

## Trauma Studies in Amber Smith's *The Way I Used To Be*

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### ABSTRACT

*This study aimed to find out what events caused Eden's trauma and the way Eden overcame her trauma in the novel *The Way I Used to Be* written by Amber Smith. This research was included in the category of literary criticism that used Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis as its research approach and Sigmund Freud's trauma theory to analyse the data. The source of data in this research was the novel written by Amber Smith entitled *The Way I Used To Be*. The research results revealed that the cause of trauma experienced by Eden was sexual abuse by Kevin. Apart from that, other components supported the increasing sense of trauma experienced by Eden. In this research, Eden's ways to overcome the trauma she experienced were also found, which included being honest about something happened to her, overcoming her feelings of guilt and shame, getting ready for disappointing flashbacks and memories reconnecting to her body and feelings, staying connected with her friends, and taking care of herself. Based on this research, the novel entitled *The Way I Used To Be* by Amber Smith could be used to illustrate how to deal with trauma. For this reason, readers could use this novel as research material with topics other than trauma issues, such as how Eden's personality changed after recovering from her trauma of sexual abuse.*

**Keywords:** *trauma, psychoanalysis, The Way I Used To Be*

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## INTRODUCTION

Today, in the reality of life, we often hear or say the term trauma. Usually, this condition is spoken by people when they encounter problems that are experienced repeatedly, in succession, so those who experience them are unable to respond, face, and overcome them. Trauma can be described as a wound that occurred in the past but is still remembered today. If someone who is traumatized sees events related to past injuries, they will feel scared and even depressed. Each person has an event that can be a trigger for

each trauma. Such as having experienced sexual abuse, loss of loved ones, natural disasters, or accidents.

According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition (DSM-5) defines, trauma is an event that causes injury when a person is hit by death, sexual abuse, and others. The severity or lightness of an event will be felt differently by each individual, so the effect of this on a person's behavior will also differ from one person to another (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). These events are generally not easily lost in the memory of the person who experienced it. In addition, trauma is usually also referred to as events that can cause excessive stress in the person experiencing it.

The process of recovering from a traumatic event is usually a painful and lengthy process. Everyone has their own reaction to dealing with the trauma they experience (Christianson, 2014). For example, taking a trauma healing approach is usually used in a healing process after a person's trauma has been experienced. Thus, he can continue his life without having to keep on remembering or being shadowed by events that have happened before.

There are many novels that tell about trauma. For example, in the novel *Hannibal Rising* in 2006 by Thomas Harris, it is said that the main character Hannibal is someone who is traumatized by the loss of his parents after the war between the Nazis and the Soviet Union and the sudden death of his uncle. In addition, there is also a novel by Zhang Ling in 2006 entitled *Yu Zhen*, which has been translated into English as *AfterShock*. This novel tells about the trauma experienced by a family due to an earthquake that causes the family to be separated from one another. It is told that the character Xiaodong feels deeply traumatized, a feeling of worthlessness because her mother prefers to save Xiaoda, who is her twin sister, in the disaster that befell them. Next is the novel *Thirteen Reasons Why* by Jay Asher, which was published in 2011. This novel tells that the trauma experienced by a high school student made her feel intimidated by several people at her school. So that at one time, the trauma he experienced made her decide to end his life. After that, there is also a novel by Wendy Corsi Staub entitled *Scared to Death*. The novel tells the story of Elsa's character, who is traumatized after the kidnapping and murder of her adopted daughter a few years ago. Therefore, when she returns to have an adopted child, Elsa's character becomes very protective because she feels traumatized by the incident that happened to her adopted child that previously would also happen to her new adopted child.

In addition to those mentioned above, also included in the novel *The Way I Used To Be* by Amber Smith. Amber Smith is a bestselling author for the New York Times. She was born in Buffalo, New York, on March 2, 1971. Amber Smith is a writer and artist who grew up in Buffalo, New York, and now lives in Charlotte, North Carolina. She writes in the hope that her books can help drive change and spark dialogue around issues of gender violence and LGBTQ equality. *The Way I Used to Be* (2016) is the first book she wrote, then followed by books entitled *The Last to Let Go* (2018), *Something Like Gravity* (2019), and her latest book entitled *Code Name: Serendipity* (2022). When not writing, she works as a curator and freelance art consultant.

