the fact that these books does not actually correspond to the typical norms of trauma narratives. As a matter of fact, the trauma in the books is what could be called the "trauma of the quotidian," a pedestrian trauma that nonetheless has the potential to cause the most intense suffering that most people will ever experience, should we be fortunate enough to escape war, natural disaster or mutilating accident. This thesis aims to explore how "trauma of the quotidian" within these texts is represented and engaged.

Yüksek Lisans tezi olarak sunduđum “REDEFINING OF TRAUMA IN IRIS MURDOCH’S *THE BLACK PRINCE AND THE SEA, THE SEA*” adlı alıřmanın, tarafımdan bilimsel ahlak ve geleneklere aykırı dűşecek bir yardıma bařvurmaksızın yazıldıđını ve yararlandıđım eserlerin bibliyografyada gösterilen eserlerden oluřtuđunu, bunlara atıf yapılarak yararlanmıř olduđumu belirtir ve bunu onurumla dođrularım.



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INTRODUCTION

The studies on trauma have shown great increase in quantity and diversity since Freud's early work. Every single day people have to experience various kinds of catastrophes ranging from natural disasters, war conflicts, abuses, incurable diseases, accidents even to heartbreaks. Some scholars claim that we live in "the age of trauma" (Geoffrey Hartman 1995, Cathy Caruth 1995). The confrontation with extremity has demanded a rethinking of the concept of representation and the increasing interest in trauma studies over the last few decades and finally resulted in the inception of contemporary trauma theory in the United States in the early 1990s by such literary scholars as Cathy Caruth, Shoshana Felman, and Geoffrey Hartman, former students or co-workers of the deconstructionist literary critic and theorist Paul de Man at Yale University. This development of what can also be referred to as literary trauma theory has in turn led not only to the emergence of a growing importance of the relationship between literature and trauma but also have led to new interpretations of the works included in the literary canon with new points of views. Today trauma theory is an established critical category of literary studies supported by sound psychoanalytical discourse and literary practice. On the other hand, many contemporary authors have insight into modern trauma theory so much so that it is possible to claim the existence of a new evolving literary sub-genre namely "trauma fiction."

Critics such as Anne Whitehead acknowledge that "trauma fiction is a paradox because if the experience of a traumatic event resists language and representation then how can it be narrativized in fiction" (*Trauma Fiction* 3). The development of trauma theory, however, provides alternative methods of conceptualizing trauma, which over comes the aforementioned paradoxical dilemma by focusing on how and why trauma is remembered. In the last twenty years, an array of fictional works on traumatic experience and its representation have appeared. In narrative approaches in many of these works are informed by theorizing and testimony of the Holocaust, Vietnam and incest as well as post colonial analyses of the psychic cost of colonization and racism. Contemporary writers in this mode include Toni Morrison, Marguerite Duras, Larry Heinemann, Ian McEwan and Jonathan Safran Foer, among others. All these writers

endeavour to depict the trauma in peculiar ways. Trauma is also present in both of Iris Murdoch's novels *The Black Prince* (1973) and *The Sea, The Sea* (1978), but this thesis will not suggest that these texts are trauma fiction.

Needless to say, Murdoch is out of this tendency as far as the time she lived is concerned, hence she could not have figured out her characters being conscious of the psychological symptoms and possible outcomes of certain traumatic cases. Furthermore, when it comes to Murdoch's entire oeuvre, any traumatic incident cannot be encountered in terms of historical, cultural, national contexts. In other words, she has not met a rapist, she has not been racially discriminated, she has not enlisted the war and the like. However, her intense concern over human sufferings leads her to create characters that experience, in a sense, personal traumas with catastrophic consequences. Thus, the trauma in her novels can be labelled only as much as "the trauma of the quotidian" (my coinage). In such a context, the novels *The Black Prince* and *The Sea, The Sea* offer the reader a platform to explore the manner in which the trivial traumas with their unexpected and tragic consequences can be represented. The texts demonstrate how traumatic episodes cause alienation between the self and others by challenging fundamental assumptions about moral laws and social relationships in a complex and modern world. Considering the common characteristics a number of trauma fiction share, these particular novels seem to be appropriate to be analyzed applying the methods of trauma theory. Therefore, in the first chapter of this thesis the theory is traced, focusing mainly on its historical development.

Trauma studies are closely linked with psychoanalytical studies so this thesis will naturally refer to Freud's and Lacan's interpretations of trauma and will take them as the basic perceptions to analyze Murdoch's two novels. Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, is very important in the field of trauma theory. He is fascinated by hysteria and traumatic neurosis. According to him, "traumatic" means "any excitations from outside which are powerful enough to break through the protective shield" (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle* 33). Since the traumatic event is unexpected, the mind of the person involved is completely out of balance. Therefore trauma kicks in later. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920) Freud introduces his theory of traumatic repetition and the function of dreams. In the book, he asserts that

The study of dreams may be considered the most trustworthy method of investigating deep mental processes. Now dreams occurring in traumatic neuroses have the characteristic of repeatedly bringing the patient back into the situation of his accident, a situation from which he wakes up in another fright (11).

Another element which is crucial in Freud's theory is his claim that a person who goes through a traumatic event is not capable of immediately acknowledging the traumatic nature of that experience. Freud notes that trauma is caused by the dialectics between the two experiences. So there is a certain amount of time between the moment that the traumatic event takes place and the moment when one acknowledges the traumatic nature of that experience. One could say that the first experience is somehow repressed and that this experience comes to the surface due to a triggering mechanism. Being repetitively confronted with trauma, the victim gets traumatised time after time. The process of repetition is called as "repetition compulsion." This compulsion has startled Freud because the returning traumatic event is inexplicably against the will of the one it inhabits. This paradox is one of the main concerns of Freud's book and will be elaborated in the first Chapter.

It is Lacan who reformulates the concept of trauma half century later. What he adds to the Freudian conception of trauma is the idea that trauma is *real* insofar as it remains unsymbolizable and is a permanent dislocation at the very heart of the subject. British Lacan scholar Sean Homer emphasizes the main difference between Freud and Lacan when the representability of traumas in dreams is concerned with the words. He asserts that "The experience of trauma also reveals how the real can never be completely absorbed into the symbolic, into social reality. No matter how often we try to put our pain and suffering into language, to symbolize it, there is always something left over" (84). In other words, there is always a residue that cannot be transformed through language into symbols via dreams. This excess, this "X" as Lacan will call it, is the real. As we will see, the real thus becomes associated with the death drive and *jouissance*. Lacan underlines the relation of the two associations with the impossibility of the encounter with the real.

Besides Freud and Lacan, there are also other important theorists of trauma theory. One of them, Cathy Caruth agrees with Freud in saying that the person involved in the trauma “was never fully conscious during the accident itself” (*Unclaimed Experience* 17). However, she also claims that the trauma returns in latency. She writes:

The experience of trauma, the fact of latency, would thus seem to consist, not in the forgetting of a reality that can hence never be full known, but in an inherent latency within the experience itself. The historical power of the trauma is not just that the experience is repeated after its forgetting, but that it is only in and through its inherent forgetting that it is first experienced at all (*Unclaimed Experience* 17).

The difference in their perception of latency is that Caruth sees the pathological nature of the traumatic experience as defined by the structure of the traumatic event and not by the distortion as Freud claims. For Caruth, the latency is in fact present within the traumatic occurrence itself. She clearly claims that the person involved in the traumatic experience is actually injured during the event, which is in contrast with Freud. Yet the patient does not register the incident in a conscious way. Hence, the victim does not fully experience the event a second time and he will never be able to find out what really happened.

The first reaction of the person who goes through a traumatic experience is to get rid of the burden as soon as possible though it is, in the case of Lacan, impossible. Freud and Caruth have illustrated in their theory that the after effects for trauma survivors are very heavy on them. Repressions of the traumatic experience, traumatic repetitive dreams, the force of triggering etc. are only part of the complex process trauma patients have to go through.

The second part of the first chapter intends to enlighten the principles of the theory and to foreground the prominent theorists in this field with their relevant works. However, the literature accumulated in this field offers us a variety of cases. The most prominent theorists are Cathy Caruth, Soshana Felman, Kali Tal, Dominick LaCapra, Geoffrey Hartman, Ruth Leys, Anne Whitehead, Kai Erikson. Some of them have explored the origin and principles of the theory while the others have preferred to write

on specific traumas as case studies. Each work, however, contributes to the development and application of the theory. The last part of the chapter draws attention to representation of trauma in literature. Trauma narratives include a great variety of topics ranging from slave narratives to Holocaust representations. In each of the chosen texts, the common point is to demonstrate how the trauma is viewed, represented and displayed in specific cases. For instance, a Chinese American Maxine Hong Kingston's works are generally reviewed under the light of trauma theories.

The next chapter centres upon Iris Murdoch. First of all, her literary life is elaborated with specific focus on her writing style, the techniques she employs, the genre she is affected and her own moral philosophy. Since the appearance of her first published novel *Under the Net* in 1954, Murdoch has emerged as Richard Todd argues, "not only as one of the most productive and influential British novelist of her generation, equally importantly, as a powerfully intellectual and original theorist of fiction" (13). Todd emphasises that the priority Murdoch has given in her works, her obsession in writing as a realist in the nineteenth century tradition of English and European fiction. She is quite prolific writer producing twenty six novels, five philosophical works, six plays, two poetry books. Iris Murdoch is a philosopher as well as a novelist. Her desire to think about the lives of human beings and their relationship to morality has drawn her simultaneously to write philosophy. She always prefers moral philosophy to analytic or linguistic philosophy. Anne Rowe asserts "Murdoch possessed an uncanny talent for identifying the underlying presuppositions of the reigning philosophical conceptions of her day" (20). However, proposing moral philosophy might lead the reader to consider her as a master of "Godless Theology." Yet she defies the term claiming that such categorization may be too much simplification. As well as her career in literature and philosophy, Murdoch's traumatic life is also elaborated in this chapter. Her problematic Irish identity and complicated love affairs are respectively treated. Finally, to what extent does she reflect these issues on her fiction and how her characters represents these traumas in the novels are also included.

The third chapter gathers around the representation of psychological trauma in *The Black Prince* (1973). When read for the first time, *The Black Prince* attracts the attention of readers with its highly tragic plot and successfully depicted characters.

What readers encounter in *The Black Prince* in the name of a love tragedy, is an elderly man Bradley Pearson's case who foolishly falls in love with Julian, thirty years his junior. The two are finally separated; the former passes away and the latter gets married with her boy friend. The novel begins and closes with a scene of violence. Bradley's best friend Arnold Baffin telephones Bradley to tell that he has just murdered his wife, Rachel. As a matter of fact, there is no death, and by the end of the novel, the phone rings again, but this time it is Rachel reporting that she has just killed her husband. Bradley hurries to his friend's house to help her. To his surprise, he is sentenced for the murder of Arnold Baffin in turn. Although the plot revolves around the beginning and the ending, the complicated events further reveal the various traumas of the characters and at the same time the text opens itself to trauma criticism.

At the heart of Bradley's trauma, there lies his tragic love affair with Julian. The disillusionment with life, the unsuccessful marriage and his repressed homosexual tendency are all stimulants of Bradley's illogical love affair with Julian. After being left by Julian, Bradley undergoes a genuine trauma causing him to experience a state of numbness. The tragic consequence of his coming into terms with his numbness reveals itself in the form of having no objection to an accusation for Arnold's murder, which would be the expected reaction under the normal circumstances.

One of the passive responses that traumatized people experience is numbness. Under the effect of trauma, the victim becomes emotionally detached or numb. The person can become confused in ordinary situations and experience memory problems. In his essay "Notes on Trauma and Community" Kai Erikson states that "Numbness and slowness of feeling shared by traumatized people everywhere may mean that relating to others comes hard" (In Caruth *Trauma* 186). However numbness is not the only traumatic symptom Bradley Pearson reveals throughout the text. Interesting enough, all the other symptoms, too can be classified under the umbrella term "traumatic consequences."

In the last chapter, the concept of "belatedness" is investigated particularly through Murdoch's Booker Prize winning novel *The Sea, The Sea* (1978). The term "belatedness" first used by Freud as "Nachträglichkeit" indicates the period between the original moment of trauma and its revivification. "Belatedness" is at the core of trauma

theory since the traumatic event as Caruth argues, “is not experienced as it occurs, it is fully evident only in connection with another place and in another time” (*Trauma* 8). Dominick LaCapra, an expert on Holocaust trauma, affirms that “The traumatic event is repressed or denied and registers only belatedly after the passage of a period of latency. This effect of belatedness has of course been a manifest aspect of the Holocaust” (*History and Memory After Auschwitz* 9). According to Caruth, this “temporal delay” is not limited to the Holocaust but can be found in traumatic events in general (*Trauma* 9). In this sense, the belated effects of Charles Arrowby’s trauma in *The Sea, The Sea* enable readers to see how his trauma after the death of Clement affects his life and which tragic consequences it bears.

The text, thematically, continues to explore the theme of love and renunciation like *The Black Prince*. Charles Arrowby, the narrator has just retired from a successful career as a theatrical director and has moved to Shruff End. His attempts to remain in solitude are disillusioned by the arrival of various visitors. Each of these people, particularly his cousin James, takes on special tasks of reflecting his past. However, Charles’s most serious crisis is not these visitations but his discovery that his childhood love Hartley is living in the village happily married to a man named Ben Fitch. His obsession with her ends up with the strange kidnapping of Hartley. Hartley’s captivity at Shruff End for a few days is useless in convincing Hartley to leave her husband and live with Charles. In his self deluded world, he strongly believes that Hartley is also in love with him. In the end, being deserted by her he is tragically disappointed. The underlying reason under his disillusionment is his inability to accept the reality. The trauma he has experienced after the death of Clement, his ex-lover in a way is confronting with the realities of his previous relations. It dawns on him that he has always been after innocent relations in his life. In his childhood he lacks loving parents, especially his undemonstrative mother leads him to be in search of innocent love. In this sense, Clement, who is fairly older than him, is the appropriate substitute for his mother. In every occasion he attempts to fulfil this infantile wish. The repressed infantile wish turns out to be an obsession and resurfaces as the belated effect of the trauma of Clement’s death.

Consequently, the aim of this thesis is to explore and disclose the representations of trauma in Murdoch's popular novels *The Black Prince* and *The Sea, The Sea*. As mentioned before, the core of this study has not been to claim that *The Sea, The Sea* and *The Black Prince* are stereotyped "trauma fictions" as is the term very often used in trauma terminology these days. Just the opposite, the recent findings of the trauma theory make it possible for the researchers to delve into the psychologies of the characters together with the authors and categorising texts accordingly. This is something in fact has been done by many authors without being fully conscious. The good thing is that recent findings in trauma theory give us the chance to label and to find the connection between trivial things and their unexpected consequences. Seemingly Murdoch, too, stemming from her real life traumas creates in the two chosen texts, typical characters which reveal themselves as traumatic ones. As stated in the beginning, we live in "the age of trauma" and unfortunately, people who are fortunate enough to escape from wars, natural disasters, any actions containing violence cannot recover easily from the side effects traumas.

CHAPTER I

TRAUMA THEORY

To give a clear definition of trauma is not possible since the trauma concept is not clear-cut. However, Cathy Caruth, one of the central figures in cultural trauma theory in 1990s, comes close to a reasonable definition when she describes trauma as “an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena” (*Unclaimed Experience* 11). Many people have spoken and written about traumatic events and the after effects for the survivors. One of the main agreements between all those theorists is that everyone seems to be aware of the fact that trauma symptoms are a heavy burden for the patient.

Trauma cannot arise without a cause; yet it is different from grief or shock due to its long lasting effects. Shock and grief have shorter recovery periods. Traumatized people may suffer throughout their lives and even pass the effects of trauma throughout generations. The effects of trauma are strong and generally result in permanent damage. Also, the effects are not reversible, which means that it is impossible return for victims to their pre-trauma conditions.

Over the last decade the concept of trauma has enjoyed a dramatic development. Critics have argued that we live in a “age of traumas.” The application of the concept to extremely diverse domain and its extension to the discourse of a “century of traumas” leads to its becoming a literary theory.

1.1. The Origin of Theory

When we scrutinize the etymology of the word “trauma” we see that it derives from the Greek word “traumata” or “*τραύμα*” which means “wound.” First used in English in the seventeenth century in medicine, it refers to only a bodily injury caused by an external agent; furthermore, what wounded and what cured share the same term so it is possible to use the word as in the following sentence “Physicians applied traumatic herbs or balsams to injuries”, which with today’s English would look quite ambiguous. (*The Oxford Dictionary of Word Histories*, 521) In the early editions of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (1893) the entries for trauma, traumatic, traumatism and the prefix

“traumato-” solely allude to physical wounds. The one exception comes from an 1895 edition of *Popular Science Monthly*. It writes “We have named this physical trauma, a morbid nervous condition” (45). As it is implied, physical trauma has an affinity with nervous system. This is the first sign of the drift of trauma from the physical to the mental dimension, thereafter; the word would be contextualized under the heading of psychological studies in the late nineteenth century.

Contrary to the first uses of the word, today, in the current edition of OED, citations to physical wounds are reduced to three and are substantially outnumbered by those from psychoanalysis and psychiatry. The predominant popular connotations of trauma now circle around metaphors of psychic scars and mental wounds. Nevertheless, the word trauma, which has been attributed various meanings at various times has not reached a certain definition for a long time. For a good discussion of the history of the notion and for a recent attempt to define it, Charles R. Figley and his work, *Trauma and Its Wake* (1985) is one of the best sources. He describes trauma as “[an] overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the responses to the event occurs in often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena” (5). For instance, a soldier who has borne witness sudden and massive death during the war reacts belatedly in a numbed state and besides, re-experiences the war scene later in repeated nightmares. This is a central and recurring image of trauma in our century.

In this regard, the people of twentieth century experiencing two World Wars and many accidents depending upon rapid developments in technology and transportation system and numerous terrorist attacks because of some racial, religious or political reasons are most likely, supposed to have the traumatic symptoms later in their lives. Presumably for this reason that the twentieth century is frequently called as the century of trauma. Deborah M. Hortvitz, a lecturer at Salem State College, argues in her book; “Over the past one hundred and twenty-five years, three unique forms of trauma have emerged into public consciousness: hysteria in the late Victorian Era, combat neurosis following World War I, and violence against women and children in our era” (*Literary Trauma* 12). In Hortvitz’s words, each time public attention to the concept of trauma is directed and contextualized by social and political motives. Hysteria has been regarded

as demonic possession till the end of the late Victorian Period. Yet, this allegedly religious belief is shaken by Freud's publication of "The Neuro-Psychoses of Defence" (1894), in which he recognizes trauma as a medical illness and at the same time, the source of the hysteria.

The concept is seriously investigated for the second time in response to symptoms of "shell shock" presented by soldiers who have been under heavy bombardments and accordingly show catatonic reactions in the First World War. Research on the combat trauma stops shortly after that war, but resumes following World War II; it reaches a peak during and immediately following the Vietnam War. In comparison with the First World War, the Second World War is more destructive since the latter spreads out the world rapidly in the process of globalization while the former only contains European countries. Therefore, the death rate is higher in the Second World War. Ideologically, because of Nazi provocation, thousands of Jews are slaughtered and the next Jewish generation bears the traumatic symptoms of genocide forever. Thus, Holocaust has an undeniable impact on the emergence of trauma theory.

The sufferings of Jewish people in concentration camps and the repetitive haunting effect of these sufferings throughout generations prove that trauma is a wound inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind. In this respect, the German-Jewish Marxist philosopher and also a witness to the genocide, Theodor Adorno declares in his well known statement that "To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric" (1981 342). In saying so, he puts an emphasis on what great influence trauma has on people. He maintains that "After Auschwitz there is no word tinged from on high, not even a theological one that has any right unless it underwent a transformation" (1973 362). According to him, all Western culture is at once polluted by and complicit with Auschwitz, yet the denial of the culture is equally barbaric. If silence is no option either, Adorno sets art and cultural criticism the severe and the paradoxical, imperative of finding ways of representing the unrepresentable. In Adorno's wake, the problem of Auschwitz is the determining catastrophe that starts the trauma paradigm; in consequence, after 1945 all culture must address to this question.

