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RESEARCH PAPER

Silenced Narratives, Enduring Wounds: A Feminist Examination of Trauma and Power in Anuradha Roy's *Sleeping on Jupiter*

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ABSTRACT

This research paper examines the portrayal of women's trauma and its frequent misinterpretation within the androcentric society, as depicted in Anuradha Roy's novel, Sleeping on Jupiter. Through a feminist analysis of the novel, the study analyzes how societal norms not only shape the experience of trauma but also its recognition and authentication. The research is qualitative in nature and explores the concept of "insidious trauma," and "secret trauma," faced by the protagonist in the given novel which is often ignored due to the biased nature of the social and cultural norms. The research follows Cathy Caruth's concept of trauma as a methodological framework. The research concludes that the seemingly ordinary experiences, silenced narratives, and gender disparities significantly contribute to the inadequate representation of women's trauma. This novel can further be explored from the perspective of intersectionality to examine how race and gender identity impact the experiences of abuse survivors.

| **KEYWORDS** | Gender Bias, Insidious Trauma, Secret Trauma, Societal Norms |

Introduction

Trauma literature deals with the profound and lasting impact of distressing experiences on the human psyche. Early works in the field of trauma studies primarily focus on the psychological wounds inflicted by catastrophic and extraordinary events such as natural disasters and wars (American Psychological Association, 2013). The victims confront the enduring impact of these invisible wounds, struggling with the complex interplay of memory, healing, and resilience. The field of trauma has also expanded to other areas of study, such as psychology, sociology, literature, and even political discourses, to encompass a more holistic approach to understanding human experiences of historical events. Literary fiction, particularly the novel, provides a powerful medium for exploring the survivors' delicate and deep emotional experiences (Jena & Samantray, 2021).

Despite significant progress in recognizing the impact of psychological trauma, a critical gap persists in acknowledging the profound effects of recurring, seemingly "ordinary" traumatic experiences, particularly faced by women. The prevailing framework for understanding trauma, often centered on extraordinary events and the clinical diagnosis of PTSD, frequently overlooks the insidious impact of everyday women's trauma. This limited perspective leads to the silence and dismissal of women's experiences. The novel, *Sleeping on Jupiter* (2015) by Anuradha Roy, depicts these commonplace issues, faced by the protagonist, Nomi, and their devastating impacts on her life. The research

paper argues to reframe the existing understanding of trauma to include these often-ignored quotidian experiences.

This research, therefore, examines the nature of trauma endured by Nomi in Anuradha Roy's *Sleeping on Jupiter* (2015). It explores the persistent misunderstanding surrounding repetitive, seemingly "ordinary" traumatic experiences, particularly those that are endured by women. It critically examines how deep-rooted gender biases, often rooted in patriarchal structures, contribute to the minimization of women's trauma. The study answers the question: How does Nomi's social context contribute to her secret trauma and its long-term consequences? Moreover, this paper also focuses on the long-term consequences of trauma and the various levels at which it affects an individual's life.

Literature Review

Trauma theory deals with the psychological complexities faced by individuals who have experienced various forms of violence and adversity. Sigmund Freud's work on "hysteria," particularly in the aftermath of World War I, brought increased attention to the lasting effects of trauma (Sütterlin, 2020). Cathy Caruth's contribution further broadened the scope and analytical power, of "the theoretical framework to include feminist, race, and postcolonial theory" (Balaev, 2018). Trauma theory provides a crucial lens for comprehending the long-term consequences of experiences that traumatize individuals and the diverse ways in which survivors respond to and cope with them. Many postmodern novelists have written about the core concept of trauma in their works of fiction. Including many, *Sleeping on Jupiter* (2015) is one such realistic novel that portrays the trauma of the main characters.

According to Sinha and Ali (2021), trauma leads to the disruption of certain cognitive processes. This research paper explores the intricate and enduring relationship between trauma, language, and healing as depicted in the novel. They analyze the profound impact of child sexual abuse on the characters' language and communication. Their study explores the fragmented cognition often caused by trauma, as evidenced by disrupted memories, disorganized speech patterns, and silence (Sinha & Ali, 2021). The paper examines how their traumatic experiences appear in fragmented memories, intrusive flashbacks, and poignant silences. Through the analysis of the characters' linguistic patterns and narrative voices, the paper emphasizes that trauma not only impairs their capacity to express their experiences but also undermines their fundamental sense of identity. By exploring the characters' linguistic patterns and narrative voices, the paper highlights the ways in which trauma disrupts not only their ability to articulate their experiences but also their very sense of self.