*The Way I Used to Be* by Amber Smith is a novel that tells about the main character, Eden McCrorey. A fourteen years old girl had been raped by her brother's friend while

Eden was sleeping. It tells the story of the impact of sexual abuse she experienced, like deep trauma. Besides that, it also shows the strength of an Eden when she experiences unbearable disappointment and pain from adolescence, first love and first heartbreak, friendship breaks, and after that is rebuilt while learning to embrace the strength to be able to survive with pain and trauma, which she hid in her heart.

The reason why the researcher chose this novel and conducted research on this topic is that the Researcher is interested in discussing the trauma and also the ways that Eden's character deals with the trauma she experienced through an analysis of the character's background after sexual abuse. Apart from this, another reason is there are many people who are still confused about how to deal with trauma. Consequently, not a few people use powerful ways and endanger themselves to deal with trauma because they can no longer be haunted and imagined by the fears of trauma. In the novel *The Way, I Used To Be*, the ways used by Eden's character to overcome her trauma are still considered healthy ways and thoughts. Thus, by making this novel an object and raising the topic of research on trauma and ways to overcome trauma, the researcher hopes that readers who have experienced trauma can choose healthy ways in trying to recover from their trauma.

The first previous research by Sarikaya-Şen (2018) was entitled "*The Trauma Betrayal in The Good Soldier*." The theory used in this journal is trauma theory. The results of this study are about the impact of trauma that does not stop showing the traumatic memories of John Dowell's character in the novel. The reason I took this previous study is that this study discusses the traumatic impact experienced by the characters in the novel. Hence, it is in accordance with this research.

After that, there was a study by Aulia et al. (2019) entitled "*Betrayal Trauma in Heather Lloyd's My Name Is Venus Black*." The theory used in this journal is the theory of literature and psychology by Wellek and Warren. The results of this study are to reveal the truth that the trauma of betrayal can occur to the main character because of the depression and anxiety problems that he has experienced. I took this previous research because this study discusses the trauma experienced by the characters in the novel, so it is in accordance with this research.

Another previous study was researched by Ningrum et al. (2019) with the title "*The Portrayal of The Main Character's Persistent Depression In The Way I Used To Be By Amber Smith*." The theory used in this study is a purely psychological theory that discusses depression, Legg. The results of this study are data from the most common depressive symptoms experienced by the main character is a negative attitude. The reason I took this previous research is that this study uses the same novel object, so it is in accordance with this research.

Furthermore, research by Ahmed (2019) entitled "*Trauma in Toni Morrison's Novel God Help the Child*." The theory used in this journal is trauma theory. The results of this study are about the traumatic situation experienced mainly by the protagonist in the novel, its implications, and the transformation achieved by the protagonist. The reason I took this previous study is that this study it discusses the traumatic situation experienced by the characters in the novel, so it is in accordance with this research.

Another previous study was conducted by Sari (2019) with the title "*Eden McCrorey's Trauma and Personality Development In The Way I Used To Be Novel By Amber*

*Smith.*" This study uses psychoanalysis. The result of this study is that trauma caused the development of Eden's personality to be disrupted during her teenage years. The reason I took this previous research is that this study discusses trauma and also uses the same novel object, so it is in accordance with this research.

After that, there was a study by Qing (2020) entitled "*Interpretation of Celie's Trauma in The Color Purple from the Perspective of Trauma Theory.*" The theory used in this journal is Sigmund Freud's theory of trauma. The result of this study is that many women do not realize that they have experienced trauma, so this research helps many people recognize and pay attention to trauma in women's lives. The reason I took this previous study is that this study uses Sigmund Freud's theory of trauma, so it is in accordance with this research.

Another previous study, there was a study by Shoukat et al. (2020) entitled "*An Analysis of Personal and Collective Trauma in Khaled Hosseini's Novel Sea Prayer.*" The theories used in this journal are Cathy Caruth's personal trauma theory and Kia Erikson's collective trauma. The result of this research is about the personal trauma elements of the Narrator's character through flashbacks, immortality, and unspeakable. The reason I took this previous research is that this study it discusses the trauma elements of the characters in the novel so that it is in accordance with this research.