Thus, psychiatry, psychoanalysis, and neurobiology have increasingly insisted on the direct effects of external violence in psychic disorders. This trend has culminated in the

study of Post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, which “explores the emergence of a more sophisticated understanding of the immediate and long-term psychological consequences of traumatic events” (*Trauma and Its Wake* 7). As it is generally understood today, post-traumatic stress disorder reflects the direct imposition on the mind of the unavoidable reality of horrific events, the taking over of the mind, psychically and neurobiologically, by an event that cannot be controlled. As such, PTSD seems to provide the most direct link between the psyche and the external violence and to be the most destructive psychic disorder.

The centrality and the complexity of trauma in our century is most profoundly addressed in two important and controversial works by Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920) and *Moses and Monotheism* (1939). Cathy Caruth, publishes *Unclaimed Experience* in which she works through the basic principles of the theory. In her book, she first treats the genealogy of the notion “These two works, written during the events surrounding World War I and World War II, respectively, have been called upon by contemporary critics as [something] showing direct relation between Freud’s theory of trauma and historical violence, a directness presumably reflected in the theory of trauma he produces” (3). These two pieces read together represent Freud’s formulation of trauma as a theory of peculiar incomprehensibility of human survival. It is only by reading individual trauma in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, in the context of the notion of historical trauma in *Moses and Monotheism* that we can understand the full complexity of trauma paradigm at the heart of the human experience.

Most of the theorists who engage with trauma suggest that Freud’s work *Beyond Pleasure Principle* forms the basis of the trauma theory. Freud attempts to describe and conceptualize trauma by giving the example of an accident through which the terms; traumatic neurosis and the latency are defined.

It may happen that someone gets away, apparently unharmed, from the spot where he has suffered a shocking accident for instance a train collision. In the course of the following weeks, however, he develops a series of grave psychical and motor symptoms, which can be ascribed only to his shock or whatever else happened at the time of accident. He has developed a “traumatic neurosis.” This appears quite incomprehensible and is therefore a novel fact.

The time that elapsed between the accident and the first appearance of the symptoms is called the “incubation period,” a transparent allusion to the pathology of infectious disease. It is the feature which one might term “latency” (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle* 84).

This two-stage theory of trauma, the first forgotten impact making a belated return after a pause, has been central to cultural trauma theory. The psychoanalyst Jean Laplanche has translated Freud’s term for belated or deferred action as “afterwardness, a deliberately awkward word that foregrounds the odd temporality of an event not understood as traumatic until its return” (*Essays on Otherness* 260).

The psychoanalytical concept of afterwardsness, derived from German adjective-adverb “afterwards” or “deferred” (*nachträglich*), first emerges in Freud’s unfinished essay “A Project for a Scientific Psychology” in 1895. It comes to mean that a memory is repressed which has only become a trauma after the event. However, it is in *Studies on Hysteria* (1895) that Freud elaborates on the idea of deferred action. According to him, the devastating effect of a traumatic event occurring in childhood reappears retrospectively when the child attains sexual maturity.

In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud tries to understand the reason why catastrophic events seem to repeat themselves for those who have passed through them, which has been coined as “repetition compulsion.” Roger Luckhurst, the writer of *The Trauma Question* (2008), asserts in his book that “In essence, the psyche frequently returned to the scenes of the unpleasure because, restaging the traumatic movement over and over again, it hoped belatedly to process the unassimilable material, to find ways of mastering the trauma retroactively” (9). Namely, the conscious restages the traumatic event despite its painful effect on the victim to overwhelm the devastating power of trauma.

Freud’s striking analysis of a child game offers an explanation in order to comprehend “repetition compulsion.” In the simplest form of the game, the child has a piece of string attached to a wooden reel which he throws from him, murmuring “o-o-o-o,” then pulls back, saying “da.” Freud interprets the first sound as the child’s version of “fort” which means “gone away,” the second as the German for “there.” According to

Freud, the child associates the departure of the toy with his mother's occasional excursions from the household without him. Despite the unpleasant feeling the game evokes, the child repeatedly experiences the same play. On this point, Freud theorizes that the child is attempting to master the sensation of loss "in allowing his mother to go away without protesting," but asks in puzzlement "how then does his repetition of this distressing experience as a game fit in with the pleasure principle?" (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle* 90).

Traumatic repetitions could be seen as the result of an attempt to retrospectively master the original trauma, a child's play as an attempt to turn passivity into activity. At the beginning, he is in a passive situation but by repeating it, though it is unpleasant, as a game, he takes on an active part. Thus, at the beginning, repetition of a distressing event contradicts with the psyche's search for pleasure, but, actually, as Freud indicates "the child may, after all, only have been able to repeat his unpleasant experience in play because the repetition carried along with it a yield of pleasure of another sort but none the less a direct one" (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle* 94).

Cathy Caruth also explains and exemplifies "the repetition compulsion" in her book. She points out that "In some cases these repetitions are particularly striking because they seem not to be initiated by the individual's own acts but rather appear as the possession of some people by a sort of fate, a series of painful events to which they are subjected, and which seem to be entirely outside their wish or control" (2). She continues by relating the story of Tancred, which is written by Tasso in his romantic epic "Gerusalemme Liberata" and is first narrated by Freud in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* to explain the essence and the latency of trauma. Caruth writes:

Its hero, Tancred, unwittingly kills his beloved Clorinda in a duel while she is disguised in the armour of an enemy knight. After her burial he makes his way into a strange magic forest which strikes the Crusader's army with terror. He slashes with his sword at a tall tree; but blood streams from the cut and the voice of Clorinda, whose soul is imprisoned in the tree, is heard complaining that he has wounded his beloved again (2).

The actions of Tancred, wounding his beloved in a battle and then, unknowingly, seemingly by chance, wounding her again, evocatively represents in Freud's text the way that the experience of a trauma repeats itself, exactly and unremittingly, through the unknowing acts of the survivor and against his wish. As Tasso's story dramatizes it, the repetition at the heart of catastrophe emerges as the unwitting reviving of an event that one can simply leave behind. Thus, what seems to be suggested by Freud in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* is that the wound of the mind is not like the wound of the body, a simple and healable event, but rather an event that, like Tancred's first infliction of a mortal wound on the disguised Clorinda in the duel, is experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known and is therefore not available to consciousness until it imposes itself again, repeatedly in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor. Repetition compulsions are the inevitable consequences of traumatic events. Individuals, collectives and nations risk trapping themselves in cycles of uncomprehending repetition unless the traumatic event is translated from repetition to the healthy analytic process of "working through."

Metaphorically speaking, Freud envisages the mind as a single cell with an outer membrane that does the work of filtering material from the outside world, processing nutrients, repelling toxins, and retaining the integrity of its borders, just as the consciousness mind does. A traumatic event is something unprecedented that penetrates the membrane and floods the cell with foreign matter, leaving the cell overwhelmed and trying to repair the damage. Freud argues that "We describe as "traumatic" any excitations from outside which are powerful enough to break through the protective shield" (*Beyond Pleasure Principle* 88). He adds:

Such an event as an external trauma is bound to provoke a disturbance on a large scale in the functioning of the organism's energy and to set in motion every possible defence measure. At the same time... there is no longer any possibility of preventing the mental apparatus from being flooded with large amounts of stimulus which have broken in and of binding them, in the psychological sense, so that they can be disposed of (89).

Freud's late work, *Moses and Monotheism* includes his speculations on the origin of Judaism by using the analogy of the effect of trauma on the individual for entire race. In

the biblical account, Moses is one of the captive Hebrews, who eventually arises as their leader and leads his race out of Egypt back to Canaan. Freud, from another perspective, announces at the beginning of his account that Moses, in spite of being the liberator of the Hebrew, is not himself a Hebrew, but an Egyptian, a fervent follower of an Egyptian pharaoh and his sun-centred monotheism. After the pharaoh's murder, according to Freud, Moses becomes a leader of the Hebrews and brings them out of Egypt in order to preserve the fading monotheistic religion. After the Egyptian Moses leads the Hebrews from Egypt, Freud claims, they murder him in a rebellion. They have repressed the deed and in the passing of two generations replaced his god with a volcano god named Yahweh, and assimilated the liberating act of Moses to the acts of another man, the priest of Yahweh, also named Moses, who is completely different from the first Moses with the time he has lived and the place.

The most important moment in Jewish history is thus, from the Freudian point of view, not the literal return to freedom, but the repression of this murder and its effect. Freud proposes that the Jews have a hidden traumatic secret in their childhood, the murder of their liberator and law-giver, Moses. Accordingly, Freud applies traumatic neuroses of the individual to the group. He asserts "In it we once more come upon the phenomenon of latency, the emergence of unintelligible manifestations calling for an explanation and an early and later forgotten, event as a necessary determinant. We also find characteristics of compulsion [in their act]" (*Moses and Monotheism* 16). As Roger Luckhurst points out "In one of the clearest summations of the aetiology of traumatic neurosis, Freud argues that the compulsions deriving from forgotten traumatic kernel displayed great physical intensity and at the same time exhibit a far-reaching independence of the organisation of the other mental processes" (*The Trauma Question* 10). There is a common claim that Jews act "like a State within a State." This analogy triggers the prejudice against Jews as unassimilated foreign entities in European nations. This fact partially explains the hatred they have been subject to and at the same time the reason for the massive genocide the world history has ever recorded. To sum up in *Moses and Monotheism*, Freud argues that individual trauma stemming from the repressed deed of Moses' murder, turns into a collective trauma, from the consequences of the event an entire race is terribly affected.

Not only Freud but also Jacques Lacan inspires the trauma theorists, particularly, in terms of the relation of trauma with literature. Despite being a fervent follower of Freud, Lacan asserts his different perspective on trauma in his essay “Desire and the Interpretation of Desire in Hamlet” (1977). Lacan assumes that the human psyche is determined by structures of language and that the linguistic structures of *Hamlet* sheds light on human desire. The point where he diverts from Freud is Oedipal theories and the central theme of mourning that runs through *Hamlet*. In Lacan's analysis, Hamlet unconsciously postulates the role of phallus, the cause of his inaction, and is increasingly distanced from reality by mourning, fantasy, narcissism and psychosis, which create holes in the real, imaginary, and symbolic aspects of his psyche. In other words, through a Lacanian lens, trauma can be identified as the encounter with the real; the loss of unity with the mother, intrusion of language in the symbolic order, loss of phallus; fear of castration, all of which are the original trauma for an individual. It is something that shapes, marks the individual forever. According to Lacan, trauma is in the origin of the individual. All these experiences are not mastered by the individual, but they produce him. While Lacan makes reference to the encounter with the real as traumatic, his theory suggests that this encounter only acts as a place-holder and the true trauma only occurs belatedly and through repetition.

The concept of repression is one of the most basic terms in trauma theory, and denotes the process by which certain thoughts or memories are expelled from consciousness and confined to the unconscious. Freud is first led to hypothesise the process of repression through his investigation into the amnesia of hysterical patients. He later distinguishes between primal repression, a “mythical” forgetting of something that was never conscious to begin with, a “psychical act” by which the unconscious is first constituted and secondary repression, concrete acts of repression whereby some idea or perception that was once conscious is expelled from the conscious. Since repression does not destroy the ideas or memories that are its target, but merely confines them to the unconscious, the repressed material is always liable to return in a distorted form, in symptoms, dreams, slips of the tongue, etc.

For Lacan, repression is the fundamental operation which distinguishes neurosis from the other clinical structures. What is it that is repressed? At one point Lacan speaks

of “the signified as the object of repression” (*Ecrits* 55), but he soon abandons this view and argues instead that it is always “a signifier that is repressed, never a signified” (*Seminars XI* 218). This latter view seems to correspond more closely to Freud’s view that what is repressed is not the “affect” which can only be displaced or transformed but the “ideational representative” of the drive. Lacan also takes up Freud’s distinction between primal repression and secondary repression:

1. Primal repression, in German *Urverdrängung*, is the alienation of desire when need is articulated in demand (*Ecrits* 286). It is also the unconscious signifying chain (*Ecrits* 314). Primary repression is the repression of the first signifier. Lacan asserts that “From the moment he speaks, from that precise moment and not before, I understand that there is repression” (*Seminars XX* 53). Lacan does not see primary repression as a specific psychical act, localisable in time, but as a structural feature of language itself namely, its necessary incompleteness, the impossibility of ever saying “the truth about truth” (*Ecrits* 868).

2. Secondary repression, in German *Verdrängung*, is a specific psychical act by which a signifier is elided from the signifying chain. Secondary repression is structured like a metaphor, and always involves “the return of the repressed,” whereby the repressed signifier reappears under the guise of the various formations of the unconscious such as symptoms, dreams, slips of tongue, jokes. In secondary repression, repression and the return of the repressed are the same thing.

1.2. The Principles and Forerunners of Theory

The concept of trauma which is first featured and contextualized by Freud has become a major standpoint for the research on psychoanalysis so far. Yet, the trauma paradigm is so intense and far-reaching that by the 1990's trauma started to cross disciplinary lines, entering the work of literary and cultural theories. Luckhurst asserts “Trauma has become a paradigm because it has been turned into a repertoire of compelling stories about the enigmas of identity, memory and selfhood that have saturated Western cultural life” (*The Trauma Question* 80). A theory of trauma suggests ways of reconceptualising important directions in critical theory itself. In particular, the recent crisis in poststructuralist thought brought on by the Heidegger and de Man

controversies seems to require a way of thinking about how events in the past return to haunt the present. More fundamentally, it may be useful to look again at the rhetoric of poststructuralist and postmodern theory as well as their emphasis on decentering, fragmentation, the sublime and apocalyptic and explore what relation they might have to the traumatic historical events of mid-century. This question becomes more immediately relevant when we see thinkers like Jacques Derrida, Jean-Francois Lyotard, and Hayden White writing explicitly about the Holocaust in the 1980s in ways that seem uncannily to echo earlier work of theirs which, while full of rhetoric of catastrophe, contained no references to that history.

Cathy Caruth, Shoshana Felman, Kali Tal, Dominick LaCapra, Geoffrey Hartman, Ruth Leys are the names we can call as forerunners of this newly emerging theory. Combining knowledge from the psychological sciences with the psychoanalytic theory of Lacan and Freud, these scholars start excavating narratives of war, torture, rape, genocide, natural disaster, death, love, addiction, and abandonment, and present them as cultural evidence and constant re-enactments of both individual and collective trauma. Kai Erikson makes a clear distinction between individual trauma and collective trauma in his work, *Everything in Its Path* as follows:

By individual trauma I mean a blow to psyche that breaks through one's defences so suddenly and with such brutal force that one cannot react to it effectively [...] By collective trauma, on the other hand, mean a blow to the basic tissues of social life that damages the bonds attaching people together and impairs the prevailing sense of community (153-4).

As natural consequence of the trauma either it is individual or collective, people tend to exhibit various symptoms. Categories of symptoms are re-experiencing symptoms, nightmares, and flashbacks; avoidance symptoms, the marks of psychic numbing; and the symptoms of heightened physiological arousal; hyper-vigilance, disturbed sleep, a distracted mind. Indeed, the vivid and precise return of the event appears to be accompanied by amnesia for the past. In the essay entitled "Retrieval and Integration of Traumatic Memories with the 'Painting Cure'" Greenberg and Van der Kolk, in this sense, assert that

Pathologies of memory are characteristic features of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). These range from amnesia for part, or all, of the traumatic events to frank dissociation, in which large realms of experience of aspects of one's identity are disowned. Such failures of recall can paradoxically coexist with the opposite: intruding memories and unbidden repetitive images of traumatic events (191).

Over a century ago, Pierre Janet, struck by the observation that some memories could become the nucleus of later psychopathology, devoted much of his attention to studying how the mind processes memories. He focuses on the difference between the traumatic memory and narrative or ordinary memory. In order to manifest the difference, Janet often used a clinical example: his patient Irene, a young woman of twenty three years of age who was traumatized by the tragic death of her mother. In the months preceding her mother's death, Irene cared for her conscientiously. She had hardly slept for sixty successive nights. Thus she was utterly exhausted when her mother finally died one day. Being unable to grasp the reality of this event, she tried to revive the corpse, trying to force it to speak, continuing to give it medications, cleaning its mouth. In the morning Irene left her house trying to get help from her aunt. However, she did not tell her that her mother was dead. Sensing something was unusual, her aunt went to apartment and discovered the corpse. Initially, she did not want to go to the funeral; during the funeral she laughed continuously. After a couple of weeks, her aunt brought her to the clinic of Janet. The most absurd symptom was that Irene had absolutely no memory of the death of her mother and did not want to believe that her mother had died. After six months of treatment and hypnotic therapy, Irene slowly started to tell the story of her mother's death.

Traumatic memories are unassimilated scraps of overwhelming experiences, which need to be integrated with existing mental schemes, and be transformed into narrative language. Janet's case of Irene illustrates a situation in which this integration initially was totally absent. Irene had complete amnesia for the death of her mother and only experienced traumatic re-enactments. This case also illustrates the fear and the repugnance with which traumatized persons respond when confronted with their hitherto dissociated traumatic memories.

1.3. The Narrative Representation of Trauma

So far trauma theory has been discussed within the realm of psychoanalytic studies and the human history. When it comes to the relation of trauma with literature, it is strongly affected by literary practice. Both philosophical and linguistic scepticism have challenged the possibility of certain knowledge. Trauma theory introduces a psychoanalytic scepticism as well, which does not give up on knowledge but suggests the existence of a traumatic kind, one that cannot be made entirely conscious, in the sense of being fully retrieved or communicated without distortion. On this point, Caruth, who has written extensively on psychoanalytic and trauma theories, states “If Freud turns the literature to describe traumatic experience; it is because literature, like psychoanalysis, is interested in the complex relation between knowing and not knowing. And it is, indeed at the specific point at which knowing intersect that the language of literature and psychoanalytic theory of traumatic experience precisely meet” (*Unclaimed Experience* 3) Thus, the theory emerges as Geoffrey Hartman asserts in his essay “focusing on the relationship of words and trauma, and helping us to “read the trauma” with the help of literature” (“On traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies” 66).

Accordingly, we see numerous works relevant to various kinds of trauma; collective trauma and national identity, post-colonial trauma, slave narratives, war trauma, genocide, holocaust literature, rape, love and other personal traumas. To comprehend the magnitude of trauma, the emphasis must be put on the individual nuances and textures of each victim’s narrative. Consequently there emerge numerous kinds of trauma narratives. To identify and feature the characteristics of the trauma narratives has been a very a recent literary task. Anne Whitehead, a lecturer in Modern and Contemporary Literature and Theory at Newcastle University, publishes *Trauma Fiction* (2004) in which for the first time, the literary potential of trauma is examined, bringing trauma theory and literary texts together. She terms trauma fiction an “emerging genre” (4) which suggests that we have not seen its full extent so far. The effect of the trauma theory on emergence of trauma fiction is prominent and undeniable. The prominence of trauma theory has enabled novelists to find new ways of conceptualizing trauma and has shifted attention away from the question of what is remembered of the past to why and how it is remembered. This raises, in turn, the

related issues of politics, ethics and aesthetics. The desire among various cultural groups to represent or to make specific historically significant examples of trauma visible has given rise to numerous important works in contemporary fiction.

The origin of contemporary trauma fiction can be traced back to 1980s when post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is first included in the diagnostic canon of the medical and psychiatric professions. The formal recognition of PTSD is the result of prolonged political campaign by Vietnam veterans who have organized agitation groups against the continuation of the war. These gatherings spread throughout America and aim to make the society aware about effects of war and offer support or counselling to returning soldiers. The veterans launch research about the impact of war-time experiences on combatants. This ends up with a five volume study on the psychological legacies of Vietnam, which clearly elaborates the syndrome of PTSD and shows its direct relationship to combat experience. In formally recognizing this condition as a new diagnostic category, American Psychiatry Association acknowledges that a psychic disorder can be wholly environmentally determined and a traumatic event occurring in the adulthood can have lasting psychological consequences.

Narratives about trauma flourished particularly in 1980s and 1990s with increased public awareness of trauma and trauma theory. However, these narrative approaches have varied in their depth and purposes. Although popular culture has at times offered some insight into the psychology of fear, it has more often exploited such anxieties with tales of terror, suspense and abnormalities. Trauma narratives go beyond presenting trauma as subject matter or character study. They reveal many obstacles to communicating such experience: silence, simultaneous knowledge and denial, dissociation, resistance and repression, among others. They try to invoke in readers what Dominick La Capra terms "emphatic unsettlement" (Writing 40-1) or empathy without over identification with victims, which can enable readers to work through the problems or mourn rather than merely to sentimentalize victim.