Vashishth (2023) brings forth the subjugation of women at the hands of patriarchy in the novel, *Sleeping on Jupiter*. The research paper examines the profound impact of sexual violence on female identity and agency within the patriarchal structures. Using a feminist discourse, the study criticizes the persistent nature of toxic masculinity and its role in preserving the domination and silencing of women. The analysis of the paper centers on the devastating consequences of sexual trauma, exploring how it fractures a woman's sense of self and agency. Through the experiences of Nomi, the protagonist, the paper traces the arduous journey of confronting past trauma and rebuilding a shattered sense of self. The research concludes that by giving voice to the silenced narratives of female survivors, Roy's novel challenges readers to confront the systemic forces that perpetuate gender-based violence.

Sinha and Ali (2024), in their research paper, explore the persistent issue of gender inequality in India through the lens of child abuse as depicted in the novels: Kishwar Desai's *Witness the Night* and Anuradha Roy's *Sleeping on Jupiter*. By conducting a comparative analysis of these distinct narratives, the study highlights the multifaceted nature of gender-based abuse faced by children within a patriarchal society. The analysis shows the deeply rooted correlation between gender inequality and child abuse in the Indian context. By challenging the ingrained prejudices and dismantling gender biases, the study advocates for the creation of a more equitable and secure environment for children.

While existing research provides valuable insights into Anuradha Roy's *Sleeping on Jupiter* from various perspectives, there remains a notable gap in exploring the profound psychological consequences of trauma on the novel's female protagonists. This research paper addresses this gap by examining the enduring impact of the disturbing experiences endured by these characters. Through a focused analysis, the study reveals how these traumatic events leave lasting psychological scars, disrupting the protagonists' lives and shaping their understanding of themselves and the world around them.

Material and Methods

While trauma affects individuals across all segments of society, women's experiences of trauma are often distinct and shaped by a complex interplay of social, cultural, and biological factors. The patriarchal structures prevalent in many societies contribute to the marginalization and silencing of women's voices, leading to a lack of recognition and justification of their traumatic experiences. These experiences range from overt forms of violence, such as domestic abuse and sexual assault, to more insidious forms of harm, including verbal abuse, emotional manipulation, and societal neglect. These forms of trauma are often categorized as "secret," "insidious," or "everyday" trauma, highlighting their hidden and pervasive nature (Caruth 1995). Due to their marginalized status in many societies, women may be particularly vulnerable to secret and insidious forms of trauma. Fear of justice, social humiliation, and a lack of faith in support systems can lead women to suffer in silence, internalizing their pain and enduring the psychological consequences privately. Therefore, it is crucial to move beyond the narrow definitions of trauma imposed by dominant social institutions and develop a more subtle understanding of women's experiences.

As Laura Brown (1955) argues, a feminist perspective reveals how the understanding of trauma is often shaped and constrained by the dominant groups within a society. These groups tend to define "real" trauma in ways that center their own experiences. This biased discourse has deep consequences, as it serves to silence and nullify the suffering of marginalized groups, particularly women. When dominant narratives surrounding trauma prevail, the experiences of women are often dismissed or minimized. The lack of recognition and justification has long-term psychological effects, hindering women's mental and emotional well-being. In many cultures, women's subordinate social status further intensifies the challenges of addressing trauma. Their experiences are often shrouded in secrecy, hidden from public view, and rarely acknowledged within dominant cultural discourses. These hidden traumas, often rooted in systemic inequalities and normalized forms of abuse, demand greater attention and understanding (p. 102).

Maria Root's (1989) concept of "insidious trauma" refers to events that may not cause physical harm but nevertheless have intense psychological and emotional consequences. These experiences are often overlooked or minimized because they do not fit neatly into conventional definitions of trauma. Root's model highlights how insidious trauma can affect entire groups of people, particularly those living in cultures where

certain forms of harm are normalized or accepted. The constant threat of violence and the normalization of these behaviors create a persistent sense of fear and vulnerability, leading to psychological distress and impacting women's overall well-being. The concept of insidious trauma encourages a broader understanding of the nature and impact of trauma, urging us to look beyond overt acts of violence and acknowledge the profound consequences of more subtle, yet prevalent, forms of harm.

