

Psychological Trauma in Sam Shepard's *A Lie of The Mind*

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Received: 22/03/2026

Accepted: 25/06/2026

Published: 01/07/2026

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Volume: 7 Issue: 4

How to cite this paper: Kareem, A. W. A., Laftah, N. F., Kateb, L. A. H., Al-Kinani, G. M. (2026). Psychological Trauma in Sam Shepard's *A Lie of The Mind*. *Journal of Critical Studies in Language and Literature*. 7(4), 8-15

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.46809/jcsll.v7i4.449>

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Abstract

This study aims to explore and understand the dire effects of psychological trauma on individuals and family relationships, as depicted in Sam Shepard's play, *A Lie of the Mind*. This study also aims to understand how psychological trauma caused by violence and abuse affects individuals, families, and their relationships. Furthermore, this study uses trauma theory as the main framework to explore the dire effects of trauma on individuals and family relationships. Psychological trauma focuses on how traumatic experience such as violence and abuse impact the mind, emotions, and behavior over time. The conclusion of this study shows that psychological trauma plays a dire role in the deterioration of family relationships, and how violence and abuse can create an ongoing cycle of suffering, which enables the transmission of trauma's effects from one person to another. Traumatic memory also has a huge effect on the way characters behave, making it hard for them to stay emotionally stable. The study also shows that trauma experienced during childhood years can have long-lasting effects on future behaviors.

Keywords: Sam Shepard, Psychological Trauma, Childhood Trauma, Traumatic Memories

1. Introduction

Sam Shepard (1943-2017) is regarded as one of the influential contemporary playwrights and actors in the United States of America. Shepard's works are considered the most dynamic representations of family life, which illustrate characters living under shadows of painful memories (Amani et al., 2021). He began his career in writing plays in 1964, starting with the play *Cowboys* (1967), and he received many renowned accolades including eleven Obie Awards and the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, serving as an insightful testament of his contribution to the contemporary theatre (Garfat, 2010). Due to his conflict with his father, Shepard intentionally discarded his original surname, Rogers. This personal decision is noticeably echoed in his dramatic tension or what is called a violent conflict between father-son relationship (Rubenstein, 1989). His famous works

include *Buried Child* (1978), *Curse of the Starving Class* (1977), *True West* (1980), *Fool for Love* (1983), and *A Lie of the Mind* (1985) (Rubenstein, 1989).

A Lie of the Mind is a play by Sam Shepard. The play is about two American families connected by a tragic violence and abuse. The play is structured in three acts and in a nonlinear structure. The play opens with a conversation between Jake and his brother, Frankie, who tries to calm him down, because Jake assaulted his wife, Beth, causing her brain damage. However, Jake believes that he has killed her and continues to justify his actions with jealousy and suspicion until Frankie interrupts, telling him that he has been blaming others since childhood. Then Frankie talks about a forgotten incident, trying to get him to realize the truth about what he had done to his wife. He tells Jake that he had kicked a goat and broken his leg from the force of the kick. Jake denies the entire incident and tells him that he cannot remember anything. When Frankie insisted on reminding him, Jake collapses and falls onto the ground (Shepard, 1986).

At the hospital, Beth is wrapped in bandages, cared for by her brother, Mike. Beth is in bad conditions; doctors have diagnosed her with brain damage resulting from the violent assault by her husband. Then, Beth's parents arrive. Her father, Baylor, is more concerned with his mules than his daughter, and her mother, Meg tries to avoid admitting her daughter's condition, which shows that the family lives are in complete isolation from each other. At Jake's house, Frankie tells Lorraine that Jake is involved in a big problem, but his mother shows her carelessness by saying what is new, we are used to Jake's problems since childhood, and from the moment of his birth, he fell on his head from the hands of the doctor. Sally then approached Jake in an attempt to calm him down because he was experiencing a psychological and emotional disorder, but she failed and he began to imagine her as his wife, Beth, leading her to run away from the house (Shepard, 1986).