In critical discussions various patterns of texts are written, often because trauma fictions are considered to develop from the context of specific identity politics. As it has been mentioned before, Vietnam fictions help to compose not just any putative trauma aesthetic but the formation of PTSD itself. These works might include the innovative

reportage of Michael Herr's *Dispatches* (1977), Tim O'Brien's fiction or Larry Heinemann's novel about a group of post-traumatic combat veterans; *Paco's Story* (1986).

One of Caruth's recent studies *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* appears as a landmark publication in 1995. She edits essays and interviews by literary theorists, film makers, sociologists, psychiatrists in order to emphasise the trans-disciplinary nature of trauma theory. According to Caruth, inadequately realized at the time of its occurrence, trauma does not lie in the possession of individual or to be remembered at will but rather has haunting and possessive influence on victim and is, moreover, experienced for the first time only in its belated repetition. Her work suggests that the time sequence in trauma narratives prominently differs from the linear time sequence in conventional narration but adopts a distorted time sequence, instead. No narrative of trauma can be told in a linear way; it has a peculiar time sequence that must fracture conventional causality. Intermingling one time with another is labelled by Caruth as a form of possession or haunting. The ghost represents a suitable embodiment of the disjunction of temporality, surfacing of the past in the present as well as interpersonal or trans-generational consequences of secrecy and silence.

In modern fiction, there has been abundance of novels which explore haunted histories. The traces of unresolved past events or the ghost of those who died too suddenly and violently to be properly mourned possess those who are seeking to get on the task of living. Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987) is one of the most influential of this kind. Sethe, the leading character of the book, is haunted by the ghost of her murdered daughter, Beloved, who returns to claim the mother-love that she has so brutally denied. Beloved also represents the unresolved trauma of slavery, which haunts each of the characters in the novel. The traumatic experience of the slave woman was doubly silenced until late into the twentieth century. Feminist literary theorist, Spivak, argues in her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" "If, in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern female is even more deeply in shadow." In the same sense, Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1982) can be regarded as another striking example about women's traumatic experiences during slavery as well as the cult of true womanhood.

Traumas of women who undergo psychological, sexual and physical violence and suffer in the quest for identity have been narrated by several authors; among them, Ian McEwan, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Pauline Hopkins, Gayl Jones, Joyce Carol Oates, Margaret Atwood can be listed. Gilman's *The Yellow Paper* (1892), for example, aims at exposing the patriarchal "mental health" system, which approves even promotes the captivity of woman. The book causes us to comprehend how psychological and cultural sadism produces trauma for the story's female narrator. A.L. Kennedy is a Scottish writer who has dealt with trauma in her writing. Her novel *So I Am Glad* (1995) focuses on trauma of a woman, Jennifer Wilson, who has been sexually abused as a child by her parents, who died very soon, leaving her orphan.

Furthermore, British playwrights Sarah Daniels and Caryl Churchill's plays in which female characters suffer from PTSD are the evidence that theatrical language offers effective strategies to communicate the experience of trauma and theatre is an appropriate genre which allows for alternative means of articulation beyond language and words. For instance, Churchill's *Top Girls* (1991) illustrates various female characters, coming from different historical and cultural backgrounds, under the oppression of patriarchal social structure in which male characteristics, such as, independence, aggressiveness are acceptable and associated with power, while female traits, such as, co-dependence, intuition, and collaboration are inferior in comparison.

Apart from the representation of trauma by women, the Holocaust perspective also contributes the novelistic canon and sometimes claims a determining priority over the trajectory of trauma fiction. In the years immediately following World War II, writers take the responsibility of describing indescribable world of the ghettos and concentration camps in fiction. Many authors have felt compelled to write these stories, as a form of testament and as a way to memorialize those who were silenced by the Nazis. The origin of Holocaust literature traces back to video testimonies which first emerged in 1980s and they were immediately archived in the Yale University library. Dominick La Capra, who provides a broad-ranging, critical inquiry into the problem of trauma in his work, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (2001) argues that "Testimonies are significant in the attempt to understand the experience and its aftermath, including

the role of memory and its lapses, in coming to terms with-or denying and repressing-the past" (86-7).

Holocaust testimonies are original and reliable sources for trauma narratives but writing trauma of others does not mean simply telling the stories again in a literary pattern. The Holocaust is assumed as the conceptual "limit case" of human suffering, which violates the limits of language and representation. Accordingly, an artist can do no more than depict the trauma's traces, after effects, the confusion surrounding it and is inadequate of representing it thoroughly. On the other hand, the impossibility to represent is not viewed as a failure, so much as an integral part of ethical witness-bearing. As Jean-François Lyotard states in his book *Heidegger and "the jews"* (1988), "What art can do is bear witness to this aporia of art and to its pain. It does not say the unsayable, but says that it cannot say" (27). In these terms, unrepresentability becomes an indicator of truthfulness rather than an evasion of painful truths. Jerzy Kosinski's *The Painted Bird* (1965), Cynthia Ozick's *The Shawl* (1980), Thomas Keneally's *Shindlers's Ark* (1982), Martin Amis' *Time Arrow* (1991), Benjamin Vilkomirsky's *Fragments* (1995), Jonathan Safran Foer's *Everything is Illuminated* (2002) are regarded as prominent milestones of Holocaust trauma fiction.

The trans-generational trauma which is based on an assumption that the trauma can be passed on descendants in spite of the fact that they have never been exposed to the original traumatic event is contextualized in trauma fiction. The concept of trans generational trauma is developed primarily from the study of how Nazi Holocaust survivors' children are affected by their parents' traumatic experiences. In this regard, Foer's *Everything is Illuminated* presents the story of a young American Jew on his search for his grandfather's story of survival during the Holocaust. The book demonstrates how the traumas of witnessing, surviving and to some extent, perpetrating events have been transmitted onto subsequent generations, and that this transmission causes a disruption in the formation of their identities. On the other hand, a poetic representation of Holocaust trauma is successfully treated in a prose poem *Ghost* (1988) written by the contemporary British writer, Eva Figes, with a view to demonstrate an intriguing example of a poetic text expressing the post war trauma.

As far as cultural trauma is concerned, the post 9/11 fictions are certainly assumed as trauma narratives. Resulting with the death of nearly 3000 people, the catastrophe of 9/11 deeply affects the Americans and this trauma is expected to transmit over generations. A. Spielgelman's *In the Shadow of the No Towers* (2005), Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2005), Colum McCann's *Let the Great World Spin* (2009), Don DeLillo's post-9/11 novel, *Falling Man* (2007) are the most prominent of post 9/11 fiction. For instance, in Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, Oskar, the protagonist, is traumatised by the 9/11 terrorist attack, during which his father dies in the WTC collapse. Oskar is the only family member who knows that his father left several phone messages from the WTC tower on the day of his death, and Oskar is plagued by survivor's guilt, not least because he did not pick up the phone the last time his father called, immediately before the collapse. All Oskar has left are memories of his father and the recordings from the answering machine.

There have been also significant attempt to correlate the trauma paradigm with the nervous conditions of post-colonial literature. The post-colonial trauma narratives try to depict the sufferings of the colonized engendered by colonial oppression. The term post colonial is an ongoing process of imperial suppression. All post-colonial societies still subject in one way or another to overt or subtle forms of neo-colonial domination and the independence has not solved the problem. The developments of new elites within the independent societies, often buttressed by neo colonial institutions; the development of internal divisions based on racial linguistic or religious discriminations; the continuing unequal treatment of indigenous people in settler or invader societies, all these testify to the fact that post colonialism is a continuing process of resistance and reconstruction. In the atmosphere of persistent oppression, the literature produced by the writers who experience the pressure in person or bear witness the other's sufferings during the process can be easily categorized as trauma narratives. Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958), Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), J. M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980) and *Disgrace* (1999), Leslie Marmon Silko's *Almanac of the Dead* (1991) Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* (2000) are the best examples for the post colonial trauma narratives. These texts are often brought together by the critics as exemplary works because they are held to share a particular trauma aesthetic.

Most generally and perhaps most obviously, the late twentieth century is a time marked, indeed defined, by historical catastrophe. World wars, local wars, civil wars, ideological wars, ethnic wars, the two atomic bomb attacks, the cold war, genocides, famines, epidemics and the visual representations of these events have in large part triggered the emergence of the trauma theory. In this sense, it is not surprising that theorists have turned to concepts of trauma as tools of literary and cultural analysis. Trauma suspends between event and symptom and this model manifests itself throughout Freud's work *Moses and Monotheism* in which trauma represents both a specific event, such as a railway accident, and the symptomatic responses to that event which emerge a few weeks later. In this sense, the cultural trauma theory focuses on symptomatic responses of the victim to a specific trauma. Trauma theorist, Geoffrey Hartman suggests in his essay "On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies" two aspects of trauma, the event (content) and the symptomatic response to the event (form), operate in literary terms. Trauma like fiction occupies an uncertain but nevertheless a productive sphere between content and form. With their trans-generational and belated nature, cultural, historical and personal traumas are very interdisciplinary and are really appealing topics that will seemingly not be losing interest any time soon.

CHAPTER II

IRIS MURDOCH

Iris Murdoch was born of Anglo-Irish parents in Dublin in 1919. Her family moved to London when she was one year old. She was brought up in London. After winning a scholarship to Oxford College, she studied philosophy and classics, including Greek and Latin. She graduated in 1938 and was immediately appointed to the civil service as a Treasury worker. After the Second World War, she continued working for the government as an administrative officer with the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration in Belgium and Austria. While on the European continent, she got into touch with both Jean-Paul Sartre and Raymond Queneau, the French novelist, both of whose writings are influential on her literary development during the late 1940s and 1950s. She returned to Oxford for an advanced philosophy degree and had a chance to study with Ludwig Wittgenstein. After receiving her degree, she started to work as a lecturer at Oxford, which she maintained until she was nearly sixty years old. (*Iris Murdoch*, Richard Todd)

2.1. The "Traumatic" Life of Iris Murdoch

Iris Murdoch is a philosopher and a prolific writer and published in her lifetime twenty- six novels, eight books of philosophy, and eight plays. Her writing career began in 1953 with *Sartre: Romantic Rationalist*, a critical assessment of his writings. The book acknowledges Satre's deepened portrait of consciousness, the parallelisms between existentialist and British philosophy, and also the importance of the novel as a human enquiry. Satre's philosophy is an inspiration to many who feel that they must and can make out of all that misery and chaos to a better world. Thus, existentialism, as stated by Murdoch, "is the new religion and the new salvation" (*Satre: Romantic Rationalist* 9). Although she admires the dramatic aspects of Satre's conceptual thinking, his ability to make striking, psychological human situation, Satre's influence on Murdoch is not permanent. Murdoch's subsequent arguments about realism, literature and art certainly have their origins from existentialism, but the interpretation is distinctive and there is in fact an increasing detachment from Satre as time goes on.

She published four novels in the 1950s, starting with her first novel, *Under The Net*, in 1954. In 1956, she married the writer and literary critic John Bayley, a professor of English literature at Oxford whose literary criticism offered some illumination of her work. She continued to produce twenty five more novels until 1995, when she began to suffer the early effects of Alzheimer's disease. Her fiction is innovative and widely appreciated by readers as well as critics as pointed by John Bayley in *Elegy for Iris* (1999):

She wanted, through her novels, to reach all possible readers, in different ways and by different means: by the excitement of her story, its pace and its comedy, through its ideas and its philosophical implications, through the numinous atmosphere of her own original and created world-the world she must have glimpsed as she considered and planned her first steps in the art of fiction (26).

The Booker Prize in 1978 for was given to Murdoch for *The Sea, the Sea*. In 1987 she was made a Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire for her scholarly achievements. In 2001 her first published novel, *Under the Net*, was selected as one of the 100 best English language novels of the 20th century by the editorial board of the American Modern Library. Several of her works have been adapted for the screen, including the British television series of her novels *An Unofficial Rose* and *The Bell*. J. B. Priestley dramatized her 1961 novel, *A Severed Head*, which was directed by Richard Attenborough in 1971, Richard Eyre's film, *Iris* (2001), based on her husband's memoir of his wife as she developed Alzheimer's disease. When Iris Murdoch died in February 1999, she was described by A S Byatt, among many others, as one of the most significant British writers of the twentieth century.

As a moral philosopher and novelist, Murdoch chooses her themes from fundamental moral concerns. As Avril Horner and Anne Rowe, both are directors of the Centre for Iris Murdoch Studies at Kingston University, indicate "Her work has sparked such interest because of her unique position as a working moral philosopher and practising novelist whose fiction tests and contests the moral stances to which she commits herself in her philosophical essays" (*Iris Murdoch and Morality* 1). Murdoch treats concepts of freedom, the problematic nature of sexual desire, goodness depicted in struggle with evil, strategies for dealing with intense suffering, and she celebrates the redemptive

power of love while illustrating its fragility. All such issues are framed in an imaginative exploration of the ways human consciousness can be expressed in art and conducted by means of fascinating experimentation with the novel form.

Murdoch's philosophical discourse is observed in most of her fiction. Particularly, in *The Black Prince* (1973) her philosophical restatement is prominent. Its primary themes are the possibility of glimpsing at eternal truth through the experience of erotic love, and possibility of presenting truth through the creation of art. Murdoch believes that people go through life with only a limited sense of truth since our "everyday" world is a world of illusion. Behind this world however is a world full of "ideal forms." It is this world, which contains truth, which Bradley Pearson, the main character of *The Black Prince*, is able to touch upon as a result of his experience with erotic love. Structurally, Murdoch's tendency to shift into philosophical discourse while telling her stories may be slightly disconcerting and difficult for some to follow and her use of philosophy often gives her novels a fragmented style. Nevertheless, her ability to merge philosophy and fiction, however, leads to a profound reading experience.

Murdoch's novels are filled with dark humour stemming from Murdoch's background as a philosopher and her talent as a novelist. In this sense, the literary critic, Rubin Rabinovitz remarks in the review of *The Fairly Honourable Defeat*: "The gloominess of the philosophical theme of the novel is offset by multitude of comic incidents which here, as in her earlier fiction, gives Miss Murdoch a chance to display her inventive skill" (28). It is inevitable not to observe the reflection of philosophy on her fiction. Yet, Murdoch is against the idea that she has used her novels to stage her philosophical ideas as she says in an interview "I might put in things about philosophy because I happen to know about philosophy. If I knew about sailing ships I would put in sailing ships; and in a way, as a novelist, I would rather know about sailing ships than about philosophy" (Bellamy 11).

In her fiction, the comic vision is distinguishable. According to Murdoch, the novel, the best vehicle for the depiction of the realistic and comic world, is also best equipped to describe man's irrational, contingent existence. Angela Hague, the writer of *Iris Murdoch's Comic Vision* points out "Sexual attraction, the inability of human beings to furnish rational explanations and predictions for their behaviour and the contingent,

random nature of the universe all create a topsy-turvy world of comic unpredictability of her novels” (50). Murdoch believes that comedy is the proper aesthetic mode for the novel and is a philosophical and moral necessity for art; and her fiction reflects her conviction that the most horrible aspects of existence can be dealt with effectively and truthfully in the comic mode.

Despite the debts to modernist fiction and the modern philosophy, she categorizes herself as a traditional novelist and emphasizes her commitment to nineteenth century realism. In this regard, it can be referred to the essay, “Against Dryness” written by Murdoch to clarify her own position and decide where she is standing artistically. She writes:

The eighteenth century was an era of rationalistic allegories and moral tales [...] the era when the idea of human nature was unitary and single. The nineteenth century novel was not concerned with “the human condition,” it was concerned with real various individuals struggling in the society (*Existentialists and Mystics* 291).

According to Murdoch, when we consider twentieth century literature as compared with the nineteenth century literature, we notice certain significant contrasts as she has pointed out:

The twentieth-century novel is usually either crystalline or journalistic; that is, it is either a small quasi-allegorical object portraying the human conditions and not containing “characters” in the nineteenth-century sense, or else it is a large shapeless quasi-documentary object, the degenerate descendent of the nineteenth-century novel, telling, with pale conventional characters, some straightforward story enlivened with empirical facts (*Existentialists and Mystics* 291).

Iris Murdoch admired the great nineteenth-century English and Russian novels written by Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, James, Dickens, and Eliot. Murdoch’s talent as a writer and how her art brings together these great authors is clearly described by David J. Gordon in *Iris Murdoch’s Fables of Unselfing*:

Her strong reflective passages evoke the precedent of George Eliot...Her tendency to motivate characters by sudden erotic impulses rather than by considerations of money and social advantage reminds us of Emily Bronte, as well as of Hardy and Lawrence, and these names come to mind again in the way Murdoch's language infuses the thoughts and acts of persons, even nature's movements, with the aura of the godlike and demonic (3-4).

Yet, Murdoch's realism differs from that of nineteenth century especially in terms of themes she treated in her novels as Anne Rowe and Priscilla Martin explain:

She kindled nineteenth century realism with innovative experimentation with form that includes surrealism; theories of modern art; endlessly rich intertextuality; a redefining of rigidly-defined gender categories; an interest in outsiders and misfits and a brave confronting of even darker aspects of the psyche than sadomasochism; incest and hints of paedophilia are also in the novels. (*Iris Murdoch and Morality* 165-6).

In an interview A.S. Byatt, one of the few critics of the 1960s to appreciate her experimentalism said that "While nineteenth century writers focus on the larger society, her novels are psychologically and mythically centred. The great challenge to the writer was to represent the unobservable inner life of characters" (Listener 1969).

She most admires Shakespeare in this sense, drawing on this ability to combine mythical pattern with free characters. *The Black Prince* and *The Sea, the Sea* (1978) for example, meditate on *Hamlet* and *The Tempest* respectively, but it is impossible to match up the cast of novel and play. Another Shakespearean device Murdoch employs most obviously is, similarly, the sudden unexpected deaths of her characters in her novels. As in the case of Cordelia's death in *King Lear*, a Murdochian character, Harriet, from *The Sacred and the Profane Love Machine* (1974), is suddenly gunned down in a random act of airport terrorism. In an interview with Jeffrey Meyers, she cites Shakespeare as her supreme model "the absolutely prime example of how we ought to tell a story: invent characters and convey something dramatic which the same time has deep spiritual significance" (16).

Murdoch's novels display an extraordinary power of creative-intelligence caused by her intellectual accumulation and her avant-garde style. As Richard Todd, professor at University of Leiden, points out "In the period since the appearance of her first published novel *Under the Net* in 1954, she has emerged not only as one of the most productive and influential British novelists of her generation but, equally importantly, as a powerfully intellectual and original theorist of fiction" (*Iris Murdoch* 13). Murdoch's independence and power as a thinker also give her the authority to subvert and enrich the novel with forms from other genres. Drawing from British intellectual discourse, Murdoch uses a strong and independent style in her texts. Barbara Stevens Heusel, who has written several books on Murdoch, points out "Murdoch interjects a strong, irreverent, carnivalesque flavour into her text [...] Indeed, she has been breathing new life into the novel form for nearly four decades by using the analogical to destabilize Aristotelian logic (*Patterned Aimlessness* 257). Murdoch's writing pattern and strategies have changed over the years, transforming into more nonconventional, even radical. As Heusel asserts "As she reaches her potential as a novelist, she uses unobtrusive ways of expanding the boundaries of the novel form: post modernist magic realism in addition to dramatic strategies and manipulation of form" (*Patterned Aimlessness* 118).

Her Anglo-Irish background has given her a sense of bi-national identity but Irish settings scarcely occur in her fiction. London is the setting or part setting for twenty four novels, instead. Her setting depiction is so lively and striking that even after her plots fade, the setting often remains. From *Under The Net*, we remember Earl's Court, the City-pub crawl, the Hammersmith theatre; from *The Time of Angels* the fog-bound Rectory in the East End that is shaken by underground trains; James's Pimlico flat in *The Sea, the Sea*; the Brook Green "aviary" in *The Green Night* are the unforgettable settings which are delicately worked through. As Peter Conradi, who is known as having written *Iris Murdoch: A Life*, an official biography of his friend Iris Murdoch indicates in the preface for *Iris Murdoch: A Reassessment* (ed. Anne Rowe) "Her London resembles Dostoevsky's fantastical, and essentially religious, imagining of St Petersburg, as much as it does Dickens's love-hate for London" (16). So, London is an influential macrocosm for the troubled inhabitants of her novels.

