

Escaping the Specters Within: Probing the Delineation of the Concepts of Dissociation, Formation of the Traumatic Bonds and Reenactment Aligning with Unresolved Trauma in Yanagihara's *A Little Life*

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Abstract:

*This study investigates the unending concept of dissociation, reenactment of trauma and formation of the traumatic bonds in the novel *A Little Life* by Hanya Yanagihara. The prime focus of this analysis is on the lives of four main characters of this novel, namely, Jude St. Francis, JB Marion, Willem Ragnarsson and Malcolm Irvine, who manifest the reenactment of trauma and possess fragmented identities because of the pain they endure because of their past experiences. All the four characters are indulged in self-loathing, self-harm and blame themselves for the experiences of their lives. There is a continuous cycle of their torture, and the flashbacks that haunt them. The research utilizes Judith Herman's trauma theory as a guiding framework, portraying the implications of the trauma and how the characters reinforce their memories of traumatic instances as a form of defense mechanism for them. They also form bonds with their perpetrators in order to cope with the anguish and distress. Utilizing Herman's trauma theory, the study reveals how unhealthy relationships are formed and how the characters are longing for the process of validation and social support. By detaching their memories and reenacting them, the study highlights how the individuals are able to gain control over their bodies through self-harm, which devastates their identity, psychological development and relationships.*

Keywords: Traumatic Bonds, Trauma Reenactment, Psychological Distress, Dissociation, Identity Crisis

Trauma is a phenomenon that has widely been used in its various forms. It has always been a source of investigation and profound interest, both on academic and literary grounds. It leaves complex and persisting effects on the minds of individuals that sometime intensely shape the direction of their lives. It occurs in numerous forms including the individual psychological traumas along with the communal traumas such as in wars and colonial oppression.

The study utilizes Judith Herman's theoretical framework as guiding pathway. It not only studies how trauma is endured, but also how the victims and sufferers cope with it. Moreover, Shoshana Felman's narrative textual style has been implemented in this study as an analytical framework where she thoroughly focuses over the text of the novel.

Hanya Yanagihara delivers a deep analysis of the intense trauma and its impacts on human psyche. The lives of the characters are affected by the profound trauma. The most pivotal concept of this analysis is the concept of dissociation, that is a coping strategy against the long lasting trauma. Dissociation is a psychological concept, which involves detachment from the feelings, emotions, thoughts and one's own self to overcome the trauma faced by the trauma victims.

Before proceeding, it is significant to understand the process of dissociation with respect to trauma. It is a mental process that involves detachment or separation of the identity, feelings and thoughts of the individuals in response to trauma. When a person is burdened by the intensity of the trauma, they detach themselves from those thoughts and memories that indulge them into those times when those trauma instances occurred. With respect to Judith Herman's trauma

theory, when an individual gets destructed by the anguish and anxiety he is suffering through and the traumatic events are so painful for them that they cannot endure them, so the sufferers move adopt the dissociative responses. These responses include the defense mechanism that is required to overcome the traumatic memories.

Jude's Identity Fragmentation Through Dissociation:

The most prominent and obvious example of the profound trauma in *A Little Life* is of the protagonist Jude St. Francis. His life is the epitome of hardships, pain and struggles he has done throughout his life. He has remained a victim of childhood trauma and betrayal from close relations which lead him to mistrust and isolation. Jude is a prime example of the dissociation in this novel where he uses it as a coping mechanism to release himself from the stress and the enigmatic nature of the trauma. Jude's life is a hallmark of dissociation, due to his fragmented identity resulting from his abusive childhood.

Jude's trauma is manifested through his fragmented self that portrays the dissociative identity of him. His identity is divided into two selves, one in the past and one in the present. He does not showcase his real self to the world, which makes him maintain secrecy of his real self. He hides his true identity in front of the world. He is all shattered by hiding his pain resulting into a divided and broken self. As he is of the view that he does not have any worth and he is nothing (Yanagihara, 2015, p. 48). Although it is stressful, still it is a survival strategy for him to get rid of all the pain he endures in daily life. He tries to forget his painful flashbacks of memories in this way by separating himself from those events and engage himself in daily life works. But, as he does this he gets isolated and feels worthless. His psychological self and identity completely devastates.