Moreover, recognizing that trauma exists differently across genders is crucial for understanding the unique experiences of women. As Diana Russell (1986) highlights, women's trauma "occurs in secret", concealed from public view, and rarely acknowledged within dominant discourses. These 'secret traumas', as she terms them, frequently occur within the context of intimate relationships, where women may experience physical, emotional, or sexual abuse at the hands of their partners. Acts of violence are disguised as expressions of love or masked by a complex web of emotional manipulation. The secrecy surrounding these experiences is often compounded by feelings of shame, self-blame, and fear of judgment. These hidden traumas, while often invisible to the outside world, have a devastating and long-lasting impact on women's lives. It is essential to recognize that these deeply personal and often isolating experiences of women. They reflect a broader societal pattern of violence and inequality that disproportionately affects women.

Thus, a feminist perspective highlights the often-overlooked experiences of women, drawing attention to the hidden traumas rooted in everyday life. It identifies that trauma is not limited to extraordinary events like war or natural disasters, but also includes more commonplace forms of harm, which gives a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by many women. Verbal abuse, the male gaze, subtle forms of discrimination, and even societal neglect, while often dismissed as insignificant, have a cumulative and profound impact on women's well-being (p 110). To understand the scope of trauma's effect, it is necessary to expand the understanding of what constitutes a traumatic event. It is necessary to recognize the hidden pain that so many women carry, the pain that often goes unseen and unheard, to create a more compassionate and supportive world.

Results and Discussion

Psychological trauma, traditionally understood as a wound inflicted upon the mind by extraordinary events, has significant and long-term consequences for individuals. While the dominant discourse focuses on events such as war, natural disasters, and physical violence, this narrow definition fails to involve the insidious and pervasive nature of trauma experienced in seemingly ordinary circumstances. This research challenges the limited scope of traditional trauma theory by examining the subtle yet devastating impact of events often normalized and silenced within patriarchal structures, particularly those experienced by women. The prevailing understanding of trauma, often exemplified by diagnoses like Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, centers around the experience of extraordinary events. This framework, while valuable in understanding responses to extreme stressors, proves inadequate in addressing the psychological impact of events that, though seemingly commonplace, can be equally damaging. The emphasis on the extraordinary creates a hierarchy of trauma, potentially invalidating the experiences of individuals who have endured suffering outside the realm of the overtly catastrophic. Feminist perspectives offer crucial insights into the limitations of traditional trauma theory. Women, often subject to systemic oppression and abuse within patriarchal societies, experience trauma in ways that frequently defy categorization within existing frameworks. Experiences such as verbal abuse, domestic violence, sexual oppression, and marital rape, while often concealed and normalized, can have profound and lasting psychological consequences. These forms of abuse, often rendered invisible by societal norms and power imbalances, highlight the need for a more inclusive

understanding of trauma.. The novel, *Sleeping on Jupiter*, depicts such events faced by women which are excluded from the mainstream discourse of trauma because of their simple nature. This research proposes that these events need to be addressed in order to not only create a safe space for women but also to give them a chance to share their bleak stories which would, otherwise, remain buried in the pretext of being ordinary.