The early novels of Murdoch were lively, sardonic and highly original. Her recent novels - from approximately *A Fairly Honourable Defeat* onward - are far more freely structured, and they have become funnier. The question in her fiction is not what happens but why. Her great talent in storytelling can be observed in the below explanation by Gordon. He writes:

Murdoch is a wonderfully gifted storyteller but a storyteller of a special kind, one who not only delights us with an abundance of sensuous details, finely observed and resourcefully invented, but also makes ideas come alive as she does so. The most distinctive quality of her fiction is the way she mythicizes everyday life making "spiritual significance" out of imaginary characters and dramatically exciting action (*Fables of Unselfing* 1).

Her study of Russian in order to read Tolstoy and Dostoevsky causes her fascination with the subversive strategies of Dostoevsky and his carnivalesque discourse. Being inspired by writers like Dostoevsky and Shakespeare at both conscious and unconscious levels, she does not limit herself to one mode or genre or style. Elizabeth Dipple, professor of English at Northwestern University, makes her own list of Murdoch's potentially sensational techniques, "curt twist of the plot, visit[s] to future, circularity, endgame, point of view altering postscripts, total ambiguity, meandering refusal of closure" (*I. Murdoch: Work for the Spirit* 85). Such Murdochian methods are integral to the tradition of carnival.

Murdoch's novels include irony of all kinds, rushing, moral crises, family triangles, and the sublime. In addition, her emphasis is on the varying shades of illusion. Visual metaphors and symbolic illustrations are necessary to her description of her concepts about love, art, and language as she points out in an interview with Wendy Lesser:

Well, everything's symbolic. I mean, this is a fact about human nature; people make things symbolic for themselves. It's sometimes too much suggested by critics that there's a kind of machinery of symbolism which the author invents or refers to. The symbols arise spontaneously, I think, in novels because they

arise spontaneously in life. One's surroundings are charged with emotional significance (14).

Harold Bloom has claimed that one of the things that make a writer canonical is ongoing influence. So the question of how far Murdoch's influence is still felt in contemporary British fiction can be posed. Murdoch's work can be seen a crucial and essential link in the evolutionary chain of the English novel that stretches back to the nineteenth century and forward to the twenty-first century. Echoes of her preoccupations and her formal concerns can be identified in the work of a number of mainstream contemporary British writers. Zadie Smith, like Murdoch, models her artistic practice on nineteenth century realism, thinks that novels are away of undertaking moral philosophy and uses the visual arts as a moral paradigm in similar ways to Murdoch. Therefore, it is easy to understand why her work holds interest for, or has resonance with, a significant body of contemporary British literary canon.

Unlike her contemporaries, she does not console readers by fulfilling their expectations. In her essay "Against Dryness" she reminds the reader that "only the greatest art invigorates without consoling." She uses the novel form in all its richness and variety to make visible the multiple layers of human experience. Her character formation has a remarkable place in her fiction as indicated in her own essay "The Sublime and the Beauty Revisited." Murdoch's goal in this essay is to create "a house fit for free characters to live in" namely; she works to find methods of patterning that give her characters maximum freedom. Bran Nicol puts emphasis on her characterization in his work; *Iris Murdoch, The Retrospective Fiction* "The novel, she has repeatedly insisted, has a duty to portray the world as it is, and to strive to tell the truth about it, chiefly by portraying realistic characters not subordinate to the demands of plot or to the ideas which support it" (3). In this sense, Heusel makes a striking analogy "In her novels Murdoch demonstrates that she launches her narrators and characters into a cave-like labyrinth and then records their utterances as they bump up against each other" (*Patterned Aimlessness* 155). Murdoch's novels mirror British and Anglo-American society at the close of the twentieth century.

The word "trauma" does not appear in Murdoch's life with the meaning people generally recognize. Actually, her life seems to have many achievements in literary,

philosophical as well as private sense. Nevertheless, certain events can have traumatic impacts on Murdoch and may lead her to have sexually muddled life and chronic Alzheimer disease at the end of her life.

Peter J. Conradi, the famous writer of Murdoch's biography states "Iris was both happy and docile child" (*Iris Murdoch: A Life* 33). Iris and her parents are a self-sufficient family unit contented to be doing things together. In one of the interviews, she pictures her parents and herself "a perfect trinity of love" (John Haffenden 1983). The only problematic point about her childhood may be her Irish background.

Biographical information on Iris Murdoch usually begins with the fact that she was born in Dublin. Though her family moved to England early on and her presence in Ireland is limited with short visiting relatives and some conference attendance, there is ample evidence that throughout her life, Iris strongly identifies herself as Irish. In this regard, Priscilla Martin and Anne Rowe state "Her "Irishness" is a question and problem that has engaged Murdoch's scholars" (*Iris Murdoch, A Literary Life* 58). So Irish did she consider herself, Conradi says, that "it was no accident that Iris's writing persona, in her first published novel [*Under the Net*] was to have an Irish voice" (*Iris Murdoch: A Life* 102). Moreover, *The Unicorn* (1963) and *The Red and The Green* (1965), the two Murdoch's novels are set in Ireland. Her emphasis on Irish identity can be interpreted as eternal quest for identity throughout her life.

A sense of identity is a psychological fact, irrespective of passports, maternity wards and addresses. Murdoch is one of the people who go between two identities. Yet, it is clearly understood that her Irish identity has more strong influence over her. In his sense, Conradi recalls Murdoch, the year before her death from Alzheimer, saying "Who am I? Well I'm Irish anyway, that's something" (*Iris Murdoch: A Life* 28). It clearly shows that, she problematizes this dichotomy and accordingly, her quest for identity is effectively reflected through her fiction.

Love, in its many guises, is Murdoch's major theme. She sees falling in love as revelatory and one of the life's most intense experiences. Based upon the declarations and confessions we have learned from her biographies, one can claim that her quite active and complicated love life is inspirational for her writing. Murdoch does not have

to look outside but her own life to find a suitable plot including love relations. A.S. Byatt asserts that “Her characters fall in love fall in and out of bed, across barrier of age and sex normally assumed to be impassable [...]” (*Iris Murdoch* 6). Starting from James Anderson Scott, Irish pen-pal, at the age of 19, she has numerous love affairs but the most influential, perhaps, is the one with Frank Thompson, who is a brilliant, erudite military cavalier and poet and is killed with Balkan partisans at the age of 24. During this relation she is highly involved in politics affected by the Frank’s post at the army. She is loyal to Communist Party and ceases to support pacifism and accepts the need for war.

In one of the letters to Frank, Murdoch writes “I wonder what the future holds for us all—shall we ever make out the dreamy idealistic [at that time both of them are involved in Communist Party] stuff of our lives [...]” (*I. Murdoch; A Writer at War* 132). Both ideologically and emotionally, Murdoch has strong feelings towards Thompson. Murdoch’s and Thompson’s friendship has the shape of classical tragedy; it ends with Murdoch’s discovery of her feeling for Frank only months before his early death. This great loss has so strong effect on her that Thompson reappears 22 years later in *The Sea, The Sea*: Thompson’s shade contributes to her portrait of the holy and wise soldier James Arrowby. After long years have passed, the idea of being with Thompson frequently haunts her. In this sense, Valerie Purton records that “Iris Murdoch dreams vividly that she has somehow married both John Bayley and Frank Thompson and that they are all happy, though rather awkward together” (*An Iris Murdoch Chronology* 151).

After several more romances with one person after another, Murdoch makes a different kind of match with John Bayley in 1956. Their marriage can be regarded as the peaceful one not passionate though. Yet, the secure and affectionate nature of her marriage does not bring to an end her restlessness in love. She has several affairs even bisexual ones in the course of her marriage. As Murdoch herself remarks on the necessity of sex in *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals* “Certain forms of sexual activity come to be thought of as essential (without which life would be impoverished), natural, human and fundamental, functioning thereby as fates and excuses” (21-2). She regards “sex” of a great influence on human psyche as well as on art itself. On this regard, she

is very much affected by the views of Plato. In her philosophical work, *Existentialists and Mystics*, she writes “The unconscious mind is the enemy and so, of course, is sex, concerning which Plato took an alarmist and puritanical view, though he also thought that purified sexual energy, the good Eros, could lead us to enlightenment” (246-7). Murdoch is well aware of the potential of sex, both its destructive and refreshing impact on human psychology.

Freud is another one who is directly affected by the Platonic perception of sexuality. He clearly announces his debt to Plato in “Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality” “The enlarged sexuality of psychoanalysis coincides with the Eros of divine Plato” (1463). He certainly follows an important line in Plato’s thought when he envisages sex as a sort of universal spiritual energy, an ambiguous force which may be destructive or can be used for good. As far as Murdoch’s private life is concerned, her complex and abundant sexual affairs can be the consequence of her dissatisfaction with life. According to her, sexuality is the key to get close with the people, who are regarded as potential relief for her dissatisfaction. In this sense, Freud asserts “...the sexual instincts are also the ones which, in most people, find it easiest to escape from the control of the highest mental agencies” (“On Dreams” 1094). Contrary to her expectation, each affair contributes to her disillusionment in life and has traumatic effect on her.

2.2. Her Oeuvre in Relation to Trauma

Despite the fact that her widely treated theme in her fiction is human sufferings, the word trauma does not occur in the vocabulary of either her philosophy or of her novels. Most probably, trauma theory had not emerged until after the mid 1990s. However, Murdoch’s writing career had already ended due to the onset of Alzheimer’s disease. Nonetheless, critics of her work are recognising that her novels not only participate in displaying good examples of current trauma theory but also extend its boundaries. Despite the fact that Murdoch did not speak of trauma, she spoke enduringly and eloquently about suffering, the more generalised word she applied to aspects of suffering that would now be referred to as “trauma.” As it has been mentioned before, the OED defines trauma as “deeply distressing or disturbing experiences and the emotional shock following such stressful events or a physical injury, which may be associated with physical shock and sometimes leads to long-term neurosis.” In fact, this

definition is a concise summary of Iris Murdoch's plots; such events are the lifeblood of her novels.

A shared emphasis on the interconnection between literature and ethics provides an additional link between Murdoch's theory of the novel and trauma theory itself. In her essay "The Idea of Perfection" Murdoch makes a life-long commitment to a view of literature. She writes "literature could function as an education in how to picture and understand human situations" (299) and she believes that these situations could affect her readers morally. Her view of literature is much derided in the age of high theory and the postmodern but has been echoed by Roger Luckhurst, who has suggested that trauma theory "tries to turn criticism back towards being an ethical, responsible, purposive dialogue, listening to the wounds of the other" (*Literary Theory and Criticism: An Oxford Guide* 506). Murdoch would have applauded the entry of trauma theory into the domain of literary criticism, though she thought the novel itself provided a more detailed and complex forum for investigating trauma than can be offered by theory alone. With its recognizable characters and real-life situations literature can ignite empathy in ways that the dispassionate reading of theory fails to do. In her another essay "The Sovereignty of Good over Other Concepts" she indicates:

The enjoyment of art is training in love and virtue. We are presented with a truthful image of the human condition in a form which can be steadily contemplated; and indeed this is the only form in which some of us are capable of contemplating it at all. Art transcends selfish and obsessive limitations of personality and can enlarge the sensibility of its consumer (371).

The novel can thus provide what Anne Whitehead calls "an extension of the theory's own silences" (*Trauma Fiction* 105). Sudden psychological shock interests Murdoch as a novelist and moral philosopher because it is at such times that human beings are most likely to behave destructively, both towards themselves and others. She understands that most kinds of suffering are not good for us. In her essay entitled "Knowing the Void," she agrees with Simone Weil that suffering "may be pointless and is usually degrading" (159). Weil however turns her attention to the destruction of cities, the extermination of people and places of torture, and Murdoch's novels too explore the effects of tragedies beyond individual control; a terrorist attack, many purely accidental deaths and the

Holocaust feature in her plots. Yet what she calls her “moral psychology” is more frequently concerned with more common traumatic experience, that which is generated not by radical politics, psychopathic tendencies or cataclysmic “acts of God,” but by commonplace experiences that intrude periodically into the lives of everyone. One does not have to be in the wrong place at the wrong time to experience trauma in an Iris Murdoch novel, one simply has to be human.

In *The Bell* (1958) the homosexual Michael Mead’s attempts at denying his sexual proclivities result in the suicide of the man he loves and the committing of *another* character to a mental asylum. In *The Sea The Sea* (1978) the actor-director Charles Arrowby’s fear of isolation that he must necessarily endure following the death of his long-term lover results in a bizarre kidnapping and the untimely drowning of a teenage boy. *The Good Apprentice* (1985) starts with the scene of 20-year-old Edward Baltram , who slyly feeds a drug-laden sandwich to his best friend, Mark Wilsden. While Edward goes off to visit a girl in the neighbourhood, Mark wakes up and falls or jumps out of the window to his death. Edward's trauma when he learns the news of his friend’s death and accordingly his quest for a secular absolution dominate the book. In *A World Child* (1975), her seventeenth novel, Murdoch depicts a character called Hilary Burde whose traumatic memory repeatedly haunts him due to having caused a terrible tragedy some twenty years earlier, which he has kept secret ever since.

Murdoch’s is what could be called “the trauma of the quotidian,” a pedestrian trauma that nonetheless has the potential to cause the most intense suffering that most people will ever experience, even if we are fortunate enough to escape a war, a natural disaster or a mutilating accident during our lifetime.

CHAPTER III

PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA in *THE BLACK PRINCE*

It is clear that I went into medicine because I suspected that relations between man and woman played a decisive role in the symptoms of human beings [...]

The ultimate truth is that things do not work between man and woman.

Lacan 1976, 16

The Black Prince remains one of Iris Murdoch's most acclaimed novels. The main character, Bradley Pearson, a former Inspector of Taxes, has retired at the age of fifty-eight to devote himself entirely to writing. Although he has produced three minor books so far, he has always considered himself an artist and still hopes to produce one great work. Before he is traumatized because of the desperate love he has experienced with Julian, the twenty-year-old daughter of his friends, Arnold and Rachel Baffin, he has been already involved in some psychological problems. Indeed, this unhealthy psychological state of him sets the scene for his unfortunate love affair concluding with his tragic end. Richard Todd states "Fantasy and reality coexist in a complex, intertwined relationship in *The Black Prince*: a reader may well sympathize with the dignity of Pearson's experience while at the same time considering him deluded" (*Iris Murdoch* 77). Bradley's self deluded world is the remarkable symptom of his trauma. His unhappy childhood and his repressed homosexual tendency cause him to lead an unsatisfactory life.

Although Murdoch does not speak of trauma in her philosophical and literary works, she speaks enduringly and eloquently about suffering, the more generalised word she applies to aspects of suffering that can now be referred to as "trauma." Psychological trauma always interests Murdoch as a novelist and philosopher since it is at such times that human beings are most likely to behave destructively, both towards themselves and others. As a moral philosopher, one of her main concerns is human sufferings. Accordingly, psychological traumas naturally become her subject matter in her novels. In *The Black Prince*, we observe a middle aged artist with certain psychological problems which are accompanied by the trauma stemming from desperate love affair.

3.1. Trauma of Bradley Pearson as a Repressed Homosexual

Murdoch's *The Black Prince* is considered her most successful and brilliant novel by her readers as well as by her critics. The critic, Peter J. Conradi describes it as "an extraordinary achievement" (*The Saint&The Artist* 233). It is an experimental novel in a way that it plays out the history of the novel in its form. Part One is a realist depiction of Bradley's life before falling in love with Julian; Part Two contains a subjective modernist description of his changed inner consciousness and perception; the postscripts cast postmodern doubt on the truth of Bradley's account and expose the book's fictionality. As another critic Elizabeth Dipple states "*The Black Prince* is a tale of the process of potential human development" (*Iris Murdoch: Work for the Spirit* 136). The transforming state of protagonist's mind is illustrated throughout the novel.

Murdoch attempts at rendering as accurately as possible the change in consciousness occasioned by falling in love. The 58-year-old Bradley Pearson falls head over heels for Julian Baffin, the 20-year-old daughter of his best friend and rival writer, Arnold Baffin. Throughout the book the readers witness the change in his mental process during the traumatic love experience. Love animates his fantasy life so that he becomes sexually obsessed, deluded and irresponsible. Priscilla Martin and Anne Rowe refer the controversial nature of love in their work "One of the questions of the book poses is how one tells the difference between the love that cracks the ego, triggering the absolute loss of self that in turn generates goodness, and when one is in the throes of sadomasochistic self-indulgence that generates evil" (*Iris Murdoch, A Literary Life* 100).

In her Whitbread Prize-winning book, Murdoch investigates the emotional shock attached to sudden, violent and inappropriate erotic desire. This particular sexually-orientated trauma is one she frequently experiences first-hand in her own emotionally and sexually muddled life, and she notes that this is a condition much under-analysed in twentieth-century novels. As commonplace as such experience is, it can be life-shattering, causing emotional ripples that culminate in tragedy.

The Black Prince comprises a book within a book, written by a 58 year-old first-person narrator, a highly intelligent, lonely and neurotic retired civil servant and writer, Bradley Pearson. The book is itself a meditation on suffering and acknowledges the

neuroses and anxious suffering attached to all human existence as Bradley remarks in one of his intense soliloquies:

The world is perhaps ultimately to be defined as a place of suffering. Man is a suffering animal, subject to ceaseless anxiety and pain and fear, subject to the rule of what the Buddhists call *dukha*, the endless unsatisfied anguish of a being who passionately desires only illusory goods. However, within this vale of misery there are many regions. We all suffer, but we suffer so appallingly differently [...] That this world is a place of *horror* must affect every serious artist and thinker, darkening his reflection, ruining his system, sometimes actually driving him mad [...] This is the planet where cancer reigns, where people regularly and automatically and almost without comment die like flies from floods and famine and disease, where people fight each other with hideous weapons to whose effects even nightmares cannot do justice, where men terrify and torture each other and spend whole lifetimes telling lies out of fear. This is where we live (349).

This highly pessimistic scene implies that any experience of acute trauma triggered by any insignificant motives comes over anyone at anytime. Bradley's experience is unremarkable in itself namely; a middle-aged man falls suddenly and violently for a much younger woman. It can be regarded as a usual human experience anyone can have in his/her life. Considering its results, however, it turns out a genuine trauma which causes the protagonist's tragic end.

Bradley Pearson is quite dissatisfied with the life he has been leading. He is an unsuccessful husband, insensitive brother and unpopular writer. When he relates a scene from his childhood it can be supposed that his disillusionment can firstly stem from his unhappy infancy.

My parents kept a shop, a sort of paper shop, down in Croydon... Some fortunate children have a garden, a landscape, as the "local habitation" of their early years. We had the shop: its drawers, its shelves, its smells, its endless empty cupboard boxes, its particular dirt. It was a shabby unsuccessful shop. Our parents were shabby unsuccessful people. They both died when I was in

my twenties, my father first my mother not long after. My mother filled me with exasperation and shame but I loved her. My father I simply disliked (14).

These words seem like simple childhood memories but an unsuspected meaning lies concealed behind their apparent innocence. In his essay "Screen Memories" Freud exposes "Our childhood memories show us our earlier years not as they were but as they appeared at the later periods when the memories aroused. In this period of arousal, the childhood memories did not, as people are accustomed to say, *emerge*; they were *formed* at that time" (126). Then, Bradley's childhood memory is deliberately formed by his conscious as reflection of the desperate situation he is in.

Like haunting child memories, dreams are another device revealing one's unconscious. The unconscious impulse makes use of this nocturnal relaxation of repression in order to push its way into consciousness with the dream. Freud says "The dream is the (disguised) fulfilment of a (suppressed, repressed) wish" (*The Interpretation of Dreams* 124). When external or internal stimuli cannot be fended off and the meaning of the dream becomes too plain, the sleeper cuts short the dream and wakes in a fright. Dreams of this class are known as "anxiety dreams" coined by Freud (*The Interpretation of Dreams* 106). The following dream is an example for this sort.

I endlessly pursued her along black and white moonlit quays, quiet as etchings beside their glossy waters [...] we were back again the Pizza San Marco which had become an enormous chess board. She was a pawn moving steadily forward and I was knight leaping crookedly after her but always having to turn away to left or to right when I had almost caught her up...She was in a gondola, dressed in a red robe, holding a tiger lily, receding, receding, while behind me a terrible drumming of hooves became louder and louder until I turned about and saw that Bartolomeo Colleoni¹ with the face of Arnold Baffin was about to ride me to the ground. The terrible plunging hooves descended on my head and my skull cracked like an egg shell (290-1).