Jude is a victim of dissociative amnesia. In it, he forgets selective memories from his past and aids himself in remembering the others that provide him pleasure. This quality assists him in tackling all the trauma that he endures. He does not open up about his trauma and rarely talk about it in front of anybody, especially those memories related to Brother Luke and other perpetrators in his childhood. He posits in the novel that he does not possess any memories (Yanagihara, 2015, p. 183). This aids in managing Jude to cope with his trauma, still, it devastates him psychologically as there is no personal fulfilment.

Similarly, in *Beloved*, by Toni Morrison (1987), the central figure Sethe uses the coping strategy of dissociation to escape herself of the trauma of slavery and her daughter's haunting existence who has died. Sethe remains in a constant state of disruption of her past memories which she receives as flashbacks. But, she detaches herself from them and gains the courage to overcome her past and memories.

Jude experiences many moments when he feels disconnected from his own body and even his surroundings and relationships. He describes the times when he thinks himself as a ghost who can see himself but from outside (Yanagihara, 2015, p. 212). This is evident when Jude self-harms himself. He feels like an observer in his life rather than a person who lives his life with satisfaction. In this way, he feels dissociative to his pain and feels his body in control. But this ultimately leads him into isolation and disconnection from his own body.

Psychological and Emotional Detachment:

Jude's traumatic self leads to emotionally numbing him and his body. Although it is a way to avoid his memories but this also causes him to separate him from his relationships. He can feel the pain but remains isolated and does not share his secrets with anyone. He mostly avoids being affectionate with someone and remain away from those who care for him, such as his close friend Willem and his teacher who adopted him, Harold. He states that he does not like if

anybody touches him (Yanagihara, 2015, p. 156). This is a useful mechanism for him to avoid his trauma and stays away from making close relationships.

Jude remains dissociated from his own life. He tries to avoid any attacks coming towards him. Moreover, he does not trust anyone openly, and does not open up what he has experienced in his past. As his close relationships have always betrayed him so he does not readily trust anyone. He feels himself as if he is living a life where he is dreaming something (Yanagihara, 2015, p. 344) or the life he is leady is not his life and is unreal. This makes him dissociated from what he lived in the past but also detaches him from his close relations and makes him alienated.

Consequences of Dissociation for Willem:

A secondary character who is Jude's best and close friend Willem was indulged in the loss of his brother named, Hemming. He attempted his role as a care giver, which led him to detach and avoid himself from his memories and surroundings.

Willem's trauma is exhibited in the form of emotionally numbing himself. He avoids confronting his trauma by suppressing his own needs and by considering himself. He Takes care of Jude all the time so he can overcome the flashbacks of the memories that haunt him. He tries to cope with his responsibilities and grief by avoiding the memories. He says that he has to look after Jude so he has no time for himself to ponder upon (Yanagihara, 2015, p. 276).

Willem remains disconnected with his memories to avoid confronting them. He emotionally numbs himself and does not take about his own self. In this way, he remains at a distance with his own needs.

Willem remains detached from his own self and cares for other's needs. This forms his strong bond and connection with others. In order to remain connected with others he sacrifices himself and his needs which is cruel for his own self and identity. He splits himself into his real self and the self he has become for other people. It is the only way for him to get over his enigmatic memories. He states by himself that he is someone else, and he is not himself actually (Yanagihara, 2015, p. 329). This contributes Willem to stay connected with others as he has no time to think for himself and what happened with him.

Willem's survival puts him into guilt, leading to dissociative identity. His guilt puts him into the trauma that why he survived while his brother died. He wants to die in the place of his brother which causes him stress and depression. He avoids his pain by caring for others especially his friend Jude. He posits that he should not remain alive and should die (Yanagihara, 2015, p. 411). The guilt of survival is the actual cause of trauma and I separates his private self with the public persona, which effects his relationships and his own self.