Trauma theory centers on the psychological and emotional consequences that arise after an individual experiences a deeply distressing or life-altering event, commonly referred to as a 'traumatic event'. As Cathy Caruth (1995) eloquently states, psychic trauma, or simply trauma involves "intense personal suffering" that exists in various ways. It is characterized by an overwhelming emotional response to a disturbing or threatening experience witnessed by a victim. The American Psychiatric Association (1994) further elaborates on this definition, "direct personal encounter with an incident that includes actual or potential death or severe injury, or another menace to one's physical wellbeing; or observing an incident that involves death, injury, or a risk to the physical wellbeing of another individual; or discovering about sudden or violent death, severe harm, or death or injury threat faced by a family member or other close acquaintance (Criterion A1)" (p. 424). This definition clarifies that trauma is not limited to direct victims but can also affect those indirectly exposed to its ripple effects.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a common framework for understanding the mental and emotional disturbances that can arise after exposure to traumatic events. The American Psychiatric Association (2013) describes PTSD as "encountering actual or imminent death, severe injury, or sexual violence." The APA (2013) outlines four primary ways individuals can be exposed to trauma: 1) direct experience, 2) witnessing the event, 3) learning about trauma experienced by a close friend or family member, and 4) repeated or extreme exposure to aversive details of the traumatic event. This definition highlights that PTSD develops from events perceived as exceeding the normal bounds of human experience. However, the criteria for what constitutes a traumatic event capable of triggering PTSD are often debated. While the APA's definition emphasizes extraordinary and overtly threatening events, many argue that seemingly 'ordinary' and ongoing stressors, such as verbal abuse or emotional neglect, can also lead to PTSD. These experiences, though not always life-threatening in a literal sense, can be profoundly damaging to an individual's well-being and mental health. The probability of women fulfilling the criteria for PTSD is twice as high as that of men (Tolin & Foa, 2008). Therefore, there is a growing recognition that the boundaries of what constitutes a traumatic event should be expanded to acknowledge the potential for PTSD to develop from a wider range of experiences.

The 'everyday' traumas experienced by women, often taking the form of verbal abuse, emotional manipulation, or neglect, frequently remain hidden from public view. Constrained by societal expectations, fear of justice, or feelings of shame, many women suffer in silence. Patriarchal structures and dominant discourses often silence women's experiences, leaving them feeling unheard and nullified. Women's trauma is particularly due to the sexual abuse they face throughout their lives at some stages. In the context of India, young girls, in particular, are highly susceptible to sexual abuse—almost as high as 66%. (Fernandes et al., 2021).

Their trauma, therefore, remains largely unacknowledged and unaddressed. Feminist perspectives are crucial to understanding these hidden forms of trauma. By centering the lived experiences of girls and women, the feminist viewpoint sheds light on the pervasive nature of gender-based violence and its profound psychological impact. As Laura Brown (1995) argues that "traumatic events do lie within the range of normal human

experience," (p .110) challenging the notion that trauma only develops from extraordinary events. Women's trauma is often distinguished from men's in two key ways: its tendency to be shrouded in secrecy, and its frequent nullification by societal norms. Recognizing these distinctions is essential for developing a more inclusive understanding of trauma and its consequences. In the given novel, the protagonist, Nomi, faces trauma in the form of sexual abuse which happens behind closed doors. She is sexually assaulted by Guruji, the supreme authority of the sacred place, the ashram. Guruji presents himself as a well-wisher to Nomi as he says to her:

You think you have nobody," his voice said over my head, and I could feel its vibration enter my body. "That is not true. I am your father and your mother now. I am your country. I am your teacher. I am your God. (Roy, 2015, p. 24).

The societal and individual factor that inflicts trauma upon Nomi lies in the tactics of Guru to isolate and control her. He positions himself as the only source of love, security, and even divinity. He strategically replaces the sense of self from her and replaces it with dependence upon him. This manipulation makes Nomi vulnerable to his abuse. Guru's role as "father", "teacher", and "God" shows the patriarchal power structures prevalent in the ashram and Indian society. These "ideological and institutional factors" and structures grant men, especially religious leaders, unquestioned authority and control over women, which gives rise to exploitation (Segalo, 2015). The unquestioned faith in a religious leader gives him the freedom to perform his role without exposure. This societal factor helps in promoting the abuse and silences the opposition. The societal norms that expect obedience and silence, particularly from women and girls make it difficult for Nomi to speak out against Guru's authority fearing disbelief. Nomi's trauma, therefore is not due to the consequences of the Guruji's action but a product of the system that grants him power and, at the same time, snatches the voice of the abused and silences the victims.

The repeated words of Guru as "father", "teacher", and "God" shows the pattern of psychological manipulation. He aims to replace her sense of self with dependence upon him. The low self-esteem leads her to internalize her pain in terms of self-blame. She doubts her memories, stays silent out of fear and shame, and seeks external justifications. She finds it difficult to trust others and tries to detach herself from intimacy and relationships in later life. Her unspoken trauma appears in the form of anxiety, depression, and PTSD. She struggles with her flashbacks, nightmares, and emotional turmoil that affects her daily life and well-being.