¹ Bartolomeo Colleoni was Captain-General of Republic of Venice the.

The dream is the manifestation of Bradley's libido, repressed instinct and fears. The first striking image is the chess board. The famous square in Venice, Piazza San Marco suddenly transforms to the chess board on which Julian is a pawn and Bradley is a knight. The chess board with its own rules and restrictions stands for the community in which Bradley lives. The impossibility of their relation is represented by knight's failure to catch the pawn in the disguise of Julian. Knight is also another symbol implying Bradley's masculine superiority. Besides, his sexual desire for Julian is represented by the sounds of galloping horses as "horse" is the direct reference to libido from Freudian point of view. Freud asserts "We have not far to go from here to cases in which a dreaded father is represented by a beast of prey or a dog or wild horse [...] It might be said that the wild beasts are used to represent the libido, a force dreaded by ego and combated by means of repression" (*The Interpretation of Dreams* 260). If we go back the childhood memories of Bradley, the image of his father is not different from the father figure Freud describes. The most impressive scene is the one he mistakes Bartolomeo Colleoni with Arnold Baffin, which is a direct reference to Bradley's repressed homosexuality.

Arnold Baffin, the friend of Bradley, is a prolific writer frequently compares himself with him without being aware of the negative impact he makes on Bradley by saying "Because I'm successful and you aren't, I mean in a worldly way. I'm afraid that's true, isn't it?" (173). Bradley regards Arnold as a writer who produces many but literary worthless works, which is actually a kind of self-delusion of Bradley in order to explain Arnold's worldly success as well as his own failure. In reality, not only Arnold but also Bradley himself is well aware of the fact that Bradley lives in a dream world as he confesses in the beginning of the book "Sometimes I saw myself as an ageing Don Juan, but majority of my conquest belonged to the world of fantasy" (15-6). As Freud coins, these "protective delusions" (*The Neuroses of Defence* 95) are completely products of Bradley's conscious in order to regenerate his shattered ego. Bradley even creates an alter ego out of his delusions. In the beginning of the book, the editor, Loxias explains "He needed someone to believe him and someone to believe in him. He found me, his alter ego, at the time needful" (9). At first, the unsuspecting reader accepts Loxias as the real editor of the novel. By the end of the novel, the reader begins to contemplate that Loxias' ambivalence implies his ontological possibilities. As Barbara Stevens Heusel

states “[...] the reader begins to question: Is Loxias a character, a figment of Bradley’s imagination, an inspirational voice in Bradley’s head?” (Patterned Aimlessness 128).

Ironically, Bradley succeeds in creating a fictitious world surrounded by his delusions but failed in writing a real fiction due to writer’s block. Then, the only choice for Bradley is to leave the city and search for a place to write his novel in tranquillity. He says “This was everything that I wanted to be done with, the relaxed banality of life without goals. And I was upset to find how really reluctant I was to leave my little flat” (62). However, he cannot escape the unpredictable system of contingencies he is exposed to; the unexpected appearances of his sister Priscilla, his ex-wife Christian and his former brother-in-law Francis and the thereby arising network of connections.

The sudden arrival of Francis, his former brother in love, ruins his plans and revives the unpleasant memories of his failed marriage. Bradley asserts “Francis had certainly raised ghosts, was himself a spectre of a particular nasty kind” (52). The unexpected appearance of Francis comes to mean the reappearance of his traumatic marriage experience embodied in the figure of Christian, his ex-wife. His former marriage is a real disappointment as he sates repeatedly “What a mystery a marriage was. What a strange and violent world, the world of matrimony. I was glad to be outside it. The idea of it filled me with a sort of queasy pity” (53). The figure of “ghost” that he attaches to the emergence of Francis is, in fact, the symptom of “the return of the repressed.” In his essay “Repression” Freud states “ [...] the essence of repression lies simply in turning something away, and keeping it at a distance, from the conscious” (569-70). Accordingly, the unpleasant memories are buried into his unconscious till they come to surface in the disguise of “ghost”. Bradley’s former marriage is a real catastrophe and consequently he is left by his wife for the sake of a man of success and wealth. He says “As my wife you were unpleasant to me, cruel to me, destructive to me. I do not think that I speak too strongly. I was profoundly relieved to be free of you and I do not like you. Or rather I do not like my memory of you” (66). The dissatisfaction with his marriage and his wife’s betrayal cause him to experience a kind of trauma.

He seems to ignore even feels discomfort with Christian’s, his ex-wife, return and desire to meet him again. He says “It was as if I had known Christian as a real woman in some previous incarnation, and were now reliving, perhaps as a punishment, some

doomed perverted spiritual pattern. Or as if she had died long before and come back to me as a demon lover” (93). The striking image, a demon lover, which Bradley attaches to Christian, explains the persistent effect of traumatic marriage experience. His memories revive in the form of Christian’s incarnation. In this sense, the belated effect of trauma occurs as Cathy Caruth indicates “The experience of trauma, the fact of latency, would thus seem to consist, not in the forgetting of a reality that can hence never be fully known, but in an inherent latency within the experience itself” (*Unclaimed Experience* 17). When a broken childhood, a haunting marriage, frustration in novel writing and life in general are added by an unfavourable love experience, the consequences are inevitably tragic and traumatic.

3.2. Trauma of Love

The problematic and unreasonable nature of love has been the subject matter for many studies on various fields. Over the centuries love in its many forms has been described, explained, defined and depicted by poets, men of letters, philosophers, theologians, psychologists and even biologists. Firstly, Plato mediates on the subject and composes the work entitled *Symposium* (380-385 BC) where the exact nature of love has been debated. In the book, he writes “Love is a deficiency, a longing for something one lacks” (200a). Long after Plato, Freud is the first man of science to approach the concept of love scientifically, to try to probe its mysteries and explain its irrationalities. Using his theories on psychosexual development of the individual revealed by the methods of psychoanalysis, he tries to locate the origin of love in early experiences of the individual. In his original and momentous essay, “Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality,” he claims “[...] the process of falling in love itself [is] quite unintelligible except by reference back to childhood and as being residual effects of childhood” (292).

Having a remarkable place in human experience, love stands in the foreground of many of Murdoch’s novels as well as it is one of the central issues that she treats in her philosophical works. She describes it as “Love is the general name of the quality of attachment and it is capable of infinite degradation and is the source of our greatest errors; but when it is even partially refined, it is the energy and passion of the soul in its search for Good, the force that joins us to the world through Good” (*The Sovereignty of*

Good 100). She also states in her essay "On God and Good" "We need a moral philosophy in which the concept of love, so rarely mentioned now by philosophers, can once again be made central" (337). However, near the end of the essay she writes, "this [love] is the most important thing of all; and yet human love is normally too profoundly possessive and also too mechanical to be place of vision. There is a paradox here about nature of love itself" (361). Most of her novels expose and explore this paradox.

As she clearly expresses "Like Socrates, perhaps, love is the only subject on which I am really expert" (Iris Murdoch, journal entry, 9 July 1976) love is Murdoch's major theme in her novels as well as has a major place in her own life. Like paradoxical nature of love, Murdoch's life is full of intense emotional and sexual imbroglios with both genders. When she is heavily involved with John Bayley and increasingly determined to marry, she has been desperately in need of security and wanted a release her complex love-life. Elias Canetti, who is to be an enduring temptation, is a huge romantic and intellectual influence. She has also an affair with the writer Brigid Brophy, Peter Ady, philosophers John Simopoulos and David Pears. Furthermore, she has to resign from her post at Oxford owing to a romantic relationship with her female colleague. Accordingly, the personas in her novels, like Murdoch, notoriously fall in love instantly and rapidly, inexplicably, absolutely. They suddenly change partners or choose dangerous and impossible partners. As a writer who treats different aspects of human sufferings in her literary life, Murdoch explores the traumatic nature of love in most of novels such as; *A Severed Head* (1961), *The Sacred and Profane Love Machine* (1974) *The Sea, The Sea* (1978), *The Black Prince* (1973).

Julian, who is academically failed young girl, is the daughter of Bradley's friend, Arnold Baffin. She has been leading an idle life and certainly away from the emotional and physical interest of Bradley. In the beginning of the book, he says "I describe Julian here as teenage because that was how I still thought of her, though at this period she was I suppose in her earliest twenties [...] I had felt a modest avuncular interest in the fairy-like little girl" (55).

In addition his paternal affection towards her, Bradley makes quite ironic comment on the affair of Roger, Priscilla's-Bradley's sister- husband, with a younger girl without being aware of the fact that he is going to end up with the similar experience. He states:

Yet there was more offence even than that, something profoundly ugly and repulsive to me: that vision of Roger with his grey hair and his genial pseudo-distinguished air of an ageing worldly man, holding a girl who could be his daughter, a girl unused, unmarked and fresh. That particular juxtaposition of youth and age offends, and, I felt, offends rightly (109).

As Bradley feels nothing but only paternal affection towards her and is quite reactive to inappropriate matches in relation, what triggers his passion towards her lies beneath the fact that his hidden homosexual tendency is revealed by Julian, who confesses that she has once played the role of Hamlet. When Julian is talking about the play, Hamlet and the role she has been given, suddenly, he pays attention to what she is saying and asks fervently and instantly:

“So you played Hamlet. Describe your costume.”

“Oh, the usual. All Hamlets dress the same, don’t they. Unless they’re in modern dress, and we weren’t.”

“Do what I ask please.”

“What?”

“Describe your costume.”

“Well, I wore black tights and black velvet shoes with silvery buckles and a sort of black slinky jerkin...What’s the matter, Bradley?”

“Nothing.” (119).

Visualization of Julian as a man sexually and emotionally affects him so intensely that he explicitly confesses his feelings right after that scene. He utters “Something very extraordinary indeed had just happened to me” (203) and adds “I had fallen in love with Julian” (205). Because of the sudden mental and chemical changes in his body caused by complicated aura of love, he cannot remember the exact time when his feelings begin to change. Yet, he suspects that it is the time when she describes her own Hamlet costume “Perhaps it was when she said ‘Black tights and black velvet shoes

with slivery buckles” (205). In later portraying Bradley and Julian at Patara, a rented seaside cottage, Murdoch reiterates how Bradley’s hidden sexual identity spoils their intercourse. Bradley is able to perform sexually with Julian only after she cross-dresses in male clothing. Tammy Grimshaw, who has produced many critical works on Murdoch’s fictions, asserts in his work entitled *Sexuality, Gender, and Power in Iris Murdoch’s Fiction* “Some readings of this novel suggest that Bradley is a repressed homosexual because his love-object dresses in male clothing” (207).

Contrary this indirect implication, Francis explicitly claims that Bradley is a homosexual and actually in love with Arnold. He asks “Have you never realized that you’re a repressed homosexual?” (153) and maintains “Your thing about smells is a guilt complex because of your repressed tendencies, you won’t accept your body, it’s a well-known neurosis” (153). Moreover, he explains the reason of the endless rivalry between Arnold and Bradley as Bradley’s hidden and deep-rooted homosexual tendency. Bradley seems to be the close friend of Arnold but at the same time he harshly criticizes his authorship and is fervently jealous of him because of his intimacy with his ex-wife, Christian. This love-hate polarity brings to mind the work of Freud, “The Ego and The Id.” He posits “In the case of origin of homosexuality, and of desexualized social feelings as well, analytic investigation has only recently taught us to recognize that violent feelings of rivalry are present which lead to aggressive inclinations [...]” (647-8).

As far as Bradley’s repressed sexual tendency towards Arnold is concerned, it can be assumed that he is emotionally involved, albeit reluctantly, with Arnold’s wife, Rachel because of the sense of rivalry triggered by his repressed tendency. Despite the intense emotional intimacy between Bradley and Rachel, the sexual intercourse between them is out of question. Bradley cannot concentrate enough to participate in the intercourse with Rachel but on the other hand, he is passionately eager and physically ready to be with Julian. Being aware of this fact, Bradley states “The experience which I had sought in vain when I was holding Rachael naked in my arms came to me suddenly with a pang and a flurry: physical desire with absurd, alarming, unmistakable symptoms, the anti-gravitational aspiration of the male organ [...]” (163). It can be only explained by the

truth that the feelings Julian evokes are quite different than those of Rachel does. Julian is a kind of revelation of his repressed impulse.

Another specialist on the work of Murdoch, Cheryl K. Bove states that “Bradley Pearson has homosexual tendencies. At moments of crisis he often rushes outside of his flat and glances at the phallic post office tower” (*Understanding Iris Murdoch* 53). As Francis says “And every man in London is obsessed with the Post Office Tower” (153), the Post Office Tower is a recurrent image attached to a particular the sexual desire. Sexual implication of the tower as phallic symbol is best described when Bradley says “I saw the Post Office Tower and it was as if I myself were as high as the tower [...] I was tall and erect” (136). Murdoch’s symbolic usage of Post Office Tower is explained by Cheryl Bove and Anne Rowe, who state “Her symbols play a crucial role in revealing details about her characters’ inner lives and often convey information to the reader that is inaccessible characters themselves (*Sacred Space, Beloved City; I. Murdoch’s London* 60).

Whatever his sexual tendency is, Bradley unexpectedly and hopelessly falls head over heels with Julian. It is, in a sense, a traumatic love experience that leads Bradley to undergo a far-reaching transformation not only physically but also mentally. At the first glance, the physical change in his appearance can be easily observed after falling in love. He looks younger and more dynamic, which is instantly noticed by two women in his life. Rachel, Arnold’s wife, is surprised at the striking change and says “You look awfully young today. You look younger” (215). Similarly, Christian expresses her admiration with these words “Brad, what is it, you look extraordinary, something happened to you, you’re beautiful, you look like a saint or something, you look like some goddam picture, you look all young again” (227).

This metamorphosis is not physically limited but expands to his conscious and perception. Bradley himself accepts that falling in love is quite traumatic experience. He states:

I had fallen in love with Julian [...] It is after all an astounding phenomenon and for most people it is the most astonishing event that ever happens to them: more astonishing because more counter-natural than life’s horrors [...]

Furthermore those who have never fallen desperately in love with someone whom they have known for a long time may doubt whether this can occur. It happened to me. Was it always there cooking, incubating, in the warm inwards of time, as the girl grew and filled out into bloom? Of course I have always liked her, especially when she was a little child. But nothing had prepared me for this blow. And it was a *blow*, I was felled by it physically. I felt as if my stomach had been shot away, leaving a gaping hole. My knees dissolved, I could not stand up, I shuddered and trembled all over, my teeth chattered. My face felt as if it had become waxen and some huge strange weirdly smiling mask had been imprinted upon it, I had become some sort of god (205-6).

He uses the word “blow” to describe the shock he has experienced implying its physical as well as psychological effect of love. As he exposes “Some readers may feel that what I am describing is a condition of insanity, and in a way this is true. Were it not reasonably common, men could surely been locked up for such a change of consciousness” (207), he is well aware of the fact he has undergone a sudden emotional change.

The dynamism triggered by love enables him to feel more confident and comfortable. He feels to have enough strength to start the novel he has been planning for a long time and remembers his responsibilities such as taking care his psychologically breakdown sister, Priscilla. He says “[...] there were simple tasks to be performed. I must set my life in order and I know I had strength to do so” (212).

Needless to say, love refreshes his life and causes him to look younger and feel more secure. This positive impact of love is also expressed by Murdoch in her philosophical work, *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*. She asserts “Eros is the continuous operation of spiritual energy, desire, intellect, love, as it moves among and responds to particular objects of attention, the force of magnetism and attraction which joins us to the world, making it better or worse world” (496). The extraordinary nature of love is emphasized by Freud in his paper “Observations on Transference-Love.” He states “If it seems so lacking in normality, this is sufficiently explained by the fact that being in love in ordinary life, outside analysis, is also more similar to abnormal than to normal mental phenomena” (385). While this abnormal state makes him to cling to the

life strongly, it makes Bradley so solipsistic that he forgets his responsibilities easily and neglects the other issues.

As Freud expresses “When a love-relationship is at its height there is no room left for any interest in the environment; a pair of lovers are sufficient to themselves [...]” (“Civilization and Its Discontents” 747) the indifference to the external world is the characteristic of love. In this sense, the shortcoming of love is the most influential on the case of Priscilla. Bradley’s sister Priscilla, who has been left by her husband for a much younger girl, is in depression and absolutely in need of intimate care. Before this love experience, it is Bradley, who takes care of her and accepts to see Roger, Priscilla’s husband, asks for his sister’s valuable belongings. Bradley says “I asked myself, should I not go at once to Patara and take Priscilla with me? To do this would solve several problems. I would be tending my sister. A simple hard obligation to do this remained with me, a palpable thorn in the flesh of my versatile egoism” (125). As a part of the transformation Bradley has undergone, the focus of attention is shifted from her desperate sister to his young lover, which tragically causes Priscilla’s suicide. It is not surprising for the reader to witness the numbness of Bradley, who is under the effect of trauma caused by his unusual love affair when the news of Priscilla’s death arrives through the telegram Francis has sent. He prefers not to reveal the truth about Priscilla’s death for the fear that it can disturb the atmosphere. As American sociologist, Kai Erikson explains in his essay, “Notes on Trauma and Community” numbness is the most prominent characteristic of psychological trauma. He says “The classic symptom of trauma range from feelings of restlessness and agitation at one end of the emotional scale to feelings of numbness and bleakness at the other” (183-4). As Bradley defends himself “love can so deaden one to external matter” (255) this extremely insensitive reaction can only be perceived if we regard Bradley is under the effect of trauma.

Consequently, Bradley’s quality of consciousness is irrevocably changed to an alarming degree and his frantic and often funny reactions to finding himself in love take up the beginning of Part Two of the novel and extend to some fifteen pages. The chronology of the novel is paused and Murdoch attempts to explore in more detail than perhaps any novelist before the inner processes which change not only Bradley’s

behaviour but also blunts his perception of the world. Sentence by sentence Murdoch painstakingly illustrates her fundamental vision of the human soul, which she understands to be in perpetual tension between two opposing forces - what she calls (borrowing her terms from Plato), low and high Eros. The psyche simultaneously experiences a push towards selflessness in favour of attention to the beloved and a concomitant pulling back to a world of erotic illusion and the thrill of sadomasochism. In her moral philosophy Murdoch suggests erotic love can play a crucial, perhaps the most effective, role in "unselfing" which is for her the route to moral goodness: unselfing allows us to see the world and others as they are, stripped of the fantasies we habitually impose upon them.

Yet, the erotic charge brings about not only the unwilling unselfing that enables us to look on the world and the loved one in the light of the good, which Murdoch aligns with the Platonic *anamnesis*, but also titillates the voracious desire to possess and devour that comes out of the Freudian *id*. "Love is too profoundly possessive and purely mechanical to be a place of vision" (*The Sovereignty of Good* 73) she also cautiously observes. The following short passage illustrates the intensification of this tension between high and low eros and the detail of Murdoch's psychological realism as Bradley vacillates back and forth between a condition close to insanity and rational reflection on his state of mind, which produces a psychological trauma:

This was a predestined collision. But it had not only just happened, it had happened aeons ago, it was the stuff of the original formation of the earth and sky. When God said 'Let there be light' this love was made. It had no history. Yet, too my awakening consciousness of it had a history of bottomless fascination. When how, did I begin to realise the charm of this girl? Love generates or rather reveals something which may be called *absolute charm*. In the beloved nothing is gauche. Every move of the head, every tone of the voice, every laugh or grunt or cough or twitch of the nose is as valuable and revealing as a glimpse of paradise. And in fact, lying there absolutely limp and yet absolutely taught with my brow on the ground and my eyes closed I was actually not glimpsing but in paradise, The act of falling in love (I do not mean

what sometimes passes by this name), floods the being with immediate ecstasy (206).

Surrounded by hypnotic effect of love, Bradley describes his state of mind enthusiastically. When at the start of Part II Bradley gives the first of many soliloquies about the experience of falling in love, he describes it as “blow” implying its astonishing effect over people. He then points out that love “generates” or rather reveals something which may be called “absolute charm.” The love, in this sense, leads him way to happiness and self satisfaction. At the same time Bradley accepts blinding effect of love as he says “But even if a man or a woman were so fine and so wise that their claim to be such could be denied by no one, it would still be a form of madness to direct upon him or upon her the kind of exclusive worshipping attention in which being in love consists” (243-4).

