

LITERARY LEGACY AND PSYCHOLOGICAL THEMES: STATISTICAL PATTERNS IN THE SELECT SUSPENSE THRILLER NOVELS OF SIDNEY SHELDON AND TILLY BAGSHAWE

Kavita Dubey

Ph. D. Scholar, Enrolment- AH23LN601001, Department of Languages, Medi-Caps University, Indore, Assistant Professor, Humanities Department, Acropolis Institute of Technology and Research, Indore, Email Id: k16.jan@gmail.com, ah23ln601001@medicaps.ac.in, kavitadubey@acropolis.in,

Dr Prachi Sathe

Assistant Professor, Department of Languages, Medi-Caps University, Indore
Email Id: prachi.sathe@medicaps.ac.in

Abstract

Readers are always arrested by the indepth inquiry of suspense thriller novels in complexness of psychology, trauma and shattered self. This paper presents a statistical research study of the themes of trauma, dissociation and multiple identity in the selected eight novels of Sidney Sheldon and Tilly Bagshawe in order to investigate how these psychological aspects are employed and utilised by the authors to fabricate a gripping story that transcend the readers immediately into another world of heightened emotions, anxiety and surprise. Through the quantitative content analysis and statistical visualization methods, this paper explores the pattern of frequency of psychological themes, diligently handled by the authors in their narratives and how these themes resound in the readers' mind on varied levels. The present research traces out five major and primary classes of psychological themes namely trauma (45.4%), psychological manipulation (20%), identity crisis (15.8%), memory loss theme (11.8%) and dissociation mentions (7%). Although these primary findings disagree with notions of artistic consistency, they additionally exhibit a strangely and surprisingly weak relationship between psychological themes across all the eight novels, a moderate lexical correlation between thematic vocabulary and an apparent variation in the average usage of major themes between the writers involved, this research paper underlines the successful continuation of Sidney Sheldon's legacy by Tilly Bagshawe by comparing and contrasting the frequency of thematic mentions in the novels of both the writers, highlighting the evolution of themes in the process of legacy following. This research study also strengthens the idea that the craft of storytelling in the suspense thriller genre can be lighted up in the field of literary research by the way of quantitative analysis.

Keywords: Statistical analysis, correlation analysis, literary legacy, suspense thriller, dissociation, mental manipulation.

Introduction

It is through language and plot structure's unmatched power only that readers are transported into a different realm of psychological tensions, complex emotions, unpredictability and doubt. The suspense thriller art form of novels maintains an exclusive position in the extensive field of mainstream literature as an aesthetic setting for an investigation into the minds of humans under pressure. In the world of suspense thriller novels, word choices and diction not only serve

to build an interesting and arresting narratives but also prepare a beautiful track to navigate complicated themes like trauma, dissociation and fractured identity (Jaber 114-125). This research paper inquires statistical regularity of psychological themes in the most famous suspense thriller novelist Sidney Sheldon and his officially sanctioned successor, Tilly Bagshawe, who continues the literary legacy of Sidney Sheldon after his demise.

The novels of Sidney Sheldon have always been unprecedented for their unmatched and harmonious amalgamation of suspense, thrill, psychological profundity and narrative modes. His heroines tend to be powerful personalities dealing with challenging surroundings alongside grave tensions and emotions caused by complicated mental barriers as well as previous traumatic situations mirroring their exterior hardships. Tilly Bagshawe, a British novelist was appointed for the formidable task of writing new novels featuring Sheldon's iconic characters and emulating his signature style by continuing his legacy after his demise in 2007. This legacy following creates an opportunity to explore how psychological themes are developed and carried on by another author within the same literary tradition. Even after noticing that adequate attention has been given to the narratives and themes of suspense thriller fiction, there is still some gap remaining in the field of quantitative analysis of psychological themes and their statistical consistency across the selected works.

This study attempts to fill the gap through data analysis of trauma, dissociation and multiple identity themes in the selected novels of Sidney Sheldon and Tilly Bagshawe and presents observational evidence of the literary experiences and facts which we usually examine through qualitative methods. The quantification of incidences, occurrences, arrangement and usage of psychological themes in the selected texts, uncover in-depth understanding of how these novelists build up incomparable narratives which not only entertain the readers but also compel them to dive deep into the psychological realm of human mind.