Further research by Bhardwaj (2021) entitled "*Lydia's Silence: Representation of Trauma From an Ex-Centric Position in Achmat Dangor's Bitter Fruit.*" The theory used in this journal is trauma theory as described by trauma theorists Sigmund Freud, Judith Herman, Cathy Caruth, and Dori Laub to understand how traumatized Lydia was during the apartheid period. The result of this study is about trauma from the eccentric position of a woman of color who refuses to let her personal trauma experience be undermined. The reason I took this previous study is that this study uses Sigmund Freud's theory of trauma, so it is in accordance with this research.

After that, there was a study by Ezenwa-Ohaeto (2021) entitled "*Representation of Trauma, Home and Wars in Rasaan Malik's No Home in This Land.*" The theory used in this journal is trauma theory by Felman and Laub. The result of this study is about a wave of poets' exposition of traumatic and depressive experiences regarding Nigeria as a home besieged by war, as well as internal exile. The reason I took this previous study is that this study it discusses the traumatic experience in the novel, so it is in accordance with this research.

Another previous study, conducted by Tyagi and Kauser (2021) under the title "*Trauma and Silence in the Aftermath of War: Rebecca West's The Return of Soldier.*" The theory used in this journal is trauma theory. The results of this study are about traumatic experiences, in particular about men and women being equally affected by trauma in the post-war period, and also new literary depictions that are not only shocking but also about the wide range of symptoms. The reason I took this previous study is that this study it discusses traumatic experiences, so it is in accordance with this research.

By looking at various previous studies on the topic of trauma and ways to overcome trauma, in the novel *The Way I Used To Be*, the Researcher will focus on discussing the trauma of Sigmund Freud and ways to overcome the trauma carried out by Eden's character. What distinguishes this research from previous studies is that previous studies

only focused on discussing the personality development of Eden's character after the sexual abuse incident that happened to her. Meanwhile, in this study, the Researcher will discuss more generally the ways that Eden's character has to deal with her trauma problem.

Therefore, based on the above introduction, this research aimed to investigate the event caused Eden's trauma and the way Eden overcame her trauma in Amber Smith's *The Way I Used to Be*.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research is designed as a form of literary criticism. Literary criticism is the reason for considering literary works as well as issues. Literary criticism is a form of study that discusses the limitations, classification, analysis, and evaluation of literary works. Literary criticism itself has many theories, but this research it is focused on using a psychological approach (Abrams, 1981) cited in (Siswantoro, 2005). Literary criticism is also defined as a view or also called an opinion about what it means to be a work written with a specific purpose. It also discusses the meaning found by the reader in an author's literature. It also applies as a term to any argument about literature, whether a particular work is analyzed or not.

In this case, the Researcher tries to explain the interpretation of the novel *The Way I Used To Be* in terms of trauma, using psychoanalysis by Sigmund Freud first; after that, the Researcher combines it with the way the character overcomes the trauma. This study uses trauma and psychoanalysis from Sigmund Freud because this theory is considered the most appropriate for discussing trauma in the character of Eden as the main character in the novel.

The data source in this research is a novel by Amber Smith entitled *The Way I Used To Be*. The Researcher uses novels in the form of hard files. This novel was published in 2016. The data used by the Researcher in analyzing the novel are in the form of monologues and dialogues of the characters in the novel written in the form of words, phrases, sentences, or paragraphs.

## FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

### ***The Event Caused Eden's Trauma in Amber Smith's The Way I Used To Be***

The event that caused Eden's trauma in Amber Smith's *The Way I Used To Be*, started when a bad night happened to her. The sexual abuse committed by Kevin, who is a friend of Caelin, Eden's older brother, is the only cause of the trauma experienced by Eden. It could be said that the cause of the trauma experienced by Eden was an event that occurred continuously, in the form of sexual abuse. In the incident of sexual abuse, there are components that also trigger the trauma experienced by Eden. Because there is only one cause of trauma experienced by Eden, in this section, the Researcher will focus on analyzing and discussing the causes of trauma and matters related to the causes of trauma experienced by Eden. Several examples of relevant data are shown below.

Datum 1 below is a flashback that shows Eden being very shocked when Kevin's sexual abuse is about to begin.



*I woke up to him climbing on top of me, jabbing his knees into my arms. I thought it was a joke, unfunny to be sure, but still, a joke. I opened my mouth. I tried to speak but only got out "www," the beginning of what. What, what, what is happening, what are you doing? (Datum 1/ p. 229)*

Datum 1 above illustrates that the shock that Eden experienced was the beginning of the formation of a feeling of trauma. The shock that Eden experienced when she began to realize that Kevin was suddenly in front of her face. This made Eden unable to say the words she wanted. Even though at first Eden thought that it was just a joke, it turned out not to be.