On the other side of the coin, there emerge the fear of losing her and the anxiety of being rejected which cause him feel depressed. In the following passage, he clearly points out devastating and traumatizing influence of love:

What is so terrible about it is the sense that a part of oneself has been irrecoverably alienated and stolen. I realized this now, first vaguely and then with increasing precision, in that case of Julian. It was not simply that I frenziedly desired what I could not have. That was but a blunt and unrefined kind of suffering. I was condemned to be with her very rejection of me. And how long and how slow and how long-drawn-out that rejection would be. Still temptation would follow where she was. Endlessly she would give herself to others taking me with her. Like an obscene puny familiar I would sit in the corner of bedrooms where she kissed and loved. She would make consort with my foes, she would adore those that mocked me, she would drink contempt for me from alien lips. And all the time my very soul would travel with her, invisible and crying soundlessly with pain. I have acquired a dimension of suffering which would poison and devour my whole being, as far as I could see, forever (248).

Similarly, the absence of love has the same strong and overwhelming effect upon Bradley. When he is left by Julian, his highly pessimistic mood is reflected through description of his room. The choice of colour and the gothic animal images are determinants in transferring the pessimistic emotion.

I woke to a grey awful spotty early morning light which made the unfamiliar room present in a ghastly way. The furniture was humped shapelessly about me like sleeping animals. Everything seemed to be covered with soiled dust sheets. The slits in the clumsily drawn curtains revealed a dawn sky, ale and murky, without colour, the sun not yet risen (341).

Being disappointed in his relation with Julian, Bradley changes his perception of love. He stops thinking love as an enthusiasm of life but regards love as an element which causes people to suffer, instead. In this sense, Freud states:

[...] he made himself dependent in a most dangerous way on a portion of the external world, namely, his chosen love object, and exposed himself to extreme suffering if he should be rejected by that object or should lose it through unfaithfulness or death. For that reason the wise men of every age have warned us most emphatically against this way of life; but in spite of this it has not lost its attraction for a great number of people (*Civilization and its Discontents*, 743-4).

As Freud states, Bradley surrenders to the irresistible nature of love though he knows the improbability of their relation with Julian and love becomes the source of his sufferings in the end. He confesses "Unhappy love is, or can be, a revelation of pure suffering" (349). After this confession, the genuine trauma begins.

Forgetting, one of the symptoms of trauma shows itself as a peculiar form of memory loss. When Rachel reminds Bradley their intimacy, surprisingly, Bradley seems to forget everything. He cannot remember any events related to Rachel and acts as if nothing has happened between them. He says:

Here memory was simply a cold cloud to be shuddered at. She was a familiar person and a familiar presence, but the notion that I had ever done anything in

relation to her was utterly shadowy, so much had the advent of Julian drained the rest of my life of significant content, separating history from prehistory. I wanted to explain this (357).

This forgetting can be called “amnesia” explored by Freud, who explains the term as concealed traces of traumatic events and, more generally, contents of the unconscious. According to him, amnesia is the symptom of repression. He states in “Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality” “Hysterical amnesia, which occurs at the bidding of repression, is only explicable by the fact that the subject is already in possession of a store of memory-traces which have been withdrawn from conscious disposal[...].” (260). Bradley does not remember having an affair with Rachael. In so doing, he unconsciously represses the deed and pretends not to have any relation with her.

In her theory of trauma Cathy Caruth regards the Freudian term, amnesia, as one of the symptom of psychological trauma. She writes “Indeed, the vivid and precise return of the [traumatic] event appears, as modern researches point out, to be accompanied by *amnesia* for the past [...]” (*Trauma* 152). Thus, the absence of Julian’s love which has caused him a complete transformation in physical and mental sense has a traumatic effect on Bradley and accordingly, he experiences the peculiar symptoms of trauma.

The most tragic consequence of Bradley’s psychological trauma attached to emotional shock he has experienced after being abandoned by Julian is his imprisonment owing to the crime he has not committed. In the course of quarrel, Rachel causes, though not intentionally, the death of Arnold. She telephones Bradley begging him to come around to her place. Indeed, she intends to put the blame on Bradley. His vain effort to salvage the situation comes to nothing and cannot stop him being condemned. The emotional shock damages his mental state so strongly that he cannot defend himself thoroughly. His numbness against the accusations causes him to be arrested and consequently his tragic death because of cancer at the prison.

Murdoch criticism is only now beginning to understand the extent of the value of her own striving to explore the “weird stuff of human consciousness,” which not only confronts the serious moral dangers inherent in traumatic experience but also enlarges understanding of what comprises it and offers practical help in dealing with it. Her work

has much to offer trauma theorists currently finding ways of receiving stories and drawing them into interpretative ethical dialogue between writer and readers. Murdoch's novels are purposefully constructed so that her readers not only observe but vicariously experience her characters' traumas and are morally affected by them. In so doing, Murdoch champions the role of literature as a practical means to influence society. The comparatively pedestrian focus of the trauma at the heart of *The Black Prince* serves as a timely reminder to every reader that the most common of human experiences, mixed with the right concoction of potent circumstances, can be as irrevocably devastating as the most heinous disaster.

CHAPTER IV

BELATEDNESS in THE SEA, THE SEA

[T]he traumatic event is not experienced as it occurs, it is fully evident only in connection with another place, and in another time.

Cathy Caruth, *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, 1995

As a traumatic concept, “belatedness” points to an event that is not fully experienced at the time of its happening, its meaning delayed or deferred, but resurfaces later on, often triggered by a second event with which it bears certain similarities. In her introductory essay to *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, Cathy Caruth provides a clear and coherent description of trauma as well as a compelling explanation of why its impact re-emerges in victim’s life later on. Caruth points out that because the event was not assimilated as it occurred; it only comes into being “belatedly.” She writes: “[T]he impact of the traumatic event lies precisely in its belatedness, in its refusal to be simply located, in its insistent appearance outside the boundaries of any single place or time” (9). This chapter intends to show belated effects of any traumatic events by referring Murdoch’s Booker winning novel, *The Sea, The Sea* and its protagonist, Charles Arrowby, who suffers from the belated symptoms of his early emotional shock. The protagonist, who seems to be entrapped by his traumatic experience, the death of his lover, becomes obsessive with his childhood love which turns, after years, a kind of madness throwing the hero into certain delusions and self-deceptions.

4.1. “Belatedness” as a Traumatic Concept

Psychic trauma is generally defined as a reaction to an overwhelming event resulting in psychological damage but instead of understanding trauma according to event or response, Cathy Caruth has famously redefined it as “The pathology consist, rather, solely in the *structure of its experience* or reception: the event is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time, but only belatedly, in its repeated possession of the one who experiences it” (*Trauma* 4). In her conception of trauma Caruth draws on Sigmund Freud’s notion of *Nachträglichkeit*, an early Freudian concept developed in his studies on hysteria and one that refers to a non-chronological movement of remembering involving a link between two events; at a critical time of psychological distress

previously forgotten memory traces return and are reworked or reinterpreted to match subsequent events, desires, and psychic developments. In her reformulation of Freud's concept, Caruth emphasizes a belatedness attaching to the traumatic moment itself; the traumatic experience is not fully registered in the first place, but experienced as trauma only belatedly and it re-surfaces in a fragmented form as traumatic flashbacks, nightmares, intrusive thoughts, and repetitive re-enactments. Rather than remembered as something that happened in the past, then, the trauma becomes part of the survivor's identity, and is compulsively performed in the present, or in Freud's terms, acted out (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle* 36) as though it happens in real time. For Caruth, the devastating impact of trauma stems from this time and placelessness, the collapsing of the distances between past and present. She writes "[T]he fact that, for those who undergo trauma, it is not only the moment of the event, but of the passing out of it that is traumatic; that *survival itself*, in other words, *can be a crisis*" (*Trauma* 9).

Caruth's exposition of trauma focuses on Freud's notion of latency or belatedness, which he initially developed in relation to hysteria and the seduction theory in the late nineteenth century, implicitly emphasizes the original and close alliance between trauma and sexual abuse. In other words, it marks familial and other sexual abuse as the first step for understanding trauma, because the foundational language for discussing this phenomenon was developed in early Freud, and is found in his writings on hysteria. Although he allegedly abandoned the seduction theory, he used and further developed his work on trauma in subsequent writings throughout his life, such as in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920) and *Moses and Monotheism* (1939).

Freud's letters written between 1887 and 1897 to his colleague and friend Wilhelm Fliess show how the early development of his concept of *Nachträglichkeit* initially occurs at the same time with the birth of the seduction theory of the neuroses. Freud developed these trauma(tic) theories by treating cases of hysteria in mostly female patients, and first used the term *Nachträglichkeit* in Part II of his posthumously published "Project for a Scientific Psychology" "We invariably find that a memory is repressed which has only become a trauma by *deferred action*" (356). In other words, for Freud, the memory of an experience gives rise to an effect, which was not originally aroused upon occurrence, in accordance with a new a subsequent understanding,

indicating that the event or the memory of the experience becomes traumatic only the second time around, after it has become internally revived.

Freud also develops the theory of *Nachträglichkeit* in *Studies on Hysteria* (1895), co-written with his colleague the Viennese physician Joseph Breuer and published a few months before he wrote the "Project," and discussed it as "retention hysteria." Upon noting that both "traumatic neuroses" and "common hysteria" often originate in psychical trauma and its memories, Freud and Breuer propose in the *Studies* the new term "traumatic hysteria." In their jointly written 1893 essay "On the Psychical Mechanism of Hysterical Phenomena: Preliminary Communication" published in the *Studies*, they describe "traumatic hysteria" as a memory disorder:

The causal relation between the determining psychical trauma and the hysterical phenomenon is not of a kind implying that the trauma merely acts like an *agent provocateur* in releasing the symptom, which thereafter leads an independent existence," but "the psychical trauma – or more precisely the memory of the trauma – acts like a foreign body which long after its entry must continue to be regarded as an agent that is still at work (6).

In other words, it is not a simple question of relay of action, symptoms or discharge. Rather, the event, which is stored in the individual, is internally resuscitated and re-enacted at a later time when the patient is confronted with a similar occurrence. Freud termed the interval of latency between the event and its resurfacing "incubation" (*Studies* 131) This time the locked-up effect appears as somatic, or psychopathological symptoms, or as Freud terms them, "mnemonic symbols" (*Studies* 90) i.e. symbols of the sealed-off traumatic memory From the *Studies* comes also the much quoted line, "Hysterics suffer mainly from reminiscences" (7). However, the same book also documents how Freud and Breuer discovered that these symptoms vanished as soon as the memory and its "accompanying affect" (6) had been verbalized; and so the "cathartic method" or the famous "talking cure" was born.

Freud's case history "Katharina" in the *Studies* became critical for the development and conceptualization of the seduction theory, his theory of trauma, and the cathartic method, and clearly illustrates the link between their formulations. On a vacation trip,

Freud encountered “Katharina,” who suffered from anxiety attacks and feelings of disgust after having caught her father in bed with her cousin. At the time she did not understand what was going on, but after promptings from Freud, she was able to produce an earlier memory of how she had been sexually assaulted by her father a few years earlier when she was fourteen. Upon this revelation, her “sulky, unhappy face had grown lively, her eyes were bright, she was lightened and exalted,” and thus, Freud concludes, she “had not been disgusted by the sight of the two people but by the memory which that sight had stirred up in her” (*Studies* 131). It now becomes obvious that it is through “Katharina” that Freud both discovered and developed some of his central traumatic insights.

In his essay, “Trauma, Absence, Loss” Dominick LaCapra points out “The belated temporality of trauma makes of it an elusive experience related to repetition involving a period of latency. At least in Freud’s widely shared view, the trauma as experience is “in” the repetition of an early event in a later event—an early event for which one was not prepared to feel anxiety and a later event that somehow recalls the early one and triggers a traumatic response.

In her introductory essay to *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, Cathy Caruth provides a clear and coherent description of trauma as well as a compelling explanation of why its impact presents specific conceptual challenges. By showing that the onset of traumatic pathology (post-traumatic stress disorder or PTSD) cannot be fully determined by, or located in, a given traumatic event, Caruth proposes that trauma compels us to imagine that traumatic events do not simply occur in time. Rather, they fracture the very experience of time for the person to whom they “happen.”

The pathology cannot be defined either by the event itself—which may or may not be catastrophic, and may not traumatize everyone equally—nor can it be defined in terms of a distortion of the event, achieving its haunting power as a result of distorting personal significances attached to it. The pathology consists, rather, solely in the structure of experience or reception: the event is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time, but only belatedly, in its repeated possession of the one who experiences it. To be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or event (4–5).

The true power of trauma is due to the fact that the person who is exposed to any traumatic event cannot perceive the after effects when it occurs; however, the traces caused by the trauma are ready to resurface whenever they are triggered by any related incidents. Thus, any traumatic experience stretches over the whole life of victim. Caruth points out that because the event is not assimilated as it occurs, it only comes into being "belatedly." She writes: "[T]he impact of the traumatic event lies precisely in its belatedness, in its refusal to be simply located, in its insistent appearance outside the boundaries of any single place or time" (9). A traumatic event is, therefore, a strange sort of event because once it is understood as a belated consequence of a "missed encounter," trauma itself must be understood in terms of "absence," the absence of something that failed to become located in time or place, rather than as a "positive" presence. This absence at the heart of the traumatic event lends it its constitutive ghostly quality. Because of this absence, people who have suffered traumatic experiences can become so "possessed" by them that they frequently describe themselves as living "ghosts."

Caruth's another work *Unclaimed Experience* is full of brilliant insights. She repeatedly argues that trauma as it first occurs is incomprehensible. It is only later, after a period of latency, that it can be placed in a narrative. She writes "the impact of the traumatic event lies precisely in its belatedness, in its refusal to be simply located" (8). What returns to haunt trauma victim is not just any event but, significantly, the shocking and unexpected occurrence of the event. Caruth maintains "Traumatic experience, beyond the psychological dimension of suffering it involves, suggests a certain paradox: that the most direct seeing of a violent event may occur as an absolute inability to know it; that immediacy, paradoxically, may take the form of belatedness" (91-2). The impact of the traumatic event thus suggest a larger relation to the event that extends beyond what can simply been seen or what can be known, and is inextricably tied up with the belatedness.

4.2. The Belated Trauma in *The Sea, The Sea*

The Sea, the Sea (1978), Murdoch's only Booker Prize winning novel, is perhaps her most sustained and focused attempt of representation of inner life of a single character.

In this novel she confronts the questions about the complexity of human consciousness which she later articulates in *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*:

How does the alleged stream [of consciousness] relate to time? How do “general” and “particular” relate therein? Should we and can we distinguish mental contents which have some degree (what degree?) of clarity, form and body, for instance, by consisting of sentences which could be uttered loud? What is the value, use, status, of contents which fail this sort of test? What do we do with items that have personal “colour” but no public classification, are there such items? (Is there a private language?) How immediate immediate awareness? Are there mental entities (images, icons, lights, dark clouds, verbal admonitions etc. etc.) which are always in our minds? What about “unconscious mind,” is there such a thing? (173).

The book is a central contribution to Murdoch’s attempt to extend the boundaries of language so that it can evoke quality of consciousness more accurately. In her essay “Thinking and Language”, she suggests that “[...] thoughts may be described as an experience into which words enter variously or not at all [...] both the actual occurrence of words in thought, and our private conceptual fixing of our own states of mind, is experienced in an *imaging*, semi-sensible mode” (*Existentialists and Mystics* 39-40). In her another work, she argues that these “hazy and unclarified outer edges of consciousness” are “more easily suggested by novelists and poets than analytically described by philosophers,” and felt writers must use “suitable metaphors [...] to make these features visible” (*Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals* 215).

Her first-person narrator is Charles Arrowby, a famous retired writer, actor and director, who has given up a life of self centred egoism to live quietly by the sea and seek out a spiritual identity. The book is in some ways a reworking of *The Tempest*, a fact indicated clearly to the reader when Charles boasts of his prowess at playing Prospero. He is one of the Murdoch’s “enchanter” characters with the power of manipulate and destroy many who intrude into his emotional domain, but his magic also extends to a clever but covert manipulation of his own mind. The power of the unconsciousness to unwittingly determine conscious action is what the novel explores.

Murdoch creates a kind of character entrapped by his past trauma which leads him to live in his self deluded world. After several years, the trauma caused by the unexpected death of his lover, Clement starts to haunt him. Reappearance of his trauma isolates him from the reality and causes him to live in world of illusions. In the process of the novel, the belated nature of the traumatic event is demonstrated by the protagonist. What Murdoch does in the novel is to draw the protagonist to the repressed regions of his mind in order to be released from his past trauma. In this sense, his childhood, particularly, his parental relations, his envies, are all revealed. Murdoch employs the psychoanalytical method where the patient is cured of a past trauma and manages to look at future being freed from the obsessive and entangling traces of the past. During Charles spiritual journey away from the world of illusion to the enlightenment, Murdoch gives her readers the analysis of irrational and obsessive love.

Murdoch uses different narrative techniques in order to reflect the distorted conscious of the protagonist. In the context of the novel the alternation of tenses is one of them, which reinforces Charles's apparent inability to distinguish the past from the present. The section of "Prehistory" which introduces the story and in which Charles surveys his past life is written almost entirely in the present tense, while the long central section entitled "History" recounts Charles's life as he is living in the present, alternating between the immediacy of telling what is going on at the moment of telling and it turns into the very recent past which are told in the past tense and serves as links in the continuity of the tale. The final "Postscript" section again reverts to the present continuous. In the book, *Iris Murdoch*, Hilda D. Spear points out "The deliberate way in which the author plays with various tenses emphasises the confusion in Charles's mind between past and present" (95).

The peculiar setting in the novel is also deliberately chosen by Murdoch so as to create a suitable atmosphere for reflecting Charles's unconscious. After Charles retires, he decides to settle in primitive seacoast where he buys a house called Shruff End. It is the house which shows Murdoch's perception of the body and the mind of Charles. Freud asserts that "The range of things which are given symbolic representation in dreams is not wide: the human body as a whole, parents, children, brothers and sisters, birth, death, nakedness- and something else besides. The one typical-that is regular-

representation of the human figure as a whole is a house [...]” (*Complete Lectures* 153). Needless to say, Charles’s neurosis is objectified by his choice of residence because his residence at Shruff End with its peculiar features indeed reflects Charles’s frame of mind. The setting reflects a dynamic site of psychological change. Jack Turner in his work, *A Freudian Look at an Anti-Freudian* writes:

Charles’s progress can be seen in terms of setting: as a movement from private, enclosed, forcibly ordered interior (his house) to a wide-open, mythopoeic exterior (the seashore), to another interior (James’s flat) the last one more jumbled, chaotic, religious, and, therefore, in Murdoch’s view, more realistic. He moves from egoism to an experience of sublime and an acceptance of real, and this course can be charted by close attention to his surroundings; the setting here is as important as it has never been in a Murdoch novel (84).

The description of the house, which “is perched upon a small promontory and standing indeed upon the very rocks themselves,” (10) according to certain critics, forms an immediate phallic image. If the house represents the mind and the body of Charles, the upstairs corresponds to the mind: there he writes his book, which reflects the creative and artistic activity of the mind, and he sleeps or dreams about his fantasies which show the working of his imagination and unconscious, whereas downstairs corresponds to the body where he mostly spends his time in the kitchen or the small den which he calls “the little red room” (14). They are symbolic of the stomach and the heart.

Charles is mostly in darkness in his residence at Shruff End since it does not have electricity. That is why Charles has to light candles during the night to illuminate the interior which creates shadows upon its walls reminding the Cave in Platonic terms. Murdoch who has used the cave metaphor of Plato in her fiction many times again employs the same notion to reveal Charles’s state of mind which takes him to the dark underworld of his own unconscious through his experiences and then leads him to confront with whatever compels him before emerging into light. Both Charles and his Buddhist cousin, James constantly mention caves. In the novel, the image of the cave is first used by Charles when he remembers a comment which has been once made by James. “I remember James saying something about people who end their lives in caves.