As the play continues, Frankie goes to check on Beth after she left from the hospital. At his arrival, he is accidentally shot by Beth's father, Baylor, which forces him to stay at Beth's house until he recovers. Frankie and Beth then engage in a conversation during which Beth speaks strangely to Frankie, saying that they will cut off his leg just like they cut off her brain. However, this shows the dire consequences that Jake has caused to his wife. After Sally returns home, Jake asks her for help and tells her that Lorraine and Frankie are plotting against him trying to make him suffer and believe that Beth is still alive. Then the conversation turns to their father, when Jake mentions how his father treated Sally cruelly, trying to get close to her sexually, showing how the family is broken up. During the play, Jake wonders about his father's death, and Lorraine tells him that he was run over by a truck, as she believed. However, Jake was at the place of incident, but he does not remember anything. Later in the play, as Sally recounts the event of her father's death, it is revealed that Jake was responsible for killing his father as he challenged him to a drinking race where the condition was to stop at each bar for a drink, which led to his death. This was Jake's indirect plan to kill him as Sally stated, and it is clear that he has repressed the event. Finally, the play ends with no clear resolution, both families continue to exist in a cycle of psychological trauma (Shepard, 1986).

The play can be seen as a tangible embodiment of the effects of trauma on individuals and their interactions with their surroundings. Psychological trauma is a very strong response to a traumatic experience or painful event that leaves a lasting impact on individual's mental state, leading to disturbances in thinking, feelings, and behaviors. This psychological state is not merely a fleeting moment of pain, but rather an internal wound that can impair individual's ability to connect with oneself and other, becoming a source of ongoing stress and conflict (Eilefson, 2015).

This concept is portrayed through the characters of Jake and Beth, where domestic violence, abuse, and mental illness intertwine to create a scene of psychological pain and inner conflict. The violence and abuse within the family have affected their self-perception and their relationship, reflecting how psychological trauma can shatter family bonds and lead to severe psychological decline.

This study analyses *A Lie of the Mind* through trauma theory to examine how psychological trauma shapes identity, memory, and family relationships. This paper asks the following questions in an attempt to reach its objectives:

1. How does trauma (family trauma, childhood trauma) shape the main characters of the play?
2. How does traumatic memory effect Jake's character and how does it function?

2. Literature Review

Many researchers have found *A Lie of the Mind* to be an interesting material for academic analysis. In "Directing 'The Absolute': Towards destabilising the victim/perpetrator binary in Sam Shepard's *A Lie of the Mind* (1986)" De Wet investigates how Antonin Artaud's concept of the Absolute is used to challenge the traditional victim/perpetrator dynamic between the characters Beth and Jake in Sam Shepard's play *A Lie of the Mind*. Drawing on René Girard's theories of violence, victimization, and scapegoating, alongside Artaud's notions of Cruelty and the Theatre of Cruelty. The study concluded that Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty and the notion of The Absolute are able to destabilize the victim/perpetrator binary between Beth and Jake by replacing sexual desire in their relationship with transcendental love (Wet, 2016).

In "Fantastic Narrative Spaces in Sam Shepard's *A Lie of the Mind*, Omid Amani, et al. shed light on the impossible along with the possible worlds projected in a textual fictional world in the play. They also investigate the "narrative spaces" and the "impossible/fantastic spaces" constructed in the play deploying Marie-Laure Ryan's views on space and possible worlds and Patricia Garcia's model of space and its transgressions. They also analyze space in the play from two distinct perspectives: Firstly, the environment in which narrative is physically set up, and secondly, the fantastic post modern dramas that pictures impossibilities. The study concluded that the play employs crossbred narrative spaces that blend reality and fantasy to explore psychological dimensions of the characters' internal conflicts and their impact on family relationships. By mixing time and

space, the play breaks away from traditional narrative forms, leading viewers to question what is true and real (Amani et al., 2021).

In “Existential Subjective Violence in *A Lie of the Mind*, Li Xiaoqing investigates how human beings’ existential problem has been revealed through the theme of violence and psychological mechanism of characters’ subjective violence in this modern tragedy, through the representation of subjective violence, which is epitomized by Jake, Mike and Baylor, and how Shepard points out modern people’s existential despair. The study concluded that *A Lie of the Mind* reveals violence as a profound psychological and existential experience, deeply impacting family dynamics and personal identity (Xiaoqing, 2023).

Despite the existence of many academic studies regarding the subject above, none of the previous studies managed to analyze Sam Shephard’s *A Lie of the Mind* depending on trauma theory as a methodology of analysis. Thus, such a study can be considered as a good addition to the body of academic research.