Datum 2 below is a flashback that illustrates that Kevin assured Eden that after the sexual abuse incident that happened to her, no one would believe her.

*"Look at me," he whispered. "No one will ever believe you. You know that. No one. Not Ever." (Datum 2/p. 231)*

Datum 2 above illustrates that Kevin indirectly puts Eden under pressure and also reduces her belief that she is not alone in dealing with the days after the bad incident. Kevin's words caused fear in Eden because she was afraid that what Kevin said would actually happen. The pressure is given by Kevin also triggers the trauma inside Eden.

Datum 3 below is a flashback that illustrates that Kevin threatened Eden not to tell anyone what he had done.

*"No one-do you understand? You tell no one," he says with his mouth close to my face. "Or I swear to God. I swear to God, I'll fucking kill you." (Datum 3/p. 232)*

Datum 3 above shows that Kevin not only raped Eden but after that, he gave threats that made Eden even more scared. Kevin even threatened to kill Eden if she told other people about this incident. This made Eden even more tormented.

Datum 4 below describes Eden realizing that the bad incident that happened to her was not a dream.

*And now I know, for sure, it happened. It actually happened. And this pain in the center of my body, the depths of my insides, restarts its torture as if on cue. I throw the covers off. Kneecap-shaped bruises line my arms, my hips, my thighs. And the blood on the sheets, the comforter, my legs. (Datum 4/p. 3)*

Datum 4 above shows that Eden realized that what she experienced did happen. The pain she felt made her think back to the events that so tormented him. The sexual abuse incident that she experienced that night was really a trauma for Eden, so the torment could not be erased from her memory.

Datum 5 below shows when Eden saw Kevin sitting with her family in the dining room, the family who should have been on Eden's side and eased the fear and trauma he felt.

*There he is. Sitting at my kitchen table in my dining room with my brother, my father, my mother, sipping my orange juice from my glass-his mouth on a glass I would have to use someday. On a fork that would soon be undifferentiated from all the other forks. His*

*fingerprints not only all over every inch of me, but all over everything: this house, my life, the world infected with him. (Datum 5/p. 5)*

Datum 5 above describes how Eden's family treats Kevin very well, without knowing what he has done to Eden. Kevin even uses all the things that Eden will later use, such as feeling disgusted and resentful of Kevin, for what has been done to her; now, everything about Kevin is not only in every corner of his house but also imprints on her body and Eden's memory.

***The Way of Eden's Overcome Her Trauma in Amber Smith's The Way I Used To Be***  
***Be honest about something that happened to her***

To be honest about what had happened, it was very difficult for Eden to do. To be able to admit that there has been sexual abuse against her makes Eden feel afraid of other people's responses and reactions. Fear of being hated, as well as fear of having no one on her side, as well as many other fears. And many things happened when Eden tried to tell about what had happened. Below are the things that Eden went through until she finally managed to be honest about what happened. Several examples of relevant data are shown below.

Datum 6 below describes Eden trying to tell her mother what had happened, but her mother assumes that Eden has just had her period because of the bloodstains in her underwear.

*"Mom, I-" But how am I supposed to say the words, the worst words, the ones I know have to be spoken? "Oh, Edy." She sighs, turning her head at me with a sad smile. "It's okay." "Wh-" I start to say. How can it be okay, in what world is this okay? "This happens sometimes when you're not expecting it." She flits around my room, tidying up, barely looking at me while she explains about periods and calendars and counting the days. "It happens to everyone. That's why I told you, you need to keep track. That way you won't have to deal with these...surprises. You can be...prepared." This is what she thinks this is. (Datum 6/p. 4)*

Datum 6 above described when Eden tried to share a bad story about what Kevin had done to her, and her mother was not even given the opportunity to speak. Eden's mother actually had a misunderstanding by thinking that Eden had just had her period, so her mother explained everything about menstruation and said that it was not a shameful problem because it would happen to women entering their teens.

Eden tries to contact Mara to tell her about the bad incident that has happened to her but cancels it, as illustrated in the datum 7 below.

