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Scratching the Surface - Exploring Betrayal as a Behavioral Shortcoming from David Grossman's *A Horse Walks into a Bar*

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Abstract: ***Every adult human being is the totality of his childhood experiences. The childhood wounds are capable enough for destroying the individual and the community. Evolution of society is and endless process and highly dynamic in nature. A Horse Walks into a Bar portrays the shortcomings in the life of average modern Israeli persona. Tracing the history it can be discovered that betrayal doesn't happen immediately but is subjected for a long systematic process.***
Keywords: Behaviors, Betrayal, Holocaust

I. INTRODUCTION

The 20th century Jewish American literature portrays the Jewish community passionately seeking a homeland of their own with dreams and aspirations. It draws heavily from immigrant experiences and memories. Works produced in contemporary Israeli is occupied by the sceptical attitudes, rationality and conflict of minds and continues to reflect the cross-currents and multiple voices which have shaped the society. David Grossman is such an author who reflects current Israeli politics throughout in his works, because he was born six years after the founding the modern State of Israel in 1945 and he grew up with the country. This incredible creation has quite uneasy emotions. The text is actually the effective portrayal of malfunctioning society that is affected by the wounds of past which leads to both physical and mental trauma. The study provides an outline of behaviourism and dimensions of betrayal.

II. BEHAVIOURISM

Psychology became an accepted science in the latter part of the nineteenth century and was defined as the science of consciousness. "Behaviorism was, and is, a moment primarily in American psychology that rejected consciousness as psychology's subject matter and replaced it with behavior" (Leahey 686). Behaviorism, simply known as behavioral psychology, is a theory of the process of learning. As its name suggests, behavioral theory is concerned with the observable behavior of people - what they actually do and say. This is in contrast to psychoanalytic theory which focuses on the mental and emotional processes that shape human personality, and the data it uses come largely from the self-observations provided by introspection. However, behavioral psychologists believe that if psychology is to be a science, its data must be directly observable and measurable.

It believes the idea that all the behaviors are acquired. It is based upon all the independent activities of mind. All the organisms both humans and animals acts or behaves according to their environment which means the acquisition of behavior is based upon environments. That is a response to a particular stimulus shapes the character of an individual. It is a continuous learning process from infancy to old age. In short, behaviorism is a scientific study of human responses and their developments. theory is relatively simple to understand because it relies only on observable behavior and describes several universal laws of behaviour. Human behavior is the most familiar feature in the world. The world knows that how an individual reacts to a problem. The true notion is that man rests upon the object of man, human nature exits because of the human behaviors, human characteristics. "all the acquired qualities are based on conditioning. Characters contribute to the degree of behavioral and to degree to which an individual has to be succeeded" (Fromm 97). "the behaviors of a man reveal the facts about himself … It should be discovered from within, for that personal contacts are been made from one's behaviour to another" (Tournier 20). Another fact is that the behaviors are developmental in nature. It replaces consciousness. The explicit strategy to know a person is to read in between his behaviors. It is developed from the sequences of the stages of life. In short behaviors are strong forces. Skinner's advocacy for behaviors states as it is the most familiar feature in the world. "human behaviors are cognitive" (208). To be precise it is the balance between the environment and the individual, individual and the individual, individual and the society.

As long as humans can remember they are curious to know who they are and what they are. Behaviorism is a part of them. And only by which an individual understands his nature.

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III. SCRATCHING THE SURFACE

.*A Horse Walks into a Bar* provides an account of extreme purgation and atonement. It is a dark and powerful portrayal of one's past and childhood. "The violence that *A Horse Walks into a Bar* explores is more private and intimate" (Greenblatt). The protagonist of the novel is Dovaleh Greenstein, a standup comedian. He is doing a comedy show. But it is not simply comical. It is his long and enduring pain. It is not in the traditional pattern that a comedy club follows. "Jewish humor is celebrated, and, these days, more necessary than ever. It is humor from the edge of the grave. Humor with a gun stuck in your ribs. Humor that requires nothing more than a match and a can of gasoline. And, of course, the willingness to set yourself on fire" (Shteyngart). . Each and every action that Dov makes point outs what he is, what he is hiding and what really disturbs him. Even though they are jokes, they attack all the spectators. Often they are the bullets fired at them and it causes discomfort for them which make them to leave the club. . What follows is an unbearably sad account of a damaged childhood, each painful, discontinuous detail emerging in mad disorder, twisted together with half-told jokes and crude insults, bursts of self-pity and self-loathing. Dov's father Hezkel was a barber, impatient and short-tempered, barely holding things together in order to support his wife and small son. His mother Sarah was a Holocaust survivor, haunted by the horrors she had endured, incapable of the simplest household tasks, perpetually disoriented, an object of pity and ridicule. "Always with her head down," Dov recalls, "and the schmatte over her face so no one could see her, God forbid, chop-chop alongside the walls and fences so no one would snitch on her to God and He'd find out she existed" (22). More than portraying Dov this actually shows something turbulent. It portrays the shortcomings of current Israeli society. It is rightly pointed that *A Horse Walks into a Bar* is a "spotlight on the Hebrew society" (Blaint).