3. Theoretical Framework

The topic of trauma is one of the important subjects that has attracted psychologists, researchers, and even ordinary people, especially in the twentieth century. Psychological trauma is defined as a crisis resulting from exposure to a distressing event or traumatic experience. It is characterized by the individual's persistent feeling of reliving the trauma, avoidance of reminders of it, increased anxiety, and intense reactions to the traumatic event (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

Historical definitions of trauma provide essential insights on the ways in which medical and literary disciplines have dealt with this complicated psychological phenomenon. Nevertheless, understanding these definitions help to contextualize how trauma is affecting individuals and societies, whether in medicine or culture. Once the word trauma was fundamentally used in reference to physical injury. However, trauma in medical terminology was the medical damage of the body that is caused by the external forces. Nevertheless, with the progression of research in field of psychology the term was expanded to cover how traumatic experiences can cause psychological traumas. This change was the switch of physical trauma interpretation to the one that includes mental and emotional suffering. The shell-shock is one of the most significant terms in the early trauma research, the phrase was formulated during the World War One and was used to describe psychological symptoms that was shown by soldiers after facing intense fighting. The shell-shock proved that psychological disturbances could be raised without having physical injury. Subsequently, the medical field came up with the medical terms like acute stress reaction and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as a classifying and diagnostic thorough classification of the trauma (Eilefson, 2015)

The theory of trauma, psychological fragmentation, and memory is one of the most prominent topics explored by literary researchers and psychologists, according to dictionaries and psychological references. Caruth's research, confirmed that trauma is characterized by its recurrence in the form of disturbing dream memories, causing a disruption in the psychological stability of the average person (Caruth, 1996).

3.1. Types of Trauma

3.1.1. Childhood Trauma

Childhood trauma encompasses a range of painful or traumatic events that children face during developmental years. There are two major types of childhood trauma: Type I trauma that results from a single event or incident, such as a sudden unexpected event, and Type II trauma is a more complicated and repeated trauma in which a child is exposed to a serious of pressure-filled situations, these may occur over a long period. Childhood trauma is a tough and hard experience that impacts the behavior and emotions of a child. It may lead to traumatic memory that affects emotional management and relationship building process with others. It also affects the growth of personality at the adolescent stage and even at later stages. Childhood trauma can be characterized by four important features, the first one is recurring memories of the traumatic event, the second one is repeated behaviors, the third one is fears associated with the trauma itself, and the fourth one is altered perceptions toward people and future. All these attributes or some of them are typical of the individuals who have experienced childhood trauma. Obviously, childhood trauma is not a one-time event, but it is a deep and ongoing psychological condition that impacts emotion and behavior of the child, as it often extends into adolescence and adulthood, influencing decision-making, relationship-building process (Terr, 2003).

3.1.2. Traumatic Memory

Traumatic Memory, which is related to very painful or terrifying events, is one of the manifestations of memory. These thoughts are transformed to the mind in the form of feelings, or images of sensations that an individual seems to be experiencing at a particular time, and thus making it unforgettable. The science of traumatic memories debates some of the fundamental ideas concerning the nature of memory. Firstly, where normal memory tends to be dependent on the process of remembering the event, traumatic memories are mostly located in the sensory and emotional dimensions. Whenever an individual who experienced traumatic events recalls them, he or she goes through the trauma once again. Secondly, normal memories are always consciously available whereby one is able to narrate well what they remember, while traumatic memories are not consciously available and the individual is not able to attribute the memories in words due to the psychological condition that comes with it. Thirdly, traumatic memories can be repressed and can be re-awakened at any moment at the point of exposure that leads to the traumatic event which makes the affected individual experiencing the re-awakened trauma as if he or she is really experiencing the event in its real state. Fourthly, traumatic memories do not always fade away in time. They are also present and not influenced by other experiences in life, unlike the normal memories that deteriorates or becomes weak over time. According to Cathy, traumatic memory is a complex and nonlinear process as it cannot fit into normal language because

it carries emotional parts that are hard to express. This makes the traumatized individual feel internal separation or weakness. To sum up, traumatic memories are not like normal memories. They are not influenced by new experiences or time but are instead vivid and painfully imprinted into a person's mind. These memories are stuck in the moments of trauma and pain, meaning that traumatized individual feels as if he / she goes through the painful experience again in the present. It's not just remembering the event, but it is re-living the emotions and sensations as if it's happening (Van Der Kolk et al.,1997; Caruth,1996).