*I don't know how I can possibly go even one more minute without telling someone what happened. I take my phone out of my pocket and start to call Mara. But I stop. (Datum 7/p. 13)*

Datum 7 above describes that Eden thought of telling at least one person to ease her mind about the incident. She intended to call Mara her best friend. However, she cancelled the intention because there was still a feeling of doubt in her heart.

For the second time, Eden felt really ready to tell Mara about the incident, and she invited Mara to go on a weekend, as illustrated in the datum 8 below.

*"Hey, can we do something this weekend?" I finally ask her. "Just us?" I clarify, thinking I really need to just tell her what happened with Kevin. Need to tell someone. And soon. Before I explode. "I can't, I'm with my dad this weekend. Remember, we're going to get my contacts?" So, it will have to wait. (Datum 8/p. 32-33)*

Datum 8 above describes Eden's determination to tell Mara about what had happened to her. The longer Eden keeps the wound to herself, the heavier the burden she will carry. So, she has thought very carefully, asking Mara to go on a weekend, asking for some time alone, just so that he can tell Eden a painful truth before everything explodes like a bomb from her. However, it turns out that Mara has an agenda at the end of the week, so Eden has to wait; who knows when the right time will be for everything to be revealed.

Before she had time to tell Mara about the incident, Eden Again felt afraid to do that, as described in the 9 datum below.

*Why do I feel like after all this time, I still can't tell her, that even she wouldn't believe me, or that if she did, that she would somehow blame me? Why do I feel so completely alone when I'm with her sometimes? Why do I feel like, sometimes, I have no one in the entire world who knows me in even the slightest, most insignificant way? (Datum 9/p.43-44)*

Datum 9 above describes that as a victim of sexual abuse, it is natural for Eden to have a lot of fear; as described in the quote above, how Eden was afraid when she told the truth about what happened to her, Mara would not believe Eden. If Mara believed the story from Eden, she was afraid that Mara would blame herself for what had happened. Besides that, Eden begins to feel that she has no one and feels lonely because just to tell the truth to Mara, who is Eden's best friend, she still feels afraid.

Datum 10 below illustrates, over time, the longer Eden harbored the lie itself, she increasingly felt that someone could care about what had happened to her.

*I need someone. I actually fucking need someone. Need someone now. But I have no one to call- no one. I have left myself with absolutely no one in the world who would ever care about what is happening to me right now. (Datum 10/p. 233)*

Datum 10 above describes that having a lie and also a sense of trauma itself indeed feels very heavy for Eden, as described in the quote above. Eden needs someone to share, but as time goes by, she loses the people closest to her, thus making Eden confused and did not know whom to contact at that time. Even Eden felt she had no one who would care about what happened to her.

#### *Overcome her feelings of guilt and shame*

Overcoming feelings of guilt and shame that Eden has not yet done to overcome her trauma, Eden can only harbor hatred for herself, for the bad incident that Kevin did to her. Apart from that, Eden only feels that she is the one who deserves to be blamed for what happened to her. Datum 11 below describes the feelings of hatred that Eden keeps to herself.



*Most of that hate, though, I save for me. No matter what anyone else did or didn't do, it was ultimately me who gave them permission. I'm the one who's lying. The coward too afraid to just stop pretending. (Datum 11/p. 44)*

Datum 11 above illustrates that in this case, Eden still has not been able to overcome her guilt feelings; in fact, she harbors a hatred for herself, as quoted above. Eden feels that she is the one who deserves to be blamed for what happened to her. Because she gave permission for what happened to Kevin. And Eden feels that she is a liar and is afraid to just stop pretending.

#### *Get herself ready for disappointing flashbacks and memories*

To overcome her trauma, Eden also uses a way to be ready when remembering what Kevin did to Eden and various ways Eden did it when bad memories of events he didn't want to come back to her mind. Eden always had a way when flashbacks about those disappointing memories flashed through her mind. Below are the things Eden did to overcome the flashbacks of the bad events that had occurred in overcoming her trauma. Several examples of relevant data are shown below.

Datum 12 below describes how Eden tries to suggest herself forget and ignore her trauma about the bad incident that happened to her.