Well, this, here, is my cave" (4). Charles appears to have misunderstood this remark and believes that Shruff End is his cave and is a good place to end his life. Yet, the truth is not so superficial. Spear points out:

We can have no doubt that Murdoch's reference is once more to Plato's cave, from which the Good must emerge to look at the sun. It is a hint that James is striving towards Platonic goodness and that while he understands that many people never escape the cave, he himself aspires to emerge from the dark and look at the sun (*Iris Murdoch* 99).

Murdoch, herself, explains Plato's view of human life as a pilgrimage from appearance to reality by reviewing his famous myth of the Cave. In her book *The Fire and The Sun* she writes:

The prisoners of the Cave are at first chained to face the black wall where all they can see are shadows, cast by a fire which is behind them, of themselves and of objects which are between them and the fire. Later they manage to turn round and see the fire and the objects which cast the shadows. Later still they escape from the Cave, see the outside world in the light of the sun, and finally the sun itself. The sun represents the Form of the Good in whose light the truth is seen; it reveals the world, hitherto invisible, and is also a source of life (4).

Murdoch plays ironically with Charles's version of the cave parable. According to Charles, Hartley, who appears to be the obsessive childhood love of him, embodies the Platonic sun which Charles thinks her to be. As the whole novel questions the dichotomy of the inside and the outside reality, Charles faces his own truth, how he has misled himself with a self-deluding obsession concerning Hartley. Truth becomes increasingly hard to distinguish from mere illusion in a bewildering way. As Deborah Johnson mentions in her book, *Iris Murdoch*, "The Cave in *The Sea*, *The Sea* is both the theatrical enclosure in which we live and a place of contemplation, of confrontation with inner truth, a testing-place" (92).

In addition to metaphoric usage of the Cave, the concept in Freudian approach is evaluated as a womb-shaped enclosure, both secret and sacred. According to Freud, boxes, caves, shoes, gates, paper, suitcases basically anything hollow that stores

something is bound to be a womb. Freud asserts in his book entitled *Civilization and its Discontents* "The dwelling- house was a substitute for the mother's womb, the first lodging, for which in all likelihood man still longs, and in which he was safe and felt at ease" (4488). In this sense, Charles, who states "this, here, is my cave" (4) is in fact, strongly in need of protection as well as longs for the days of innocence in his childhood. What he actually looks for in his relations is innocence since he is fed up with the artificiality around him. Thus, Murdoch's deliberate choice of theatre for Charles's occupation becomes more meaningful since theatre is a place of pretending. As Charles states "we are masked figures; ideally the masks barely touch us" (37), he makes a direct reference to artificiality of human nature. In this sense, the image of theatre can make a convenient backdrop. Conradi points out "Few other novelists would have resisted the temptation to use the theatre to flatten the book's own illusionism" (58).

Undoubtedly Charles's quest for innocence directs us to his childhood. Charles's memoirs of childhood display the figure of a dominant mother. Peter J. Conradi points out "There are always some Freudian hints as to what makes Charles what he is, in the depiction of his relationship with his mother" (*The Saint & the Artist* 299). For instance, he rarely wants to spend the night with a woman he has made love to. He says "In the morning she looks to me like a whore" (52). Besides, he experiences "something strange and awful" when watching people, especially women, sing "the wet white teeth, the moist red interior" (60). The main reason of Charles's negative attitude towards women stems from his disappointing relation with his mother. His mother is envious of other people's happiness and wealth and resents her life. Her dissatisfaction with life directly affects her relations with the others especially with her son. Therefore, Charles seeks for an ideal woman substituting the mother in his dream throughout his life.

His first serious love affair with Clement who is much older than Charles carries signs of his innermost need for an affectionate and strong mother figure. As Conradi states "He is aware of feeling of a connexion with Clement kin to what he feels for his mother" (299). As a mother-like figure, Clement has an undeniably important place in Charles's life. In the beginning of the novel, he clearly states "I had such a close collection with Clement, just as if (though I never used these words to her) she were

indeed my mother" (53). Accordingly, the sudden death of Clement deeply influences Charles.

As Freud describes it as "the painful riddle, against which no medicine has yet been found, nor probably will be" ("The Future of an Illusion" 693), death is such a phenomena that neither comprehending it totally nor overcoming its effects is nearly impossible. Particularly, to experience the death of someone close has dramatic effects on human psyche. This effect can be defined as psychological trauma. Caruth properly explains "trauma describes an overwhelming experience of sudden and catastrophic events" (*Unclaimed Experience* 11). In the novel, the belated nature of trauma appears when Charles, who experiences the death of his beloved, later shows traumatic symptoms though he cannot perceive the meaning of losing her at the moment she has died. Rather than being a mere lover, Clement means a lot for him. He describes his state of mind when she is about to die and after her death with these words:

Clement was a long time dying [...] I lay on the bed beside her and stroked her face, which had become, just very lately, so much more wrinkled with pain and fear. My fingers can still remember those soft wrinkles and the tears that quietly filled them. She said she wanted to die in a storm of noise and for days we had the hi-fi turned up playing Wagner and we drank whiskey and together we waited [...] Our fear divided us, her fear, my fear of *the event*: two different sharp fears which we had to overcome by constant force of mutual attention. [...] In the end she died when I was asleep [...] That time of attentive mourning for her death was quiet unlike the black horror of the thing itself. We had mourned together, trying to soothe each other's pain. But that shared pain was so much less than the torment of her vanishing, the terrible lived time of her eternal absence (485).

Unlike his mother, Aunt Estelle, wife of Uncle Abel plays the role of dream mother. In the novel Charles compares two women with these words "She was, in a vague way, demonstratively affectionate to me when I was a child. My undemonstrative mother watched these perhaps meaningless effusions coldly, but they moved me" (60). Aunt Estelle has been a centre of attraction for Charles as well as bears a symbolic meaning. Charles says "Altogether my aunt was for me a symbolic figure, a modern figure, even a

futuristic figure, a sort of prophetic lure into my own future. She lived in a land which I was determined to find and to conquer for myself" (60). In addition to perfect representation of mother figure, Aunt Estelle also stands for Charles's future expectations since she is from America where he wants to go and settle a new life. Being dissatisfied his own parental relations; Charles cannot help regarding his uncle and aunt "as glamorous almost godlike beings" but on the other hand, he defines his own parents "as failures" (59). In the circumstances, as a son of this favourable couple, James is, doubtlessly, the person who has been envied most by Charles.

At the very beginning of the book Charles speaks of his relation with his cousin James. He states "When I was young I could never decide whether James was real and I was unreal, or vice versa. Somehow it was clear we could not both be real; one of us must inhabit the world of shadows" (57). Since childhood he has been full of both jealousy and envy of James's money, education, assurance. In the book, he more than once quotes a common French term "*Cousinage, dangereux voisinage*" which can be translated into English as "Cousins, dangerous neighbourhood." Conradi writes "Charles has pursued success out of rivalry with James and a desire to be "one up" on him" (*The Saint & The Artist* 304). The rivalry between Charles and James is entirely inside Charles's head. As the novel proceeds, James becomes "a centre of magnetic attraction" (328). He is the sound of commonsense and a perfect guide for salvation from difficult situations. Jealousy accompanied by rivalry turns out to be an obsession for Charles. He even says "If I were told today that James was dead my first emotion might be pleasurable [...]" (57).

On the other hand, James, who is totally unaware of this feeling, illustrates a reasonable character in comparison with Charles, who lives in a world of illusion. Suguna Ramanathan, the lecturer in English from India points out that "James Arrowby, though seen through the distorting glass of Charles's journal, is an example of one whose Buddha-nature has been awakened, one far advanced in the long journey from unreality to reality and clear vision" (*Iris Murdoch; Figures of Good* 68). Throughout the book, he maintains to be the man of commonsense and logic. In this sense, he repeatedly struggles for pulling Charles out of his self deluded world. When Charles tells him in their first exchange that he has met Hartley, that she has been and is his only

love despite the numerous women in between, that he will rescue her and make her happy, James introduces notes of reason and good sense. He says “[...] you may be deluding yourself that you have really loved this woman all these years. Where’s the proof? And what is love anyway? [...] I cannot attach much importance to your idea of such a long-lasting love for someone you lost sight of so long ago” (178). In conclusion, Murdoch creates “James” as foil character in order to put an emphasis on Charles’s unawareness of reality. Ramanathan puts in more proper way “James’s significance can stand out only if placed against Charles’s unawareness” (68).

The use of imagery employed by Murdoch in *The Sea, The Sea* also provides the reader with the pessimistic panorama of Charles’s unconscious. Elizabeth Dipple explains the black imagery of the landscape and the names of the places in the novel as follows:

We are told that Shruff means black; the pub is called Black Lion, the local Hotel is the Raven, the village is called Nerode (black village) Shruff End is finally sold to Dr. Schwarzkopf meaning “black head.” The world of the novel is dominated with black-yellow, the colours of Charles’s clicking bead curtain. We are being nudged toward Western and Buddhist death symbolism (*Iris Murdoch: Work For the Spirit* 301).

In addition to colour image, the other two master images of the book are the “box” and the “sea.” These are so influential, both “literal” and “metaphoric” that to call them symbols is to degrade them. They seem more like concrete metaphors. Conradi writes “The power of the image of the “box”- which is both the extremely dark, entirely empty enclosed inner room without outside windows, and also the cavern of his mind- is that Charles has locked up a simulacrum of Hartley within his mind, and is to act out this incarceration in reality” (*The Saint & The Artist* 313). He is given to seeing her as imprisoned within the “cage” of her marriage. On one page the word “cage” (201) is repeated three times. Yet, his perception is nothing but a mere illusion. Seeing her thus, he engages her himself. During the days he holds her captive he “felt like a child who rushes to the cage of its new pet fearing to find a lifeless body” (282). Thus the image of the “box” refers to Charles’s unconscious mind. His obsession with Hartley

demonstrates his deluded assessment after traumatic experience of his lover's Clement's death.

As Heusel points out the sea is used as "a metaphor for his [Charles's] unconscious" (*Patterned Aimlessness* 72). Its endlessness changelessness, its very great beauty and its dreadfulness, its unvarying indifference to beings who view it from the shore all make the sea a natural symbol of the boundlessness of life. Besides, a connotation released by the repetition in the title, *The Sea, The Sea*, is suggestive of huge expanse and limitlessness of unconscious. The peaceful image of the sea represents Charles's overblown illusion about his ability to escape his tempestuous life as a director of theatre and change himself into a disciplined, humble, moral human being. Murdoch sets the protagonist in a quiet village where the inhabitants insist that it is foolhardy to swim in the sea. Nevertheless, he cannot resist his instinct to swim there. He states "Since my arrival I have had the pleasure of swimming naked" (5). Particularly, his preference to swim naked stands for a kind of reborn accompanied by baptizing ceremony. As a matter of fact, it means a fresh beginning and his desire to change all his life.

Unlike the positive representation of the sea, his juxtaposing a calm view of the sea and the mysterious references to a disturbing hallucination plants the idea that he could be a man close to brink of madness. Charles has seen, rising out of sea, a sea monster that is apparently an illusion of his distorted perception but at the same time a quite uncanny figure. He writes:

Just before I saw my huge monster I had been closely inspecting, in the rock pool, a little monster, the red bristling worm, whose five or six inches of wriggling body appeared big in the confined space of the pool. Was it possible that through some purely optical mechanism, some unusual trick of the retina, I had 'thrown' the image of the worm out onto the surface of the sea? This was an interesting idea but totally implausible, since the red worm bore no resemblance to the bluish-blackish monster, except in so far as both of them had wreathed into coils. Besides, I had never heard of any such retinal "cinematography." I was struck, on reflection, by the fact that I recalled the creature with extreme clarity, the visual impression remained extremely

detailed, while at the same time I felt more and more vague about its exact distance away from me (20-1).

Actually, the fantasy of monster bears resemblance to Freudian image of uncanny. "Uncanny" is the term which is developed by Freud in his 1919 essay "The Uncanny" It refers to which can be familiar, yet foreign at the same time, resulting in a feeling of it being uncomfortably strange or uncomfortably familiar. Freud explains the concept by exemplifying it as follows:

In the middle of the isolation of war-time a number of the English *Strand Magazine* fell into my hands; and, among other somewhat redundant matter, I read a story about a young married couple who move into a furnished house in which there is a curiously shaped table with carvings of crocodile on it. Towards evening an intolerable and very specific smell begins to pervade the house; they stumble over something in the dark; they seem to see a vague form gliding over the stairs- in short, we are given to understand that the presence of table causes ghostly crocodiles to haunt the place, or that the wooden monsters come to life in the dark, or something of the sort. It was a naive enough story, but the uncanny feeling it produced was quite remarkable (3694).

The uncanny is an experience of uncertainty, where the world in which we live suddenly seems strange, alienating or threatening. At the beginning, Charles notices the little worm in the rock pool. It is an ordinary worm living in the sea away from being dreadful. After a couple of seconds, the image of the worm turns out a horrific monster on the surface of the sea. Freud asserts "This is that uncanny effect is often and easily produced when the distinction between imagination and reality is effaced when as something that we have hitherto regarded as imaginary appears before us in reality, or when a symbol takes over the full functions of the thing it symbolizes, and so on" (3694). Murdoch's application of Freudian "Uncanny" imagery is not limited with the emergence of monsters on the sea. Charles imagines seeing some ghostly images through the window. He says "I looked up and was for a moment perfectly sure that I saw a face looking at me through the glass of the inner room. I sat a face absolutely still, paralysed by sheer terror. The vision was only momentary but, although I cannot now describe the face, very definite" (68). A few days later, he is, once more, deluded

himself with the apparition of woman. "I saw, beside the wall at far end, between the curtain and the door of the inner room, the dark motionless figure of woman. My first and clear thought was that I was seeing a ghost [...] The figure moved, turned more fully towards me. It was a real woman, not a ghost" (102).

The uncanny effect provoked by Charles's illusions can be traced back to "involuntary repetition" (3708) or something repressed which recurs. As Freud argues "[...] the uncanny is nothing else than a hidden, familiar thing that has undergone repression and then emerged from it, and that everything that is uncanny fulfils this condition" (3712). Accordingly, Charles's uncanny images are deferred consequence of his past trauma keeping buried in the depth of his unconscious. When Clement dies Charles not only loses his beloved but also is deprived of the meaning he has attributed to Clement. Actually, these senses that Clement represents are quite deep-rooted. They traces back his Oedipal period where he has been totally deprived of his mother's affection and intimacy. He depicts his mother quite strict, lack of sympathy and extremely jealous. Charles contemplates:

It may be that my uncle and aunt thought that my upbringing was too strict. Outsiders who see rules and not the love that runs through them are often too ready to label other people as 'prisoners'. It is conceivable that clever Uncle Abel and liberated Aunt Estelle actually pitied my father and myself, and blamed my mother for what they regarded as a repressive regime. If my mother suspected the existence of such judgments she must have felt pain and resentment; and this resentment may even have had the effect of making her still stricter with us. It is also possible that, divining my childish fantasies concerning that "America" which Aunt Estelle represented to me, she felt jealous (61).

His misfortune of having the aunt, the uncle and their son, who have very strong family bonds, enhances his depravity as well as leaves him the strong sense of jealousy towards James. He says "I could not help regarding Uncle Abel and Aunt Estelle as glamorous almost godlike beings in comparison with whom my own parents seemed insignificant and dull. I could not help seeing them, in that comparison, as failures" (59). Throughout his life, he has had numerous relations in all of which he searches for

innocent love. At last, he has found Clement “eternal wonderful unclassifiable Clement” (38). How much invaluable and precious Clement is, to be deprived of her presence has an equally great, destructive effect on Charles. Having reached the idea that an infantile factor such as this is responsible for feelings of uncanny, it can be concluded that Charles’s repressed infantile wishes return in the form of uncanny images. As Freud argues:

In the first place, if psycho-analytic theory is correct in maintaining that every affect belonging to an emotional impulse, whatever its kind, is transformed, if it is repressed, into anxiety, then among instances of frightening things there must be one class in which the frightening element can be shown to be something repressed which *recurs*. This class of frightening things would then constitute the uncanny [...] (3691).

As it has been elaborated in the first chapter, repression is one of the most basic concepts in psychoanalytic theory as well as trauma theory, and indicates the process by which certain thoughts or memories are excluded from consciousness and restrained to the unconscious. Victim, unconsciously, tends to represses the traumatizing event and seems to forget any related motives to it. However, traumatic event consists of not only the immediate shock at the time of happening but also the belated effect attached to it. Thus the return of the repressed is inevitable. As Cruth argues “Repression reflects a vertically layered model of mind: what is repressed is pushed downward, into the unconscious. The subject no longer has access to it. Only symbolic, indirect indications would point to assumed existence” (*Trauma* 168).

Once a thought is repressed, it does not remain unrevealed. It connects up other related thoughts and seeks expression through dreams, uncanny images and other symptoms. Lacan, also, studies on the concept of “repression” and “unconscious.” He elaborates most of his revolutionary ideas in weekly seminars which are later published under the name of *Seminars*. He points out “The repressed and the return of the repressed are one and the same” (*Seminar III* 57). In other words, the idea that is repressed is the same idea that is expressed in a disguised mode in Freudian perception. Actually, the only proof of the existence of the repressed is its return, its manifestations in the form of disruptions or interruptions. Based on Freudian and Lacanian perception,

the traumatic experience Charles undergoes after the death of Clement ends up with the uncanny images and illusions, as an indication of his repressed infantile wishes.

Charles's biggest illusion is, undoubtedly, his feelings toward his childhood love, Hartley. He, intentionally, prefers to move and settle in a small coastal village because as he states himself "this is for Clement that I am here. This was her country; she grew up on this lonely coast" (32). Most probably, he plans to lead a life with the dearest memories of Clement. Yet, something unexpected happens when he encounters his ex-love, Hartley. His feelings toward her begin to revive and irresistible urge to be with her dominates his conscious. On the other hand, Hartley, defined by Charles as "my end and my beginning" (77) has abandoned him in the past. He has not recovered her rejection of him. He has not passed a day without thinking of her or pondering over the hurt. He describes how her image repeatedly haunts him after she leaves him as follows:

And in a way I did keep on searching for her, only it was a different and quite involuntary kind of search, a sort of dream-search. It was as if in my persisting memory of her I seemed to 'body her forth', the ways she moved, the ways she walked, as if a physical scheme other being kept me always company. And so, and especially as the pain faded, I kept 'seeing' her, seeing shadow forms of her imposed upon quite different women; her shoulders, her hair, her walk, her puzzled fey expression. I still sometimes see these shadows. I saw one lately upon an old woman in the village, a transient look other head placed like a mask upon somebody entirely different. Once or twice in London, long ago, I even followed these ghosts, not because I thought they were she, but simply to torment myself, to punish myself for still remembering (86).

The love story of Charles and Hartley has been written beautifully by Murdoch, so much so one begins to empathize with Charles. He is greatly excited by his own descriptions and as a reader one readily accepts what he has to tell. The reader gets an inside and outside view of Charles and undoubtedly is left feeling sorry for him. Later Charles finds out that his first love, Mary Hartley Fitch is living with her husband in a very pretty house named "Nimbletts." Murdoch, again, employs the technique of using symbols to reflect the unconscious of Charles while describing two houses; Shruff End and Nimbletts. The interior of Nimbletts is cosy and clean just the opposite of Shruff

End which is grey and empty inside. The interior of the house is described by Charles as "The sea was shining into the sitting room like an enamelled mirror with its own especial clear light" (124). Nibletts reflects light and colour whereas Shruff End is dominated with darkness, which is indeed a reflection of Charles's unconscious.

It is not only Hartley's refusal to unbalance Charles's state of mind but indeed, the representation of her in his unconscious. Charles's obsessive quest for innocence is directly attributed to Hartley. In the book, Charles uses the word of innocence several times. Once he describes Hartley with these words "She was not an intellectual or bookish girl, she had the wisdom of the innocents and we conversed as angels" (80). Again, he puts an emphasis on the word by stating "To find one's true mate is to find the one person with whom happiness is purely innocent" (373). Undoubtedly, the first thing associating with innocence is the mother figure. In this sense, Charles states the similarity he has found out between his mother and Hartley.

Perhaps all my love affairs have been vicious attempts to show Hartley that she was right after all. But she was only right because she left me. You die at heart from a withdrawal of love. My mother's threats of such a withdrawal made me utterly vulnerable to Hartley's crime. Hartley destroyed my innocence, she and the demon of jealousy. She made me faithless. But with her I would have been faithful, with her my whole life would have been different, less rootless, less empty. Do I then think my life has been empty, *my* life? A ridiculous judgment! Could Hartley really have thought the youth that I then was "a worldly man"? If so she was more like my mother than I ever suspected (84).