3.1.3. Family Trauma

Family trauma comes up when family is forced to experience harsh circumstances or other major problems like abuse, violence, or loss of a family member. These experiences do not involve a single person alone but also end up influencing the lives of the whole family where all members and their relationships with each other are affected. A family trauma could also be a result of a single member undergoing harsh and painful incident and this member could spread trauma to the rest of family. However, there are families that are strong and can stick together and take care of each other after the traumatic events, and there are families that may end up being furious, mad, unemotionally stable and downhearted. The effects of trauma are also different in relation to the presence of family members as victims, perpetrators, or witnesses of the traumatic event. The parents or other members could have been abused or traumatized as children and this could leave a scar and influences how they behave in their current family, how they express emotion, and how they maintain relationships with one another. According to Cathy, trauma cannot be fully understood without considering its cultural and social dimensions, as she argues that traumatic experiences exceed the individual psyche, where it effects social and family structures. Also, Caruth states that trauma is not only a private pain but also a communal one, as traumatized individuals spread effects of trauma to others. Generally, family trauma is not a single incident, but a multifaceted process that has a huge impact on the family, meaning that trauma can originate from a single individual who has experienced trauma and then projects it to the rest of family, as well as in sometimes an impact on different generations of the same family because some parents could have been traumatized as a children and they could reflect it in their current family (Tew, 2019; Caruth,1996).

The theory of psychological trauma is considered the most appropriate framework for analyzing the play "*A Lie of the Mind*" due to its focus on studying the internet psychological processes of the characters and the impact of emotional trauma on their behavior. The play addresses complex themes such as violence and psychological tensions, which require a deep understanding of psychological motives and unconscious factors that controls characters' action. Trauma theory provides interpretive frameworks for understanding internal conflicts and repressed memories that impacts characters' interaction. Analyzing the play through this theory highlights the construction of characters and the dynamics of psychological relationships, which cannot be easily achieved by other theories that mainly focus on social or cultural aspects.

Depend on what is mentioned above it is clear that the main characters in Sam Shepard's play, *A Lie of the Mind*, suffer from childhood trauma, traumatic memory, and family frauma. Therefore, this paper aims to analysis these characters and their behaviors according to trauma theory in an attempt to answer research questions that were mentioned in above.

4. Analysis

Childhood and family trauma are significant concepts of both psychology and literature. Studies have indicated that childhood trauma may have lasting psychological and emotional consequences on the life of individuals. It can also affect family relations and increase mental health disorders. In this part of, the effects of childhood and family trauma on individuals and families will be explored (Tew, 2019; Terr,2003).

The play opens with a conversation between Jake and his brother, Frankie, who attempts to calm him down, because Jake assaulted his wife, Beth, causing her brain damage. However, Jake believes that he has killed her and continues to justify his actions with jealousy and suspicion until Frankie interrupts, telling him that he has been blaming others since childhood, even once blaming a goat, as illustrated in the text below:

JAKE. She provoked it

FRANKIE. You've always lost your temper and blamed it on somebody else. Even when you were a kid you blamed it on somebody else. One time you even blamed it on a goat. I re-member that. (*Pause. Jake stops.*)

JAKE. What goat?

FRANKIE. That milk goat we had.

JAKE. What was her name?

FRANKIE. I forget.

JAKE. What was that goat's name?

FRANKIE. You remember that goat?

JAKE. Yeah, I remember that goat. I loved that goat.

FRANKIE. Well you kicked the shit out of that goat you loved so much when she stepped on your bare feet while you were tryin' to milk her. You remember that? Broke her ribs. (Shepard, 1986, PP. 16-17).

In this conversation, Frankie tries to get him to realize the truth about what he had done to his wife. The text above reveals that Jake experienced a psychological trauma, Type I, during his childhood years as he attacked the goat that he loved, and it

was not just an ordinary animal to Jake, but it was his favorite. Childhood trauma can have permanent psychological and emotional impacts on the life of the traumatized individual, and it may also influence the family relations as Jake took his aggressive behavior from childhood into his marriage life by assaulting his wife, demonstrating how childhood trauma can influence an individual's future behavior. However, he broke the goat's ribs, and when he struck it, he fractured his own leg from the impact of the kick. Nevertheless, it was not a minor event, but a significant incident with a dire impact on the future of Jake and his aggressiveness. It is worth mentioning that suspicion and repetitive behaviors that Jake did throughout the play can stem from childhood trauma, leading him to distrust others and blame them for problems. Later in the play, terrible consequences of childhood trauma will be shown, as Jake attacked his wife, and he also was responsible for killing his father (Terr, 2003).