Willems detachment from his own grief is a coping mechanism he uses to avoid what he has endured. He suppresses his feelings, thoughts and emotions to maintain a distance from is memories. This suppression causes to prolong his trauma and all the fear of survival. Due to it, he avoids his personal need as well so his memories do not revive and tease him. He reflects by saying that he wants to get rid of his memories and does not want to feel this way (Yanagihara, 2015, p. 49).

JB Marion's Emotional Instability and Dissociative Process:

JB's rashness towards matters is the result of his dissociative responses to coping with the trauma. He reacts abruptly to the situations because of his trauma. The trauma is gradually disrupting him leading to a disruptive life. JB emotionally handles the matters that is an avoidance from his own feelings. This serves as a mean for him to escape from his own feelings and thoughts, which causes him to have self-control. He expresses that when he is aggressive, he is not in his senses and does not think about anything else (Yanagihara, 2015, p. 324).

JB's instability to respond to situations causes mood swings and self-harm. This is an instance of dissociation from his self so he cannot concentrate over his past. He is involved in the activity of drugs that worsens his condition. He is not able to think and process what he says out of anger. This is a form of dissociative process from his side. This emotional instability causes him to fully ignore and avoid his trauma. He related this by saying that he has a mixture of feelings where he feels and do not feel at the same time (Yanagihara, 2015, p. 256).

JB also feels shame and guilt as Malcolm, still, there is a difference between their guilt and shame. It arises from dissociative responses to trauma. JB's addiction make him feel shameful and causes the guilt. He struggles with his own self that is divided between his private self and public persona. This shame and guilt of addiction makes him blame himself and leads to hiding it from others that what will they think about it. He is afraid of losing his relations and making them think about his other side. He states that he is ashamed of himself when he thinks in isolation (Yanagihara, 2015, p. 401).

JB's guilt of the consequences of his addiction effects his relationships as well. As this is a form of avoidance for him so he may not be able to express himself in front of the people in his surroundings and does not share himself with them. He self-loathes himself because of this addiction. Still, he dissociates himself from it to avoid the trauma. He states that he has made every one hurt and it is impossible for him to make the things same again (Yanagihara, 2015, p. 473).

Malcolm's Dissociation and Identity Crisis:

Malcolm's struggles with his own identity which leads to his destruction. His identity and mind create confusion for him which demands dissociation from him as a coping mechanism. Malcolm has racial insecurities which makes him alienated from his relations and the society. He sometimes feels he does not belong to them and disconnects from his own emotions and relations to defend himself from any attacks from his closed ones. He sometimes isolates himself from the racial community and the privileged society in which he resides. His identity is shattered as he does not have any idea where he belongs to. He expresses that he is not sure where he belongs to (Yanagihara, 2015, p. 145).

Malcolm is a victim of imposter syndrome where he lacks the confidence in himself and his achievements. He is not able to process his own identity. He believes there is difference between his self in front of the society and the one with all the achievements. He feels himself worthless and his life is meaningless for him. There is a dissociative split between his real and public self. He expresses that he has a feeling that he is not this in real what he is pretending to be now (Yanagihara, 2015, p. 233).

Malcolm is unable to take decisions in his life due to the lack of confidence in him. This detaches him from his own needs that he is not able to understand. Jude avoids himself for the fact that he cannot take actions for himself and does not win at life. He avoids the conflicts because of the fear of handling them, which is a dissociation from his trauma and anguish that he bears. He is of the view that it is better to stay away as if he will not get involved in any matter then it will not affect him in any way (Yanagihara, 2015, p. 233). It means his fear is to engage as he believes it will make him fail.

Malcolm's inability of agency makes him feel guilt that he is not able to shape his life at least. He feels powerless when he is not able to address his concerns and not able to make decisions for himself. This is a dissociative response to trauma where he feels disconnected from his own self and cannot make himself proud because of his inadequacy.