During the first part of Dov's performance, the narrator frequently prepares to leave, at one point asking for the check from a waitress for a meal he has ordered. Dovaleh notices and introduces him as Avishai Lazar, district court judge, to the entire audience, and Avishai stays in his chair out of embarrassment. It can be realized that both the protagonist and narrator have got connections, but they are separated by almost thirty or thirty-five years. It has much complexity with discussing the whole plot of the novel, it is not so easy, but what happens is that it is the betrayal between these two friends in their adolescent period. "Spread your legs, Mrs Greenstein! Take this, Egyptian tyrant! Badbum-ching! Sorry, Mom! Sorry,Dad! My words were taken out of context! I have betrayed you yet again!" (15). And from that betrayal Dov was ruining his whole life. As a result, he is suffering from cancer. . He exhibited his frustrations in his stages. His family life went futile and he was looking for deliverance in all these times.

In the previous chapter, it is mentioned that what an individual express is the totality of his childhood experiences. Dov belongs to a family which the mother is a holocaust survivor. His father is a stubborn barber who also witnessed the horrors of the holocaust. He does not have hope in his existence and that he was dry. He trained his son in that darkness that he was also dry in his individuality. From that dryness and trauma of his identity, he betrays his friend under those circumstances and elopes. Prophet Ezekiel beautifully describes the forlorn and desperate condition to which the whole nation of Israel is reduced. "…these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. Therefore, prophesy and say unto them, Thus says the Lord God; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel" (*NRSV*, Ezek 37:11-12). The same is appropriate to the post holocaust society and the returning of Jewish people to Israel after the exile when the land was restored. The holocaust was full of horrors and it turned black the hearts and soul of the people.

Dov is a product of these horrors which he got from his father and shaped a character of that and which is fully immersed in Zionism which is supposed to be emerged. Betrayal is not a new thing. It is there at the inception of mankind. There is nothing more devastating than being betrayed by one's family and friends. Betrayal lingers like a curse, haunting its way into consciousness, injecting its poison of despair and loneliness. Betrayal undermines a fundamental trust in others and in oneself because it raises doubts. It strangles one's essential self-confidence. As far as the house of Israel is concerned the land of the tribe was supposed to evolve from a betrayal. The history of Israel starts from Jacob, son of Issac who is the son of Abraham. The land is named after Jacob. Abraham reluctantly casts out Hagar and Ishmael (a form of betrayal) at Sarah's insistence and with God's approval. It propels Ishmael to discover his own distinctive and independent path. Sarah's decision is based on a clear and present danger to her family's survival: there must be co-existence, but as a separate people.

The betrayal between the brothers, Esau and Jacob. The root cause of this is the affection the parents had for their favored child: "Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob" (*NRSV*, Gen 25:28). Later, Jacob is betrayed by his father-in-law/uncle, Laban, who tricks him into marrying Leah, instead of Rachel.

The next instance comes from the twelve brothers who were considered to the fundamentals of House of Israel who, after all the tribes of Israel are named after. Joseph was betrayed by his brothers when they sell him. They then lied to Jacob about the disappearance of Joseph.

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This is an example of the mass betrayal and the first occurrence in the house of Israel. And there are plenty of instances from the History of the Kings of Israel, including David that numerous times. When the first king of the nation of Israel, Saul was thrown away from his throne and David was ascended Saul enraged to kill David all costs.

As far as David is concerned, he is probably the greatest king of Israel. He unified the greater kingdom of Israel after the civil wars between the provinces of Israel and Yehudeya. But this trauma does not leave David too. David in his days of Reich came across Bethsheba, wife of Uriah. David saw her, he desired her, he inquired after her, he sent for her and he committed adultery with her. Uriah the Hittite was murdered by order of King David. David betrayed his friend and killed him. Later he regretted in that which Natan comes and corrects him where he points out that what he did and purifies him from his darkness.

These are some examples that can be given about how the element of betrayal is distributed in the inception and growth of Israel. In the present day Dov is performing in Netanya. The name Netanya is named after Natan, which means it comes from the name of Natan. Natan corrected David. Like that his place is supposed to be the place that Dov should purify himself. There is no other exact place than this.

The Holocausts, the contemporary event, can be seen as a product of betrayal. The Holocaust was the systematic persecution and murder of approximately six million Jews by the Nazis and their collaborators between 1933 and 1945. Millions of others, including the physically and mentally challenged, homosexuals, as well as political and religious opponents of Nazism were also targeted for destruction. The Holocaust was not an accident in history. Individuals, organisations and governments made choices that promoted and permitted discrimination, prejudice, hatred which ultimately, allowed mass murder to take place.