The present investigation employs a hybrid methodology merging quantitative measures with qualitative interpretation of psychological dimensions situated within their narrative settings, permitting a greater, more thorough understanding of these writings. By focusing on texts which span both writers' thriller genre involvement, the study traces out how psychological depth is preserved and developed throughout successive stages of this artistic lineage. The central inquiry explores: Which are the prevalent psychological elements frequently employed by Sheldon and Bagshawe? Are there significant configurations in the deployment of trauma, dissociation and identity motifs concepts? In what manner do these empirical structures play in strengthening the thematic substance and psychological believability of the narrative frameworks? The study's outcomes contribute innovative viewpoints for both literature researchers and psychological science scholars exploring the convergence of mental health issues, textual studies and mainstream cultural phenomena.

Methodology

This scholarly work applies a dual approach framework that prioritizes quantitative examination to rigorously study psychological theme usage throughout eight fictional works by Sidney Sheldon and Tilly Bagshawe. By statistically evaluating designated psychological factors and interpreting their literary functions, the present investigation aims to unearth trends that amplify both writers' expertise in representing trauma, dissociation and complex identity concepts.

Corpus Selection

Eight fictions have been chosen to be the primary materials for evaluation as they encompass the two writers' strategies towards the psychological thriller narratives in an accurate way while maintaining broad themes and orderly connections.

Sidney Sheldon Novels

- *The Other Side of Midnight* (1973)
- *Master of the Game* (1982)
- *If Tomorrow Comes* (1985)
- *Memories of Midnight* (1990)

Tilly Bagshawe Novels

- *Mistress of the Game* (2009)
- *Chasing Tomorrow* (2014)
- *Reckless* (2015)
- *The Phoenix* (2022)

These texts were digitally converted and underwent computational analysis tools to facilitate methodical quantitative assessment.

Psychological Themes Analysed

This investigation emphasizes five core psychological categories discovered through preliminary examination and extensive trauma related literature survey (Herman 38; Vissia et al. 111-128). Because of the prevalence of them throughout the genre, the following subjects have been selected:

- **Trauma References:** Alludes to traumatic incidents, psychological wounds and their persistent impacts, both direct and indirect. The medical knowledge that trauma constitutes a fundamental psychological event which redefines personas and sense of self is the foundation for this group of events.

A physical and mental reaction to highly unpleasant or troubling circumstances that exceeds one's capacity for adapting and impacts their perception of individuality, comfort and security and self worth is called psychological trauma. Medically, disturbing collections, aversions, distressing state of mind and heightened senses tend to be the manifestations of the trauma (American Psychiatric Association 141-154).

- **Dissociation Mentions:** References to altered state of mind, forgetfulness, detachment and loss of reality. It corresponds to the clinical research that cognitive dissociation is the main safeguard system in reaction to the massive traumatic experiences.

A breakdown in the natural functioning of memory, cognition, individuality, sensation and conduct. It covers serious disorders like dissociative identity disorder in addition to subtle disconnections (daydreaming). It is frequently used as an armor against severe trauma (American Psychiatric Association 155-160).

- **Identity Crisis Themes:** Narrative investigation of tortuous procedure of figuring out oneself or rebirth, diverse identities, fragmented self image and profound confusion over identity.

The term identity issues strongly suggests an inconsistent perception about oneself or perceived worth which usually shows up in personality issues or trauma associated circumstances. A pair or more psychological states of mind alongside fluctuations in sense of agency and autobiographical memory are indicative of dissociative identity disorder (American Psychiatric Association 321-332; Erikson 17).

- **Psychological Manipulation:** Various kinds of psychological exploitation which are vital to the role of power in thriller fictions include manipulation of emotions, hypocrisy and psychological intimidation. While psychological manipulation, which includes tactics such as gaslighting and coercive control, is not a DSM Diagnosis but it is officially recognized in clinical psychology as an emotional assault strategy. It destroys the victim's awareness of realism, diminishes their trust in themselves and makes them relying on those who have abused them (Dorpat 3-5).
- **Memory Loss Motifs:** The application of memory related narrative techniques including deliberate memory loss, suppressed memories and amnesia to increase anxiety and convey the mental effort at dealing with trauma.