*Telling myself: Squeeze your eyelids shut, try, just try to forget. Try to ignore all the things that didn't feel right, all the things that felt like they would never feel right again. Ignore the taste in your mouth, the sticky dampness of the sheets, the fire radiating through your thighs, the nauseating pain-this bulletlike thing that ripped through you and got lodged in your gut somehow. No, can't cry. Because there's nothing to cry about. Because it was just a dream, a bad dream-a nightmare. Not real. Not real. Not real. That's what I keep thinking: NotRealNotRealNotReal. Repeat, repeat, repeat. Like a mantra. Like a prayer. (Datum 12/p. 2)*

Datum 12 above illustrates that suggesting herself as Eden did in the quote above, trying to convince herself that the bad incident was not real. And trying to strengthen herself, to forget the pain all over his body, by continuously repeating calming sentences as one of Eden's ways to overcome her trauma of sexual abuse by Kevin.

Datum 13 below describes Eden, who wants to return to her life before the incident happens.

*If anyone is going to be allowed to start over, it would be me, and I would start over at that night in my bedroom. But since that's not possible, (Datum 13/p. 76)*

Datum 13 above illustrates that remembering the events that night made Eden want to repeat her life starting before the events of that night occurred, as described in the quote above. If given the opportunity to repeat life, Eden is a person who really wants to repeat it, hopes that everything will be fine, and can change everything that happened, especially for what happened to Kevin that night. However, Eden receives a flashback that she feels caused by her trauma and realizes that what she wants is simply something that is impossible to happen.

*Reconnect to her body and feelings*

To reconnect Eden with her body and feelings, there are several ways that are negative behaviors that Eden uses to overcome her trauma. Eden tends to escape into negative fantasy-related things because she thinks doing these things can make her forget the trauma she has experienced. Below are the things that Eden did in connecting herself to the body as well as feelings to overcome her trauma. Several examples of relevant data are shown below.

Datum 14 below, Eden tries to overcome her trauma by returning to her former self.

*And I'm trying so hard to just go back to my life. The way it used to be. The way I used to be.  
(Datum 14/p. 14)*

Datum 14 above illustrates that trying to return to a life where the sexual abuse incident had not occurred, trying to be Eden's former self, which was fine, is Eden's way of dealing with her trauma, as described in the quote above. She thought that by returning to her old self, he would be able to feel better than she felt at that time. Trying to reconnect with herself and her life before the incident happened.

Eden also overcomes her trauma by reconnecting to her body as well as her feelings by numbing the sensation of unpleasant things in unhelpful ways, as illustrated in the datum 15 below.

*Except for the small detail about me smoking every single day with Mara, and bowling all the back-to-school money they gave me to buy too many clothes at the mall and make-up and hair products, but not school supplies, like they wanted. (Datum 15/p. 42)*

Datum 15 above illustrates that after that incident, Eden turned into a smoker woman. She smoked every day with Mara and no longer prioritized school as before, as described in the quote above. Eden prefers to spend the money given to her by his parents for fun, such as buying clothes, make-up, and others. This was done by Eden as a means of escaping from the trauma she felt so as not to keep remembering what Kevin had done to her.

Apart from that, Eden also overcomes her trauma by drinking beer, as described in the datum below.

*I bring the bottle to my mouth and finish off half the beer in one gulp. (Datum 16/p. 136)*

Datum 16 above illustrates that to ease the burden of her trauma, Eden has changed herself a lot. Including changing herself into negative behavior, such as drinking beer, as described in the quote above. Drinking beer became one of Eden's escape places to calm down so as not to remember the bad event. Reducing the fear and stress caused by the trauma of sexual abuse that Kevin did to her.

Datum 17 below illustrates that Eden has also consumed marijuana to refresh her mind from the trauma she experienced.

*In a way, that feels so much better than drinking too much, or even that night at the playground when we got high. (Datum 17/p. 151)*

Datum 17 above illustrates that it turned out that not only by smoking and drinking beer, but Eden also tried to overcome her trauma by consuming marijuana. As quoted above, Eden said that night she had drunk too much beer and was drunk with marijuana at the playground. To connect with her body and feelings, Eden uses fantasy methods, doing things that are also negative. But usually, overcoming trauma with negative behavior only brings about a temporary calm and doesn't last long, as Eden did.

#### *Stay connected with her friends*

To overcome her trauma, Eden also uses ways to maintain her relationship with her friends. In fact, she changed a lot of things to look attractive in front of her friends. Eden tries to improve her socialization with her friends. Below are ways that Eden uses to stay connected in dealing with her trauma.

Datum 18 below describes how Eden tries to establish good socialization during the selection of lab partners.