At the hospital Beth is in bad conditions, doctors have diagnosed her with brain damage resulting from the violent assault by her husband, Jake. The text below shows how Beth is experiencing the trauma, speaking incoherently and asking strange questions:

BETH. Saah-thah-Jaah-thuh-saah-saah-saah – saah – (*Continues under.*)

MIKE. (*Stroking her back.*) Don't talk, Beth. You don't have to talk. It's all right, honey.

(*She discovers bandage on her head and starts to rip it off. It starts to come apart in long streamers of gauze. Mike tries to stop her but she continues tearing the bandage off.*)

BETH. (*As she rips off bandage.*) Ghaah-ghaah-khaah-khaah -khaah-khaah- (*Continues.*)

MIKE. No, leave that on. Leave it, Beth. You're supposed to leave it on for a while. Don't take that off. (Shepard, 1986, P. 11).

Family trauma is a significant concept that is used to describe the psychological and emotional suffering of the family members as a result of harsh or violent incidents, affecting one or more individuals, which subsequently ruins the family's system and their relationships. In the play, this can be seen in the strange and incoherent speech of Beth, which is the result of the violent attack that she got by her husband. According to Tew (2019), family trauma leads to emotional tension and difficulties in communication between family or members. This tension is further manifested in Beth's disturbed speech and her incomprehensible questions with her brother, as she is unable to clearly convey herself because of her psychological instability. Furthermore, Beth's language is full of unclear phrases and bursts of speech, which reflects the deep and violent trauma that she got by her traumatized husband, showing that the impact of trauma can be transferred from one person to another. Overall, this extract shows dire consequences that is caused by trauma, and how trauma can impact behavior and relationship (Tew, 2019).

At Jake's house, Frankie tells Lorraine that Jake is involved in a big problem, but his mother shows her carelessness by saying what is new, we are used to Jake's problems since childhood, and from the moment of his birth, he fell on his head from the hands of the doctor. Sally then approached Jake in an attempt to calm him down because he was experiencing a psychological and emotional disorder, but she failed and Jake began to imagine her as his wife, Beth, as will be shown in the text below:

SALLY. (*Scared, struggling to get free.*) I'm not Beth, Jake! Let go a' me. Let go a' me!

You're hurtin' me!

LORRAINE. Let go a' your sister! (*Lorraine takes off one of her shoes, charges Jake and starts belting him over the head with it. Jake keeps ahold of Sally's wrist. Frankie moves in and pulls Lorraine away from Jake from behind. She starts to beat Frankie with the shoe now.*)

JAKE. (*To Sally*) I'm gonna' let go a' you! I'm gonna let go a' you once and for all! (*Jake drops Sally's wrist. Sally backs away fast, rubbing her wrist. Jake's arm falls limply to the floor again. His eyes close. He goes unconscious. Lorraine stops beating Frankie with the shoe. Frankie lets go of her. They all stare at Jake.*)

LORRAINE. That boy's a maniac. Always has been. (*Pause.*) What's he doin' now? (Shepard, 1986, P. 24).

The role of families is important, where some families can stick together and take care of each other after the traumatic events, while other families may end up being unemotionally unstable. However, the text shows the negative role that the family plays in exacerbating the problems and disturbances as Lorraine uses her dominant and violent treatment with Jake. Furthermore, Jake was suffering from disturbances and psychological problems in his life, to an extent that he imagines his sister, Sally, as his wife Beth, causing her family trauma that drives her to run away from the home, showing how traumas or their effects can be transferred from one person to another if left unaddressed. Nevertheless, traumas frequently have deep roots that exceed the immediate or unexpected incidents. Often, unexpected events act as triggers that awaken long-standing and deeper wounds within the family members. In Sally's case, Jake's harsh behavior towards her is not the original cause of the family trauma but a trigger awakening deeper wounds caused to her by the abusive treatment that she got from her father. Also, the violence that Jake received from his mother has triggered traumatic memories, such as the goat incident and his abuse of his wife. This indicates that trauma is more complex and has deep roots that exceed the direct incidents (Tew, 2019; Van Der Kolk et al., 1997).