Charles's great love has been never responded by Hartley since they first met. Charles's self delusions cause to shadow his perception and give him a false concept of this reality. He believes Hartley is also in love with him and the only reason that prevents her from uniting is her anxiety about Ben's reaction. As Heusel acknowledges "Throughout the novel Charles refuses to believe in Hartley's happiness because he must finally win her in order to find his own integrity. Instead of investigating her satisfaction with life, he invents reasons or language games, to explain why she is lying to him" (*Patterned Aimlessness* 80). In fact Charles's deluded perception is best reviewed by James as follows:

Sorry. But seriously, look at it this way. Your love for this girl, when she was a girl, was put by shock into a state of suspended animation. Now the shock of meeting her again has led you to re-enact all your old feelings for her. It's a mental charade, a necessary one perhaps, it has its own necessity, but not like what you think. Of course you can't get over it at once. But in a few weeks or a few months you'll have run through it all, looked at it all again and felt it all again and got rid of it. It's not an eternal thing, nothing human is eternal. For us, eternity is an illusion. It's like in a fairy tale. When the clock strikes twelve it will all crumble to pieces and vanish. And you'll find you are free other, free other forever, and you can let the poor ghost go. What will remain will be ordinary obligations and ordinary interests. And you'll feel relief, you'll feel free. At present you're just obsessed, hypnotized (353).

Charles desperately begins to scheme and plot a way in which to woo his lady love out of marriage and hold her to himself. He says "We must find out how at last to be absolute to each other, never to lose each other" (121). As Charles works out plans to unite Hartley, men and women from his past begin to appear. None of his relations has been fulfilling, in none of them has he found what he searches for. Utterly obsessed with innocent love he lacks in, he coaxes and pesters the ageing Hartley to come to him. He begs Hartley "Come to me anyway, of course there are no conditions, just let me help you and serve you" (206). When Charles's plea is further rejected by Hartley, he holds her captive in his house for a few days. Like Clement, Hartley is, indeed, the embodiment of Charles's quest for innocent love. Under the effect of the trauma caused by Clement's death, his unfulfilled infantile wish reappears, blurs his perception and makes him chase for it at all cost. It is clearly understood that this never ending pursuit transforms into an obsession.

In his essay "Obsessive Actions and Religious Practices" Freud affirms that "the obsessive action serves to express unconscious motives and ideas" (433). The repressed infantile wish resurfaces through the obsessive love for Hartley. As a major symptom of this obsession, Charles breaks off the relation with reality and accordingly creates an illusionary world. In this particular subject, Freud acknowledges in the essay "On Narcissism" "A patient suffering from hysteria or obsessional neurosis has also, as far

as his illness extends, given up his relation to reality” (546). In his illusionary world, Charles, thus, has no doubt that Hartley is in love with him, too.

Freud makes number of attempts to define obsession on the basis of highly specific way in which people react to early primal experiences. On the other hand, Lacan provides the basis of a structural understanding of obsession. To grasp the concept of obsession through a Lacanian lens, his notion of the fundamental fantasy should be elaborated. In its most basic form, it is the relationship between the subject and the object. Most simple stated, the obsessive’s fantasy implies a relationship with an object, but the obsessive refuses to recognize that this object is related to the Other. In this regard, a Lacanian scholar Bruce Fink gives an example to enlighten the concept. He asserts:

To take the simplest Lacanian example, the mother’s breast is initially the infant’s primary source of satisfaction. At first, the infant considers the breast not as separate from itself but rather as part and parcel of itself. Once the infant becomes aware of itself as separate from its mother, however, the breast can never be “possessed” in exactly the same way, for the initial satisfaction it brought was tied to a time prior to the self-other, subject-object distinction. The infant did not consider the breast to belong to another person, but in the course of weaning it is experienced as wrenched way, as lost. The child does not suffer this passively: it tries to make good or compensate itself somehow for the loss (*A Clinical Introduction to Lacanian Psychoanalysis* 119).

In obsessive fantasy separation is overcome or made up for as the subject constitutes himself in relation to the breast. Yet, the obsessive refuses to acknowledge that the breast is part of or comes from the mother. The obsessive takes the object for himself and refuses to recognize the other’s existence. The obsessive’s fundamental fantasy can thus be adequately formulated using Lacan’s general formula for the fundamental fantasy. The obsessive fiercely refuses to see himself as dependent on the other attempting to maintain a relationship with a cause of desire that is dependent on no one.

After a brief overview of the origin of obsession, one can conclude that Charles’s obsessive pursue after the innocent love certainly traces back his infantile period. The

trauma of Clement's death triggers his obsession resulting in the bizarre kidnapping of Hartley. Having so deep rooted obsession, Charles refuses to give up and attempts a rescue Hartley despite Hartley's rejection of him. He even blames himself for not saving her from the unhappy life of marriage. He relates "I felt agony of protective, possessive love and such a deep pain to think how I failed to defend her from a lifetime of unhappiness" (158). Yet, there are moments when Charles introspects the wrongness of his incorrect action in confining Hartley against her wishes. He confesses:

What was I doing, or rather what was happening to me? I held my head in my hands my hands. I was totally vulnerable and helpless. I had lost control of my life and the lives with which I was meddling. I felt a dreadful and a terrible fatalism; and a bitter grief such as I had never felt in my life since Hartley had left me so many years ago (310).

Anne Rowe and Priscilla Martin assert that "Charles's love for Hartley is proven to be merely one of the myths that human beings construct to save themselves from facing reality, in this case the horror of Clement's death and the pain of her loss" (*I. Murdoch: A Literary Life* 126). He finally acknowledges that she, not Hartley, was the great love of his life. At the end of the novel Charles confesses:

Clement was the reality of my life, its bread and its wine. She made me, she invented me, she created me, she was my university, my partner, my teacher, my mother, later my child, my soul's mate, my absolute mistress. She, and not Hartley, was the reason why I never married. She was certainly the reason why I did not seek and find Hartley at a time when it might have been quite easy to do so (484).

Charles, lacking in clarity of vision and performing actions without discrimination, stumbles into the dungeon of worries and disillusionment. As Heusel posits "No doubt Murdoch has Charles refer to prayer and sleep to inform the reader that instead of holding the obvious firmly in his consciousness, he uses these escapes to help him drift off into wishing, a behaviour perhaps similar to writing novels" (*Patterned Aimlessness* 78). Escaping from facing with reality is a part of defence mechanism of psyche. From his earliest works, Freud has situated the concept of defence at the heart of his theory of

neurosis. Defence refers to the reaction of the ego to certain interior stimuli which the ego perceives as dangerous. Escape mechanism is a term designating what is usually referred to in psychology and psychoanalysis as a defence mechanism. Sleeping as Charles defines in the book as “the quick flight into oblivion of the chronically unhappy person” (281) is one of the easiest ways of escape mechanism. Charles repeatedly prefers to sleep in order to escape from the reality. On the contrary to his expectations, as the absolute realm of unconscious the dreams, continues to disturb him. He relates one of his dreams:

But I did sleep and I dreamed that Hartley was a ballet dancer and was circling a huge stage *sur les points* dressed in a black tutu and a head-dress of sparkling diamonds and black feathers... Then the stage was a forest and a prince also dressed in black came and carried Hartley away, and her head hung back over his shoulder as if her neck was broken (147).

According to Freud the process of “censorship” in dreams causes a “distortion” of the dream content; thus, what appears to be trivial nonsense in a dream, can, through the process of analysis, be shown to express a coherent set of ideas. The “dream work” is the process by which the mind condenses, distorts, and translates “dream thoughts” into dream content. Freud proposes that the ultimate value of dream analysis may be in revealing the hidden workings of the unconscious mind. Charles’s dream with its distorted picture, on surface, manifests his anxiety about reunification with Hartley. As Freud put forwards “In the dreams of the death of someone dear the repressed wish has found away escaping the censorship and the distortion it imposes. Then it is unfailingly accompanied by feelings of pain or grief in the dream” (*The Interpretation of Dreams* 205).

Apart from sleeping, writing is another method psyche employs as an escape mechanism. As it has been indicated in Chapter II, writing is also Murdoch’s own method to verbalize her personal traumas. Particularly, the reflections of her love traumas have been easily observed in her fictions. Jack Turner confirms that “She uses writing as therapy, just as Charles does in the novel” (*Murdoch vs. Freud* 95). As a matter of fact, Charles moves to Shruff End to write a novel though he is quite unsure about what kind of novel it would be. Charles attempt to write an autobiographical

novel can be interpreted as a kind of confession. The trauma theorist, Deborah M. Horvitz investigates the protagonists' varying capacities to use art, especially narrative, as a method of "working through" or healing from trauma. She states that

As if mimicking the "talking cure," each text functions as an analyst. The rhetorical structure of analyst provides for the character or a patient a framework wherein repressed memories can surface into consciousness. And the latter finds, to varying degrees, that hysterical symptoms diminish when repressed memories and their accompanying feelings are recalled and verbalized (*Literary Trauma* 19).

Narrative, thus, offers a unique possibility for healing and each text becomes a meta-story centred upon the protagonist's search for survival. For instance, Charles Arrowby in *The Sea, The Sea* and Bradley Pearson in *The Black Prince* both turn to writing as a consolation. In *The Sea, The Sea* Murdoch intentionally directs the protagonist to write a diary-like novel and accordingly in the book Charles states "I have reread what I wrote about Hartley and feel moved simply by the fact that I was able to write it [...] How strange memory is. Since I wrote so many more pictures of her, stored up in the dense darkness of my mind, have become available" (88). This form coincides with Murdoch's idea that "Art presents the most comprehensible examples of the almost irresistible human tendency to seek consolation in fantasy and also of the effort to resist this and the vision of reality which comes with success" (*The Sovereignty of Good* 62-3). Through writing about what happened, Charles is able to understand the folly of his self-illusion and thus, achieve the vision of reality. By writing about his personal experiences, Charles is able to recover his past trauma.

Pain experienced when someone beloved dies can be regarded as something quiet usual and ordinary. Yet, as in Charles's case, it can transform into a real trauma with its catastrophic consequences. Charles, in the grip of his trauma, insists that the seeming fantasy is the reality and the seeming reality is merely imaginary. His loss of clear vision creates tragic effects. The death of Titus, the adopted son of Hartley and Ben, is partly the result of his distorted perception. Charles omits ever to warn Titus either how dangerous the sea is or how difficult it is to get out of. The sea always undoes the ropes he tries to attach to the rock. Titus dies accidentally but partly out of his negligence.

After the deaths of Titus and James, Charles's mind gradually recognizes his mistakes in the last chapter of the book "Postscript: Life Goes On." Near the ending of the novel, Charles realizes that "I was the dreamer, I the magician. How much, I see as I look back, I read into it all, reading my own dream text and not looking at the reality" (499). Charles finally recognizes the truth of the issue and pierces through his obsessive illusions about Hartley. Through reading his "dream text" and the way he fantasizes the matter, Charles is able to step back and view it in an objective and realistic way.

As a conclusion Iris Murdoch in *The Sea, The Sea* gives an account of Charles Arrowby's obsessive desire to return to a state of innocence which resurfaces after the traumatic experience of Clement's death. His quest leads him to desperate journey into the dark realms of his unconscious and tries to see his own self and his true love within the dark caverns of his psyche and finally reaches to a kind of catharsis from an obsessive past trauma leading his former self towards death and causing the re-birth of a new self which brings him into light. It is not by chance that is only now, belatedly, that the effect of trauma begins to be grasped and seen. Charles repeats the conditions of a trauma that he has never been able to confront, let alone convey. After experiencing the belated effects of the trauma, Charles realizes in his soul that he cannot fully inhabit his past repressed self. The emergence of his new self which appears being cured of his past trauma lets Charles look into the future, but no longer towards the past.

CONCLUSION

Trauma is generally taken to mean, as Bradley has described it in *The Black Prince*, “a blow” (205) to the tissues of the mind that results in certain psychological problems. Something unknown and unexpected breaks in on you, penetrating through whatever barriers your mind has set up as a line of defence. It takes you over and becomes a dominating feature of your psyche. Since traumatic events are unbearable in horror and intensity, they are often stored as memories that are not immediately recognizable as truth. Literature, according to Cathy Caruth and the other trauma theorists, sheds light on traumatic experiences because it teaches readers to listen to what can be told only in indirect and surprising ways. As the preceding chapters have demonstrated, this thesis has endeavoured to explore the representation of personal traumas in *The Black Prince* and *The Sea, The Sea* in dialogue with texts by Freud, Lacan and certain trauma theorists.

Even though the chosen texts are not known as typical trauma narratives, they have the protagonists with certain psychological problems due to their traumatic pasts. The two novels are written successively within a brief period separating them but what in fact separates them is not the duration in their production but the dissimilarity in each protagonist’s reaction to their personal traumas. Bradley Pearson in *The Black Prince* undergoes a process of trauma after being abandoned by Julian. His love for Julian is not the usual one which elderly men feel for younger girls but instead, it is unique because of what Julian represents in his inner world. As Francis Marlowe claims in his postscripts at the end of the novel, Bradley Pearson has repressed his homosexual tendency managing to stay so concealed. This idea is proved when Bradley is able to intercourse with Julian only when she is disguised as a man. Throughout the novel there are also other implications regarding Bradley’s repressed tendency such that the first sight of attraction between Bradley and Julian appears as Julian describes her Hamlet costume she has worn for the play at a linguistic level. What is important here is Bradley’s inability to confront the reality rather than his different sexual choice. Bradley never admits this reality. It is interesting that why Bradley chooses to keep it secret at a time when people living in England started to display their homosexual tendencies without much fear. Among the second thoughts, his denial invokes that the real target of

his homosexual impulses is Arnold, Julian's father and it also comes to mind that Julian is only a means to be close with him. Thus his love for Julian is unique in terms of his own self revelation. He passionately desires for Julian and does anything to be with her regardless of his status and her age. In such a context, the separation with Julian turns out to be a real trauma for him.

As it is explained by the trauma theorists properly, the expected belatedness and symbolic recurrences follow and in the end the psychological trouble comes to the surface in the form of a physical trouble, which is numbness. Numbness is accepted to be one of the natural outcomes of the previous traumatic events by many theorists. This is the body's way of protecting itself from being overloaded by the past experience. The daily events in numbness are often experienced as unreal and as something indeterminate. Numbness is generally accompanied with selective inattention, complete or partial amnesia and the constriction of associational thinking. In Bradley's case, emotional numbness comes to the surface immediately after his traumatic love experience. The very first indication is his apparently calm reaction to his sister's death as Bradley defines "the proof of [his] callousness" (384) in the text. Another form of numbness follows when he has lost his ability of associational thinking at the scene of Arnold's murder. When he is charged with the death of Arnold, he cannot defend himself and as a consequence he is sentenced for murder. By positioning his protagonist in acts of trauma, Murdoch provides us a chance to observe how an ordinary love trauma can bear tragic consequences and surprises the reader unless these manners are properly enlightened under a new torch.

In the fourth chapter, the thesis has focussed on the belated nature of trauma in *The Sea, The Sea*. Murdoch again situates the protagonist of the novel at the heart of the trauma. Charles Arrowby demonstrates some traumatic symptoms after the death of Clement, the most prominent of which are Charles's obsession in Hartley and the illusions he sees. His repressed infantile wish transforms itself into an infatuation. The undemonstrative mother figure is the origin of his obsession. He is obsessed with innocent love that he has been deprived of throughout his childhood. In the pursuit of this vain obsession he has been frustrated in life at several times. For Charles, the most devastating disillusionment is Clement's death which later turns into trauma. Hence, he

blurs the line between fact and fiction due to the belated effects of this loss. When the belated effects become conscious, they are in the form of self delusions.

Self delusions are what the victim's defence mechanism produces after the traumatic experiences. Charles is unable to distinguish between the real Hartley and the Hartley of his imagination. She, no longer young and no longer beautiful and married, is regarded by the deluded Charles as both young and beautiful. He tries fanatically to possess Hartley and starts to fabricate imaginary stories about her failed marriage and a fierce, cruel husband from whom she must be rescued. Charles's failed pursuit changes into violence as he imprisons Hartley. Charles believes that his love for Hartley is mutual and it is only Ben who prevents their reunification. Accordingly, he makes up excuses for Hartley's rejection. In a sense, he creates his own self deluded world. James, who has earlier tried to warn his cousin about his obsession with Hartley, attempts to explain that all his love adventure is an invention of his deluded mind. Charles's deluded and obsessive manner is retained even after Hartley has returned to her home and to her husband. He goes on deceiving himself about her and counts that she will return. He insists that he has known her from childhood and she has always been there. He defends himself with these words "this is not an illusion and that she is woven into him" (355). However, the letter that Hartley has sent from Sydney tragically forces him to confront with reality. The delusions appearing as symptoms of the trauma cause him to experience a tragic frustration.

One significant and approved fact is that the people who have experienced a traumatic event and who have kept it secret are worse when compared to those who talk about their traumas. Moreover, the traumatized people who do not tell their story become victims of distorted memory. The longer the story remains untold the more distorted it becomes so much so that the victim doubts the reality of the actual events. In this sense, the act of writing about the traumatic experience can be an effective method to get over the trauma. The simple act of expressing your thoughts about emotionally challenging experiences on paper is proven to speed your recovery from the trauma. When the traumatic life of Iris Murdoch in the second chapter is read, one can deduce that Murdoch also adopts this method in her life and accordingly she has produced

twenty six novels in each of which characters, in a sense, have affinity with her own life.

Similarly, Bradley's and Charles's attempts to write something can be considered a kind of purgatory action through which they can confront their traumas. After experiencing the traumatic love affair, Bradley writes the novel that he has been dreaming for a long time. In his book he relates all the events and details from the first point of view. Verbalizing his thoughts and experiences in the writing process enables him to confront the reality. On the other hand, Charles writes a kind of diary which later provides him a chance to look back to his past and realize his self delusions and obsessions.

After the traumatic experience, each protagonist feels anxious and confused. The trauma causes them to view the world from a privileged stance of detachment as in *The Black Prince* or to experience a cycle of perpetual frustration in his self deluded world as in *The Sea, The Sea*. Neither protagonist is capable to integrate his traumas into his reality. For each of them, trauma becomes a debilitating force enhanced by disorientation and chaos which threatens the fundamental purpose of everyday existence. A total recovery from trauma is not something impossible but something improbable. After the traumatic love experience, Bradley loses his ability to react the events properly and as a consequence of this he is sentenced for the crime he has not committed. It is impossible for Bradley to talk about a complete recovery from the trauma since he dies in prison because of cancer. In *The Sea, The Sea*, there is still no guaranteed solution for the removal of trauma. Trauma seemingly will continue to inhabit a space within Charles's life till the end of his life.

By reflecting the different forms of trauma in her fiction, Murdoch suggests that trauma is an inseparable part of ordinary existence. People experience emotional upheavals either consciously or unconsciously. However, they are unaware of the roots of their inconsistencies since they are unable to analyze their conditions in psychoanalytical terms. The concept of trauma distinctively differs from other emotional disturbances such as grief or pain in the way that its effect never disappears but continues haunting the victim. At this point, Murdoch depicts the protagonists of *The Black Prince* and *The Sea, The Sea* as the victims of their respective traumas.

On the other end of the continuum, we find the traumas affecting the masses such as genocides, wars, natural disasters which are well described by trauma theorists, as it has been given in the body of the thesis. However, for Murdoch characters' traumatic experiences, it is necessary to pinpoint a place which neither can be ignored like grief or pain nor can be categorized under the big titles. Instead, these accumulated traumas, beginning with trivial abnormalities make themselves apparent and cause the destruction of the characters since they are unable to overcome them. By comparing the reactions of protagonists of both novels to the symptoms and reactions described in the trauma theory, it is possible to come to the conclusion that Murdoch's chosen two texts reflect on trauma. Their traumatic symptoms have been analyzed under the light of Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalytic theories. Consequently, if we reflect on the scenarios of the selected Murdoch texts, one can conclude that the ordinary human experiences, mixed with the right concoction of potent circumstances, can be as irrevocably devastating as the most heinous disasters. That's why it is our contention that should we call Murdochian type of traumas as "the trauma of the quotidian" it will be a proper name.

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