*I quickly turn to the girl next to me and smile, as if to say: I'm friendly, I'm normal, smart-I'd be a great lab partner. She smiles back (Datum 18/p. 47).*

Datum 18 above illustrates that Eden shows herself as a good lab partner, a normal human, and also smart to attract the attention of her friends at school, as described in the quote above. By smiling at the girl next to her, she hoped that she would choose Eden as her lab partner. The changes that Eden made to overcome her trauma were considered totality so that she could again attract the attention of her friends to improve socialization that was not good before.

#### *Take care of herself*

To overcome her trauma, Eden also uses ways to take care of herself. Eden kept herself from lamenting over what had happened. In addition, Eden also protects herself from people who try to bring down her mentality and hurt her heart. Below are some of the things Eden does in order to take care of herself. Several examples of relevant data are shown below.

Datum 19 below describes Eden overcoming her trauma by keeping herself from lamenting the wounds on her body.

*Careful not to stare too hard at the fading gray bruises that still line my thighs. Careful not to dwell too long on the bruises on my hip bones and ribs. They'll be gone soon, anyway (Datum 19/p. 29).*

Datum 19 above illustrates that Eden struggled to fight the pain in his body; she turned her attention away from the bruises and wounds on her body. Eden prevented herself from daydreaming and lingering when she saw the bruises on her body. Because

staring at wounds and bruises for too long can make Eden keep remembering what happened to her, it can exacerbate the trauma she experienced.

Datum 20 below illustrates Eden has the idea of renewing herself.

*and I think maybe I can change too. Maybe I can become someone I can actually stand (Datum 20/p. 40).*

Datum 20 above illustrates that to overcome her trauma, Eden has a plan to change herself. By changing herself, Eden hopes to have a new life too and to forget the events that have managed to disrupt her. She hopes to turn herself into someone she will like, no matter what it turns out to be.

Datum 21 below describes Eden's attitude, which ignores insults from her schoolmates.

*I try to be cool, ignore it, let it roll off me. Plenty of girls at school hate me, think I'm trashy, worry about their boyfriends. I'm not blind, I'm not deaf, either. I see the way they watch me like I'm dangerous, hear the way they talk about me, their smirks behind cupped hands and their whispers. I'm used to it. (Datum 21/p. 182)*

Datum 21 above illustrates that Eden overcomes her trauma by protecting herself from people who try to bring her down mentally. Eden ignores and tries to remain calm in the face of a situation where many people consider her trash and hate her, as illustrated in the quote above. Whatever people say about Eden, she just stays silent and doesn't reply or respond to anything. Eden behaved like that because she felt that she was used to such things. To maintain herself mentally, Eden tries to ignore everything that will have a bad effect on her.

Datum 22 below describes Eden, who had a plan to change for the better, but it didn't go according to plan.

*The plan was to get better, to feel better, by any means. But I don't feel better, I feel empty, empty and broken, still. (Datum 22/p. 203)*

Datum 22 above illustrates that the trauma experienced by Eden made her have the desire to change for the better. However, Eden's desire to overcome her trauma by changing for the better did not materialize, as has been described in the quote above. Eden felt broken and not even better at all. Even now, she feels empty and empty.

## CONCLUSION & SUGGESTION

Trauma is presented in the novel *The Way I Used To Be*, in which Eden is the main character. According to the novel, Eden must experience trauma in her youth. The results of this study revealed that the cause of the trauma experienced by Eden was sexual abuse and threats after a sexual abuse committed by Kevin, her brother's best friend.

Another finding in this research is Eden's way of dealing with the trauma she experienced. To overcome her trauma, Eden did several ways. There are ways that lead to

the positive, and there are also ways that lead to the negative. Eden's ways are as follows: Be honest about something that happened, overcoming feelings of guilt and shame, get ready for disappointing flashbacks and memories reconnect to body and feelings, stay connected, and take care of yourself.

Based on research and discussion, the novel entitled *The Way I Used To Be* by Amber Smith can be used as an illustration of how to deal with trauma well. It can be learned that sometimes when you are traumatized, something that shouldn't be done looks more interesting to do as an escape, when in fact, it will cause feelings of regret in the end. Apart from dealing with trauma, this novel also describes how the personality of Eden's character changes after the sexual abuse. For this reason, readers can use this novel as research material with topics other than trauma issues, such as how the personality changes of Eden's character after sexual abuse occurred.

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