Nomi, as a child, is sexually abused by Guruji. On one hand, she is powerless in front of Guruji to resist his advances; on the other hand, Guruji holds the powers of a deity which gives him legitimacy to do as he pleases. Guruji abuses Nomi in his private quarters—where she suffers secretly as stated in the novel:

As his hand moved from scar to scar, it went under the skirt of my tunic and began to stroke the part between my legs…He shifted my weight and slipped down my knickers and put his hand right between my legs. He lifted his own robes and he pulled my hand towards himself and said, "Hold this, it is magic." It stuck out from between his legs like a stump (Roy, 2015, pp. 71-2).

Nomi, as a child, is powerless against the power of Guru. Her dependence on him and the secrecy of her surroundings contribute to her vulnerability and she is unable to ask for help. The setting of the ashram, a place meant for spiritual growth, becomes a place of abuse for her due to the unrestrained freedom of the Guruji. The societal norms and expectations force her to be silent and discourage her from speaking against the violence

of the Guruji. All the other girls in the ashram, along with Nomi, are unable to stand up against Guruji because of the power and authority granted to him by his spiritual position. Their silence encourages him to abuse more and more individuals. Nomi's innocence and lack of sexual knowledge make her a victim of abuse. Her hesitation to openly discuss her experience about such matters makes it difficult for her to understand, process, and complain about the abuse. This kind of abuse—molestation and rape—leads to almost 49% of women to PTSD (Kessler et al., 1995). Nomi, too, becomes a victim of PTSD due to her secret abuse and molestation at the hands of Guruji.

Guruji sexually abuses Nomi when she enters puberty at the ashram. The sexual abuse deeply disturbs Nomi at the psychological level. Being a young girl and under the control of Guruji's power, she is unable to fight back for her dignity and safety. Her suffering accounts for 'secret trauma' as she suffers secretly at the hands of the very person who claims to be her protector. She explains her sexual abuse as:

My body felt as if it would tear into two when he forced my legs apart, then wider apart. He stuffed cloth into my mouth to stop me shouting for help. I remember my screams made no sound. There was blood. A burning between my legs. The sense that my body was being split open (Roy, 2015, p. 140).

The brutality of Nomi's abuse and manipulation leaves lasting impacts on her mind and body. The way "he forced her legs apart" shows his control and disregard for her well-being. The Guruji acts with freedom and confidence given to him by the patriarchal structures. Nomi's isolation and powerlessness are expressed when she says "My screams made no sound." She is trapped and unable to ask for help. Her helplessness contributes to her insidious trauma. She desperately wants to erase that experience from her mind to regain her sense of control over her violated body. She suffers night after night due to the culture of silence and fear in the ashram. This enforced silence shows Guruji's authority and societal expectation of obedience towards it. She deals with her trauma without any social support which consequently affects her later life.

Nomi's later life is greatly disturbed by the sexual abuse she faced at a young age. Her later life is greatly disturbed by the trauma she faces as a child at the ashram. Sexual abuse at such a young age shatters her sense of self and identity. She in order to deal with such emotional experiences either detaches from her physical self or seeks relief in self-harm. Her depression, anxiety, nightmares, and eating disorders isolate her from her loved ones. She fails to form healthy and trusting relationships with the people who truly care for her such as her foster mother. The posttraumatic stress, which Nomi develops as a result of her trauma, normally affects an individual's life at three levels: at a behavioral level where a person behaves in abnormal ways (Sareen, 2014; Downey & Crummy, 2022); at emotional level where a person is unable to regulate his/her emotion like a normal person would do (Hayes et al., 2012; Conti et al., 2023); and at interpersonal level where an individual is unable to form healthy relationships with others (Scoglio et al.,2015; Campbell & Renshaw, 2018).

At the behavioral level, the behavior of Nomi in later life, as an adult, is significantly affected by her childhood trauma. She behaves in abnormal ways as she has anger issues, and is always concerned about her safety and security. Her behavioral response is often startled and seems as if threatened by some external source(s). But her alarmed behavior is due to her childhood abuse, the bitter memories of which now manifest into behavioral interruptions. Even when she sleeps, she forms a safe and bounded space for herself in the bed, and "fence[s] herself in on every side with pillows, her backpack, her travel guide, extra blankets rolled into barrels" (p. 91). This shows the concerns of Nomi about her well-

being, even in her sleep. The behavioral changes in the character of Nomi are, in fact, a transformation of her mental trauma and posttraumatic stress into a set of concrete and visible acts.