As the play continues, Jake's brother, Frankie, goes to check on Beth after she leaves the hospital. At his arrival, he was accidentally shot by Beth's father, which forced him to stay at Beth's house until he recovers. Frankie and Beth then engage in

a conversation during which Beth speaks strangely to Frankie, saying that they will cut off his leg just like they cut off her brain. However, this shows devastating consequences that Jake has caused to his wife, as will be shown in the text below:

BETH. Maybe, cut. Like me. Cut me. Cut you out. Like me. See? (*She bends her head forward and pulls the hair up on the back of her neck to show Frankie a nonexistent scar. Frankie looks at the place on her head that she's showing him. Showing Frankie back of her head.*) See? Tracks. Knife tracks.

FRANKIE. (*Looking at her head.*) What? There's nothing there. There's no scar there.

BETH. (*She straightens her head again.*) No brain. Cut me out. Cut. Brain. Cut.

FRANKIE. No, Beth, Look-They didn't-They didn't operate did they? Nobody said anything about that.

BETH. They don't say. Secret. Like my old Mom. Old. My Grand Mom. Old. They cut her. Out. Disappeared. They don't say her name now. She's gone. Vanish. (*She makes a "whooshing" sound like wind.*) My Father sent her someplace. Had her gone. (Shepard, 1986.P. 56).

Beth appears to be in a state of disaffiliation, disconnected from reality, when she talks about painful memories and fear of abandonment. These feelings stem from Jake's violence and a trauma that she got from witnessing her grandmother's death. Moreover, the fact that her family forgot her grandmother when she died shows that Beth has been psychologically harmed. This excerpt illustrates the enormous impact of the violence and abuse that she received by her traumatized husband, showing how traumas can effect behavior and lead to grave outcomes. However, she shows Frankie her unexacting bruises as she believed that she underwent a brain removal operation, but Frankie tells her that there is nothing, depicting the irretrievable condition that Beth was exposed to. Overall, the excerpt shows the sore effects of psychological traumas on individuals and their families, demonstrating how such wounds deeply impact relationship and behavior (Tew ,2019).

After Sally returns home, Jake asks her for help and tells her that Lorraine and Frankie are plotting against him, trying to make him suffer and believe that Beth is still alive. Then the conversation turns to their father, when Jake mentions how his father treated Sally cruelly, trying to get close to her sexually, as will be shown in the text below:

JAKE. You remember how he used to try to dance with you when he was drunk? How he'd pull you right up tight against his chest and breathe into your neck. You remember all that?

SALLY. What're you tryin' to do?

JAKE. He'd put on Lefty Frizell and twirl you around the kitchen until you got so dizzy you had to run into the bathroom and puke. I remember lyin' awake listening to you with the dry heaves and listening to him bellowing down the hallway at Mom. Warning her not to go in and help you out. I remember all that!

SALLY. Yeah! Then you remember the night he died too, don't ya'? (*Jake stops. They stare at each other. Pause.*)

JAKE. No! (*Pause.*) That's the part I forgot. (Shepard, 1986, P. 50).

The conversation between Jake and Sally reveals painful memories where they recall their father's abusive behavior. It becomes clear that their father, perpetrator, had been abusive towards his daughter, the victim, and had attempted to sexually assault her, an incident witnessing by Jake. The text also reflects the presence of psychological and possibly physical abuse within the family, which is in itself central to the concept of family trauma. According to Cathy, trauma cannot be fully understood without considering its cultural and social dimensions, as she argues that traumatic experiences exceed the individual psyche, where it effects social and family structures. Also, Caruth states that trauma is not only a private pain but also a communal one, as traumatized individuals spread effects of trauma to others. The characters, both Sally and Jake carry painful scars from the past that affect their behavior in the present, as each character carries his/her own painful experiences. This demonstrates how family trauma is not a single incident, but a multifaceted process that has a huge impact on the family, meaning that Jake also suffers from family trauma because he witnesses the assault that his sister got from her father (Tew,2019; Caruth,1996).

Traumatic memory is significant concept in psychology and literature. Studies have shown that traumatic memories are recollections of painful events or psychological trauma that affect individuals and cause them long-term psychological and emotional problems. These memories can be of events such as war, sexual assaults, incidents or any other type of psychological trauma. In this part, the effect of traumatic memory on Jake and how it function will be shown (Van Der Kolk et al., 1997).

At the beginning of the play, Jake and Frankie were talking about a forgotten incident. Frankie told Jake that he had kicked a goat and broken his leg from the force of the kick. Jake denied the entire incident and told him that he cannot remember anything. When Frankie insisted on reminding him of the incident, Jake collapsed and fell onto the ground, as will be shown below:

JAKE. I never kicked that goat!

FRANKIE. Oh, you don't remember that huh? You broke your damn foot you kicked her so hard.