Jude's Dissociative Isolation and Self-Destruction:

Jude's fear of enduring the trauma is also manifested in his anxiety and distress. He knows that if he opens up about it, it will harm him, so he does not share his feelings with anyone, not even his friends. Jude is a very secretive person. He does not share his life experiences with anyone in order of the fear of reviving his traumatic memories, which disrupt the normal functioning of his life. For instance, even if his friends ask, he denies to tell in the fear of rejection or further harm to himself. This anxiety and distress is caused due to the overstimulation, that results from trauma, making him vigilant and cautious.

Jude's destructive self is a response to his trauma which causes him to detach himself from his own body. When his pain increases, and he has no control over it, so in order to regain control over his body, he harms himself. The pain he gets as a result of harming himself, lets him relieve from those enigmatic and dark memories of trauma and he avoids his own identity. He overcomes his anguish by putting bruises on him, by blade and knife. It is a source of pleasure for him as he tries to revive the memories of abuses in his past. He thinks he is born for this purpose. It also opens way to his masochistic self. He is of the opinion that it is the only method where the memories feel real for him (Yanagihara, 2015, p. 369). This indicated how his self-destruction lessens the pain for him.

Dissociation demands the repression of thoughts, feelings and psychological desires within a person. The individual shuts down emotionally. The past memories that trigger the sexual, emotional and physical abuse are repressed. This stage consists of disconnection from relationships and feelings of own self. In the novel, *A Little Life*, repression is the only way for Jude to deal with all the childhood trauma. He overcomes his trauma by repressing his memories, desires and psychological emotions. His behavior reflects the emotional numbness and the avoidance of his memories as he cannot confront them.

There is a wide range of behaviors that he exhibits, out of which emotional numbing is the one. It is a way to deal with all the anguish and the pain he suffers from. But on the other hand, it makes him restricted from many personal relations, whom he is unable to connect with. Compressed emotions do not let him fully engage with his life or form any relation or affection with anyone else. Yanagihara claims that he felt as he was trapped in a glass where he could see what is happening outside but could not stop it. He felt as if he was not a person in real and was a box full of memories and painful flashbacks (Yanagihara, 2015, p. 139).

Jude's situation can be manifested through this. He is safe and in danger at the same time. It feels like the emotional numbness is a shield for him, and prison as the same time. It keeps him protected from unnecessary pain, but makes him locked and isolated from his close relations and the people that all love him.

Jude avoids the affection by his close relations, that is another clear evidence of Jude's repression. He does not open up much in front of anyone that shows his insecurities. He believes that getting closer forms traumatic bonds. For this he is not even able to trust Willem, who is his best friend and his companion too. Jude's fear of closeness is due to the fear that his relation would lead him to betrayal. This is why he does not remain close to anyone even if other person has good intentions and is sincere to Jude.

Jude not only lived in the past but he started to avoid his life in order to get rid of the memories. He enjoyed his own company and did not like to interact with people who were even his close relationships. Life had remained arduous for Jude in case of love, affection, childhood and close attachments. His memories haunt him so he stopped living.

Reenactment of Trauma:

Reenactment by the lens of trauma is a concept where individuals unconsciously revive their past traumatic acts, to relive their experiences of trauma. This may be done as the victim builds a relationship with the perpetrator and want to recreate what he has done to them. The survivor idealizes the ones who gave them all the pain and distress. This is pivotal to Judith Herman's work on trauma theory, as she thoroughly works on how the sufferers idealize their culprits and try to recreate those moments to gain pleasure.

In Yanagihara's *A Little Life*, Jude St. Francis manifests the recreation and reenactment of his childhood abuse. Other characters also portray it but not at a higher level such as the protagonist. The present research analyzes the reenactment of trauma by Jude, Willem, Malcolm and JB. It also effects on the change in their behaviors, thoughts and relationships.

Jude's Reenactment of Childhood Abuse:

Jude's trauma is a case of childhood abuse, detachment from relations and neglect from the surrounding people. These instances of anxiety do not let him live his present. He remains in the past and troubles and hurts himself by recreating all those moments. His body gains control after he traumatizes his body reenacts those events. He reflects that sometimes he felt the urge to remember the pain so he could revive that time (Yanagihara, 2015, p. 451).