The main feature of dissociative memory loss is the failure to retrieve crucial autobiographical particulars, commonly involving distressing or traumatic events that are unable to be accounted for by normal forgetting or neurological damage. This might show up as focused, generalised and localised amnesia (American Psychiatric Association 285-319).

Analytical Tools and Procedure

This study implemented dual approaches incorporating computer based analytical instruments and hand annotated coding procedures:

Quantitative Analysis: Occurrence counting of theme related vocabulary and expressions via corpus based linguistic applications and data analysis incorporating average computation, correlation assessment (Pearson's r), and significance evaluation through R statistical tools. An inter-writer comparison applying independent t-test analysis and correlational matrix array.

Qualitative Interpretation: Contextual review of characteristic passages highlighting each psychological concept. Examination of thematic integration within narrative architecture and character progression. Appraisal of thematic uniformity and advancement across the literary corpus.

Statistical Framework

Data collection encompassed:

- Thematic occurrence tallies per literary work and writer.
- Proportional allocations throughout psychological category systems.
- Relationship analysis through correlation study among various psychological motifs.
- Comparative statistical testing of Sidney Sheldon versus Tilly Bagshawe novels
- Representation via graphs and charts to showcase recurring thematic configurations.

Limitations

The present research recognizes certain methodological boundaries. Psychological motifs possess situational intricacy and may shift in interpretation across varied readers and cultural perspectives. Though automated systems boost impartiality and consistency, human analysis stays fundamental for recognizing nuanced psychological portrayals that surpass basic lexical frequency enumeration.

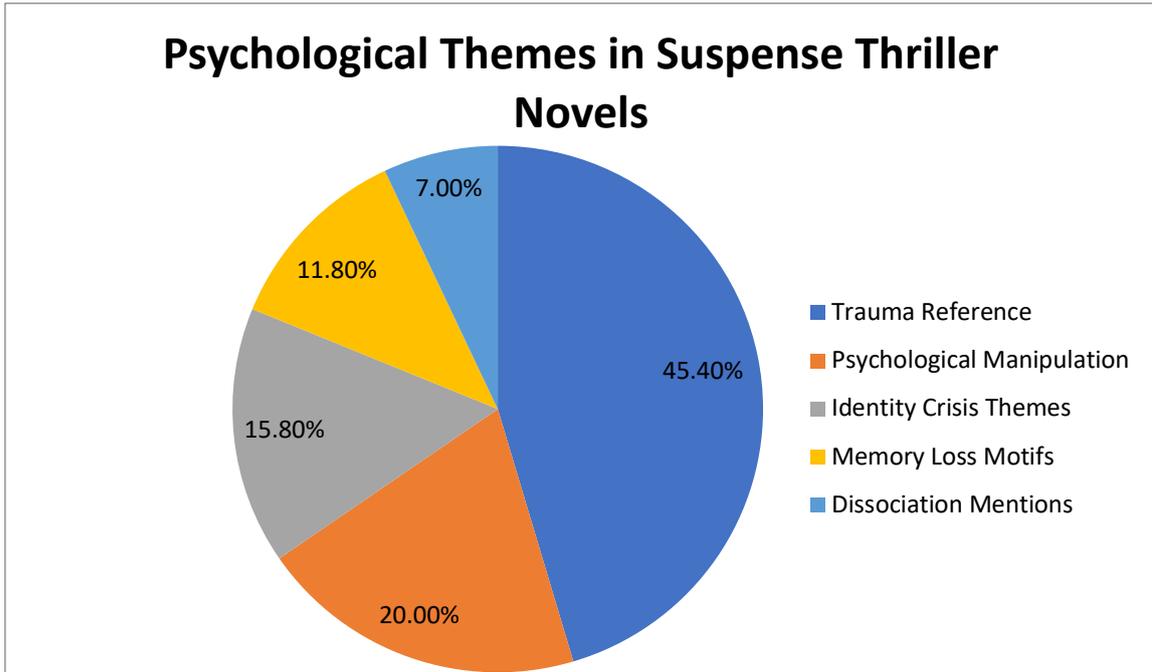
Result and Discussion

1. The Thematic Distribution and Frequency Analysis

The statistical examination shows prominent trends in the placement of psychological concepts all through these eight novels. The trauma elements form a major theme, making up 45.4% of all psychological sections, with an overall score of 452 instances, approximately 56.5% references in each novel on average. This dominance matches alongside trauma theory studies, which indicates that horrific and traumatic incidents serve as the core component of psychological suspense thriller storylines (Caruth 16; Balaev 14-16). It shows that the impact of trauma is not just a minor plot aspect but instead the skeleton onto which the mental growth of the lead characters is constructed.