In short, betrayal is dispersed in the history of the country and the people are still the victims of the age old betrayals. "*A Horse Walks into a Bar* … is more like a parable, about the loss of parents and the losses of a nation" (Sansom). It is not just a book about Israel. It is about people and societies horribly malfunctioning. The novel touches the themes of betrayal between lovers, the treachery of friends, guilt and redress.

IV. CONCLUSION

Self-denounced autobiography of Dovaleh Greenstein, did not suppose himself to become the reason behind the tragedies happened which ruined both him and his friend. It is from his acquired behaviors that he exhibited such a thing. Dovaleh's betrayal does not happen purposefully. But when the element of betrayal is analyzed through the history of the house of Israel it can be found that happens purposefully and it is distributed with full consciousness.

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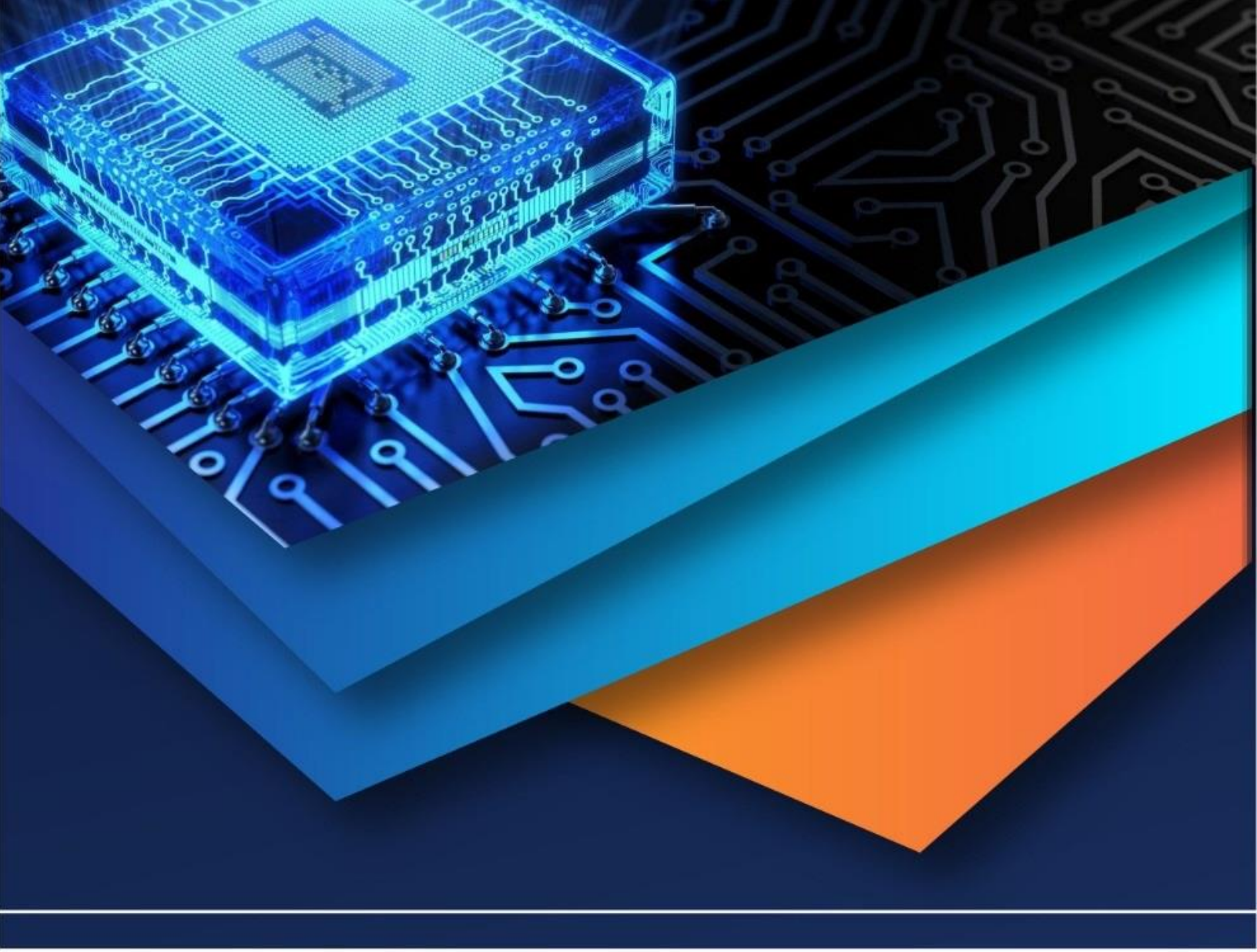

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