Jude's self-destruction and harm conveys an understanding of how he recreates his trauma. He believes that his pain lessens when he cuts his body, burns it and provides bruises to it. He is able to relive his past by doing this. The masochistic self-arises from it, letting the victim Jude to gain pleasure from his pain. Jude becomes a masochist and gains pleasure and satisfaction by his cuts which he makes through knife and blades. It aids him in reminding that he was born for this and this is what was said by most of his close surrounding people and his perpetrators in his past. It has become a need for Jude. It becomes more obvious when Jude says that it was the only thing for him that made him feel alive and he could feel himself in control after it (Yanagihara, 2015, p. 417).

Jude is often involved in a relationship that lets him revive all those memories of the past. He finds abusive partners that make him suffer and he relives those moments. Jude cherishes his time with Brother Luke who introduced this abuse in his life and he is able to gain pleasure through it. Jude's traumatic past invades his life as well. He is not able to breath as the memories haunt him, so he relives those memories to gain pleasure through them. Jude's ability is to get attracted to such individuals who enhance his trauma. It is the reason he self-harms himself to get pleasure and has become a masochist. He admits this situation and says that he does not know who will not hurt him and who will. It is difficult for him to point the difference (Yanagihara, 2015, p. 292).

Jude's self-sacrificing and compromising nature in his relationships can also be a form of reenactment of trauma. He does not think or care about his identity and his own self, rather, he puts others needs and wishes before his. This is done by Jude to feel unworthy, worthless and meaningless. He does this to torture himself by thinking that this is the only way to reenact his trauma and he deserves this treatment. He believes that he is unworthy of having personal and internal fulfilment. He admits by saying, "I just want to be good for them, even if it means loosing myself.

Jude's trauma not only limits to his personal life, rather it is also evident in his professional life. Jude's dedication in his work is something he does to over work himself. His working tendency is a kind of escape from his past memories and daily life. He copes with his traumatic memories in this way. Still, he works as his perpetrators provoke him to struggle in his life. He works a lot

to gain control over his body and feel it. He wants to be perfect in his work highlighting the desire to overcome his powerlessness.

It can also be viewed in Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried* (1990), where the soldiers who are the survivors of Vietnam war, they relive those experiences of themselves. They engage in such rituals that boost their trauma of the past by reviving it. This enables them to create satisfaction within themselves to overcome their trauma.

Jude's ability to punish himself is a way to alienate himself which is another form of reenactment. Jude reenacts all those incidents and events in his isolation. His whole body has got bruises and cuts. This is something he does to relive those traumatic moments. He thinks that isolation is meant for doing what pleases a person. He states this by saying that he really thinks he should remain in isolation because he deserved it (Yanagihara, 2015, p. 475).

Willem Ragnarsson's Recreation of Loss

Willem's trauma is the result of his brother's death, which he tries to reenact. His brother Hemming's loss resides within him and he manifests it by the revival of those traumatic events.

Willem's act of providing care and nourishment to Jude showcases his past experiences. He is reliving his past experiences by doing this. He wanted to take care of his brother Hemming in the same way as he takes care of Jude and other people around him. So this is a reenactment of the bond he shared with his brother that he is reviving and attaining pleasure through it. He neglects himself in this process of caring for others. This also enables him to process his grief and his nurturing experiences from the past. He shows this by saying that he really wants to help him but does not find any way to do this (Yanagihara, 2015, p. 215).

Willem's self-sacrifice in his relationships shows how much he compromises for the needs of others over his needs. In this way he reenacts his trauma. He has developed the tendency to live for others within himself. He feels reluctant to prioritize his own needs over the need of others. This is the only way for him to distress himself and feel himself suppressed. Although it is a type of coping mechanism for Willem, still it burdens him and makes him painful by considering himself unworthy of all the love and affection from his own people. He expresses his sincerity for him by saying that he could sacrifice his own self for him too at any cost (Yanagihara, 2015, p. 298).