At the emotional level, Nomi is unable to display her emotions properly like a normal person. She does not healthily channel her feelings but, rather, expresses her emotions in a disrupted manner due to the stress she lives under because of her enduring trauma. She, sometimes, displays emotional outbursts and emotional breakdowns on various occasions. For instance, she experiences an emotional breakdown in her hotel room, as she states:

I turned on the shower, I slid to the bathroom's polished floor. Over my head, my shoulders, my breasts, the water poured, I was sodden, I was sobbing, I scoured myself with my nails,… they scratched my skin, but I could not stop. I don't know how many hours I passed inside, or maybe they were minutes, I was cold, my skin felt raw as just-flayed hide, I tried, but I could not go back into the room (Roy, 2015, pp. 95-6).

She experiences emotional numbness due to her mental stress. She finds it difficult to channel her emotions in an alternative way. The self-harm she inflicts upon herself shows her inability to regulate her emotions at the time of mental pressure. Despite her desperate attempts to turn off the shower and leave the bathroom, she finds herself unable to move because of her emotional breakdown. Instead, she roughly scratches herself as she loses self-control and emotional control.

At the interpersonal level, Nomi lives a secluded life from the rest of the people. It is challenging for her to form healthy bonds with others due to trust issues. It is because she confronts most of her childhood trauma at the hands of the people who pretend to be her protectors. First abandoned by her mother, and then abused by Guruji, Nomi's later life is greatly affected in terms of relationships. When a Norwegian woman adopts her, Nomi is unable to build healthy communication with her, even though she cares about Nomi. As the following scene shows how difficult for Nomi it is to get along with her foster mother due to her past trauma:

"How long will you stare at your cereal and keep muttering to yourself, Nomi?" my foster mother's voice broke in. "Look what a mess you've made with all that torn up tissue." She cleared my bowl and brushed away the shredded paper, shaking her head to say she had given up all hope of sense from me. As if she had no idea what she was doing, she took a big jar of pasta shells and began to fling handfuls of pasta into a pan on the stove top in which she had put eggs to boil. "I asked at your school here, you know, and they said, What? Doesn't she talk at home?" (Roy, 2015, p. 30).

This scene illustrates that traumatic individuals find it hard to trust others easily. They see a potential threat that can come from anyone and anywhere. Despite the genuine concerns of Nomi's foster mother for her mental well-being, Nomi finds herself completely numb around her. The long-term consequences of trauma leave Nomi in an isolated social state which further complicates her personal life, and her relationships with others.

Along with these different levels at which the life of Nomi is profoundly altered, her traumatic memories often resurface in the form of an intrusive cycle, and it is difficult for her to escape. These experiences in the form of flashbacks and intense emotional distress haunt her. She finds it difficult to escape her past. Her past haunts her into her present, giving rise to her various insecurities later in life. She tries to suppress her memory of abuse, trying to erase the unbearable past but her fragmented memory keeps resurfacing

and making her struggle with trauma. The internalization of the abuse in terms of shame and guilt hinders her process of dealing with her trauma. Her violation makes it difficult for her to have physical intimacy. She fears the repetition of her abuse that is triggered by certain touches. Therefore, all the abnormalities in the life of Nomi demonstrate the persistent negative impacts of her childhood trauma which hampers her growth in adult life.

Conclusion

This study concludes that Roy's novel, *Sleeping on Jupiter*, depicts the prolonged and devastating effects of trauma faced by the protagonist, Nomi. The novel portrays the sufferings and misery she faces at the hands of the people who are responsible for her safety. Nomi encounters horrifying physical and sexual abuse as a child at the sacred place, the ashram. Still, she cannot stand or speak against Guruji because of his predominant authority. The societal norms do not leave any room for poor girls to raise their voices against inhuman treatment. Consequently, their trauma is excluded from the dominant discourse due to the existing gender-biased nature of the societal structures. Due to all these factors, the protagonist, Nomi, is overtaken by the long-term impacts of trauma. She experiences emotional, behavioral, and interpersonal abnormalities due to her childhood trauma. Roy's novel, not only addresses the hidden traumas of women, which mostly remain unnoticed, but also highlights the need to rethink and restructure the social norms and discourses to ensure the safety of women and create more space for their voices to be heard.

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