JAKE. What was that goat's name? (*Jake suddenly falls to the floor, collapses. Frankie goes to him. Tries to help him.*) Get away from me!

FRANKIE. What happened?

JAKE. Just get away!

FRANKIE. You all right?

JAKE. Somethin's wrong. My head's funny. (Shepard, 1986, P. 17).

The text expresses experiences of a traumatic memory as Jake attacked a goat during his childhood years with a powerful kick, breaking its ribs, and when he sticks it, he fractured his own leg. However, traumatic memories are not consciously available, they are repressed and could be revived at any moment when the individual is exposed to a trigger, making him or her reliving the trauma again. In the play, Jake is already having a childhood trauma, but he is not conscious of the harsh incident, which indicates that he has repressed this painful experience. When Frankie insists on him to remember the incident, Jake couldn't bear to hear the incident, he collapsed to the ground and began screaming, demanding Frankie to stay away from him. This shows how traumatic memories can cause a sensory recollection of the person who is a victim of the trauma to such an extent that he experiences the incident again if it had just happened (Van Der Kolk et al., 1997).

During the play Jake wonders about his father's death and Lorraine tells him that he was run over by a truck, as she believed. However, Jake was at the place of incident, but he does not remember. Later in the play, as Sally recounts the event of her father's death, it is revealed that Jake was responsible for killing his father as he challenged him to a drinking race where the condition was to stop at each bar for a drink, which led to his death. This was Jake's indirect plan to kill him as Sally stated. It is clear that he has repressed the event, as will be shown in the text below:

JAKE. How was it he died? (Pause. They stare at each other.)

LORRAINE. Jake, you remember all that.

JAKE. No. I don't remember. I don't remember it at all.

LORRAINE. Jake-

JAKE. JUST TELL ME! (Pause.)

LORRAINE. He burned up. JAKE. His plane crashed?

LORRAINE, No. He was no hero. Got hit by a truck. Drunk as a snake out in the middle of the highway. Truck blew up and he went with it. You already know that. (Jake leaps to his feet but stays by the bed.)

JAKE. DON'T TELL ME I ALREADY KNOW SOME-THIN' I DON'T KNOW!

DON'T TELL ME THAT! HOW COULD I KNOW SOMETHIN' THAT I DON'T

KNOW? (Pause. They stare at each other.) (Shepard, 1986, PP. 33-34).

The text expresses the experience of a traumatic memory as Sally recounted that Jake had indeed killed his father. Furthermore, the memory of the traumatic experiences is not consciously accessible. They are blocked in unconscious part of mind and could be reawakened at any time when the traumatized individual is faced to a trigger, leading him or her to experience the trauma again. Also, according to Cathy, traumatic memory is a complex and nonlinear process as it cannot fit into normal language because it carries emotional parts that are hard to express. This makes the traumatized individual feel internal separation or weakness. However, Jake is not conscious about his father's death, even though he was the perpetrator, suggesting that he has repressed the criminal act. When Lorraine insists that he was present during the incident, Jake breaks down in yelling and refuses to accept the truth. This illustrates how traumatic memories can cause distress to a person who is traumatized to the level that he experiences the event again (Van Der Kolk et al., 1997; Caruth, 1996).

5. Conclusion

Psychological trauma is the mental and emotional harm caused by a very distressing or incident that leaves a long-lasting impact on the emotions of an individual. Psychological trauma can be permanent and effects future behavior. Sam Shepherd's play, *A Lie of the Mind*, is remarkable example of how the impact of psychological trauma on individuals and families can be realistically depicted. Through the depiction of two American families suffering traumas, the play illustrates how trauma can lead to the breakdown of family relationships and lead to dire consequences. As a results, this study has shown that psychological trauma plays a dire role in the deterioration of family relationships, and how violence and abuse can create an ongoing cycle of suffering, which enables the transmission of trauma's effects from one person to another. Traumatic memory also has a huge effect on the way characters behave, making it hard for them to stay emotionally stable. The study also shows that trauma experienced during childhood years can have long-lasting effects on future behavior. Shepard's view remains highly relevant today as it highlights on ongoing societal issues related to violence and mental health. Future research could expand on this work by exploring and explaining trauma's impact in diverse cultural contexts and investigating therapeutic approaches that help to break these cycles of suffering. Overall, this study is greatly valuable and provides a comprehensive view of the psychological trauma and its effects.

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