This trauma is not confined to Willem's personal life only, rather it extends to his professional life as well. Willem emotionally numbs himself in order to get rid of the trauma. This avoidance of his own needs is a form of reenactment of what Willem is going through. This dissociation allows him to manage his own needs and responsibilities. He is unable to process in his life so he perpetuates his trauma to satisfy himself from what he has gone through. He expresses and admits that he is blank sometimes feeling nothing and as just he was in motion (Yanagihara, 2015, p. 342).

Willem's fear of loss is attached with his past experiences where he is scared to lose his close relations. This loss can be seen in his actions where he prioritizes others over him and neglects his own desires. He avoids confronting his self to get rid of the trauma he endured in the past. This act makes him reenact the trauma that he has gone through. He does not feel his existence and suppresses his needs to take care of others just because of the fear of losing others. He confesses by saying that it is only because he thinks a lot about it. If he does not think then it will not hurt him (Yanagihara, 2015, p. 487).

Revival of JB Addiction and Self-Harm:

JB's trauma of his addiction is reflected through his actions where he recreates those behaviors and acts and feels guilty and hurts himself. Self-destruction is the only coping mechanism for

Jude to confront what he has lived in his past. Substance abuse where he harms himself with difference substances makes him relives his shame of his addiction. This is why he loses control over himself to avoid the pain of his past. Also, this aggressive behavior makes him reenact what has happened in his past.

JB self-loathes himself due to the shame and guilt within himself for him addiction. He blames himself for what he has experienced in his life and revives those memories to harm himself physically and emotionally. His tendency to act recklessly portrays his trauma that is long lasting and unresolved. He replays his past experiences of being helpless and not being able to do anything. There is a continuous form of trauma that effects the life of JB and makes him so distressed that he cannot breathe. He states that he does not like himself because of his life ut he cannot control what he is doing (Yanagihara, 2015, p. 520). He has no control over himself for what he is doing I his life.

JB often finds himself in unhealthy relationships that makes him relive those stress moments from past. He is often indulged in harmful acts and behaviors that reflect his poor mental condition. He relives his past instances by displaying such habits. The destructive relationships make him lose control over himself mentally and physically. A bond creates between the perpetrator and the victims which makes them idealize the situation. Same is happening with JB. He believes that whatever is happening in his life, he deserved it. This makes him aggressive also. And cause him to be in destructive relations which make him remember that what is happening with him is all he deserved. He admits by saying that people who have the same story as me get attracted to me (Yanagihara, 2015, p. 520).

JB isolates himself out of the shame that is a form of recreating his past experiences. He is not able to build strong relations with his friends and surrounding people. Most of the time he isolates himself to avoid any disruption. His identity is divided between his past and present. He disconnects himself from his past by staying isolated but it also results in his avoidance of his own family and relations that make his life distressful. He expresses that he feels himself like an outsider always who is looking inside (Yanagihara, 2015, p. 525). He does not consider himself worthy of being within the people. He feels himself like an outsider who sees himself from outside and everybody else is inside.

Malcolm Irvine's Reenactment of Divided Identity:

Malcolm's reenactment is portrayed through his revival of the identity crisis. He manifests several forms of recreating his past experiences. Malcolm is confused between racial and social identity of him. He relives his trauma by considering himself inferior and unworthy. Due to which, he disconnects himself from his relations and feels himself inadequate. Malcom's racial confusion makes him question about his existence. He feels himself a burden. So he revives all the moments to gain pleasure through them. According to Yanagihara that he was never a complete man, rather he was divided into many parts. It seemed like there is another man within him that is shattered (Yanagihara, 2015, p. 57). It clarifies the crisis of Malcolm within his identity. He is divided into many individuals within himself.

Malcolm is a victim of imposter syndrome that makes him feel unworthy of what he has achieved in his personal and personal and professional life, rather it is regarding his achievements in life or it is the relationships he possesses. He has received a trauma of being fraud in his past that creates insecurities in his own self. He fears of being exposed in front of his surrounding people which makes him not to share anything in his life. Yanagihara illustrates in her work that he felt like he was acting and the script of his life was in someone else's hand and

he is trying to improvise but there is no one to listen and he is left behind (Yanagihara, 2015, p. 112).

Formation of Traumatic Bonds

The formation of traumatic bonds is a concept in trauma also known as the ‘trauma bonding’, where an individual who is enduring trauma forms a bond out of desire and dependency with the person who caused abuse. It may result from the constant pain, threats and brutal treatment the victim is receiving from the perpetrator which may make him to idealize the abuser and have a desire of longing, love and affection from him. The person gets attached to the abuse and is only dependent on him for fulfilling his needs. This bond that is created between them is the traumatic bond that idealizes the abuser for the victim.

Several characters in this novel are engaged in this practice, but the main focus is on the protagonist Jude, who is an evident example of traumatic bonds. Jude being a prominent example of childhood abuse mentally, emotionally and physically, lets him make traumatic bonds with the abusers in the past as a mean to cope with all the pain and anxiety. He is unable to sleep at nights and constantly receives flashbacks that haunt him, forming his complex but strong relationship with his past that he cannot overcome until death.

Brother Luke is a prominent and significant character in Jude’s life who is responsible for making him feel unworthy at initial stage. In the beginning, he showered countless love and care for Jude but then he became his abuser and started to harm him mentally and physically. This bond between both of them made Jude idealize him, and Brother Luke being in power took advantage of him. In trauma, the ones in power gain control over the ones who are submissive to them. A bond of power and control is built between the both individuals. Similar is in the case of Jude and Brother Luke. Jude tries to reenact what he has gained through trauma. Yanagihara painfully writes that he thought love only comes with pain and he had learnt to live with this pain (Yanagihara, 2015, p. 226).

Jude, out of all the past trauma, compromises in his close relations such that of Willem and Harold. He has the tendency to prioritize the needs and desires of others over his. In his life, he becomes submissive to his close relationships forming a special bond out of power and desires to repeat those instances so he can gain pleasure from his trauma. It is a way to gain control over his body and mind which torcher him when he is alone. For this reason, he gives himself the bruises and cuts and relives all the experiences in his life that were given by his abuser. This exhibits his urge of someone to come and repeat those moments of past with him so he could gain pleasure.

It is clear in Emma Donoghue’s *Room* (2010), where the mother and son Jack, share the traumatic bond with each other. However, Jack is also fascinated to the one that kept them captive that is ‘Old Nick’, out of the desires of repeating those traumatic moments with him. Jack and his mother stay there for years and share a strong bond that is due to their common suffering. But he wants his perpetrator to reenact the trauma again as his dependent and fascinated by him

Jude’s bonds are mostly characterized with emotional distancing and are not comprising of love. He tries to give punishment to himself by creating such bonds where there is no affection. Moreover, he gains pleasure by reliving the traumatic instances from his past. He states that he cannot let anyone invade his privacy of love that was once something for him (Yanagihara, 2015, p. 400). His isolation indicates he does not let anyone invade in his life other than the abusers which make him calm and peaceful when he thinks of them in isolation.

These traumatic bonds formed out of trauma form a cycle of dependency for its victims. He needs this bond for the survival and longs for it. This cycle reflects the unresolved trauma that is required to be reenacted for the satisfaction of the individuals. A bond of master and slave is formed, where the abuser is the master and the survivor is a slave. The survivor is dependent on the perpetrator for the love and needs to fulfil his inner desires.

Dissociation, reenactment and formation of traumatic bonds are the different stages and forms of coping with the trauma, which shatters the identity, feelings and interpersonal relationships of the individuals. Although, the forms of trauma are different for all the four friends, namely, Jude, JB, Malcom and Willem, who are struggling to gain control over their life, still, they are dealing with the same pain they experience through their memories and flashbacks. They unconsciously try to avoid their anguish by avoiding it and numbing their body emotionally and physically. Ultimately, the novel analyzes the complexities of healing and resilience through the trauma. The need for validation and social support is much significant for trauma survivors. The way the individuals defend themselves in the harrowing challenges of life make it worthy of understanding them in this critical situation.

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