Thematic Distribution Overview:

Theme Category	Total Occurrences	Percentage	Average Per Novel
Trauma References	452	45.4	56.5
Psychological Manipulation	199	20.0	24.9
Identity Crisis Themes	157	15.8	19.6
Memory Loss Motifs	118	11.8	14.8
Dissociation Mentions	70	7.0	8.8



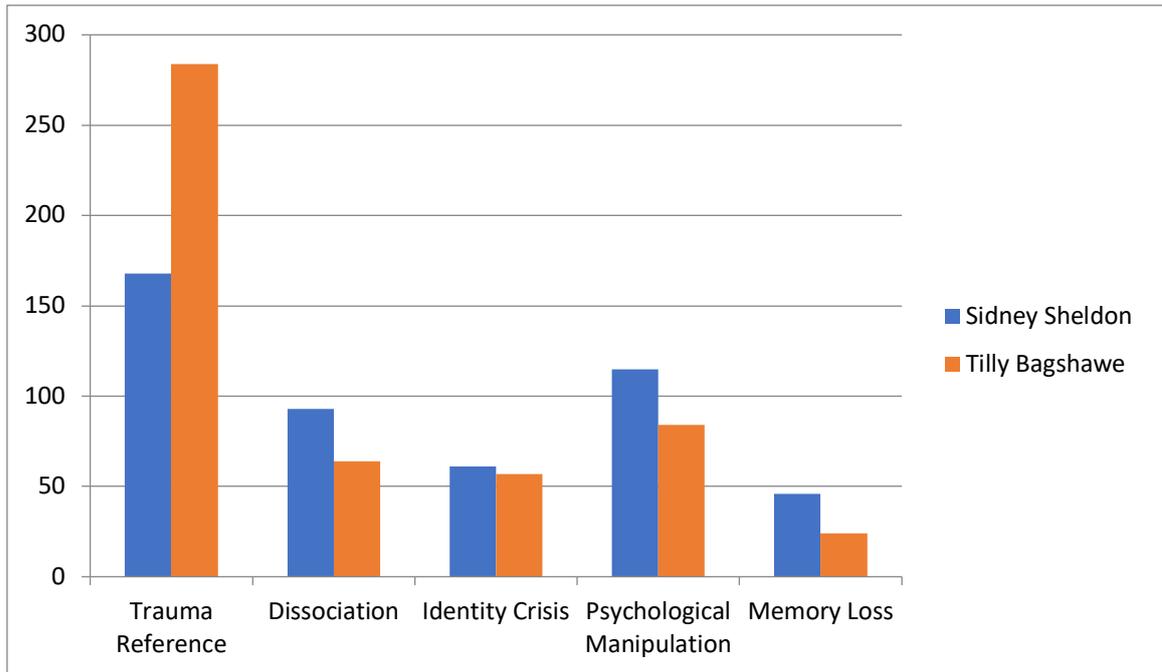
Psychological Themes and Their Presentations in Sheldon and Bagshawe Fictions

The subsequent most prevalent theme (20.0%) is manipulative psychology and this is a reflection of the genre’s attention to interactions between power dynamics and mental threat and violence as vital elements of plot. Both of the authors thoughtful approach to behavioural patterns of characters is visible in the surprisingly frequent appearances of identity crisis themes (15.8%) and memory loss mentions (11.8%), and this expands these novels deeper than shallow suspense and anxiety to address significant concerns of one’s identity and sense of self.

2. Comparative Analysis Between Authors

Bagshawe’s highly admirable sequel and revival of Sidney Sheldon’s artistic style and strategy is confirmed by an empirical comparison between the two novelists, which not just reveals unique revival but significant and remarkable thematic evolution in subject matter handling. The following statistical table suggests that both the authors emphasize various aspects of psychological encounter regardless of the fact that they are dealing with the identical core content:

Author	Trauma Reference	Dissociation	Identity Crisis	Psychological Manipulation	Memory Loss Motifs
Sidney Sheldon	168	93	61	115	46
Tilly Bagshawe	284	64	57	84	24



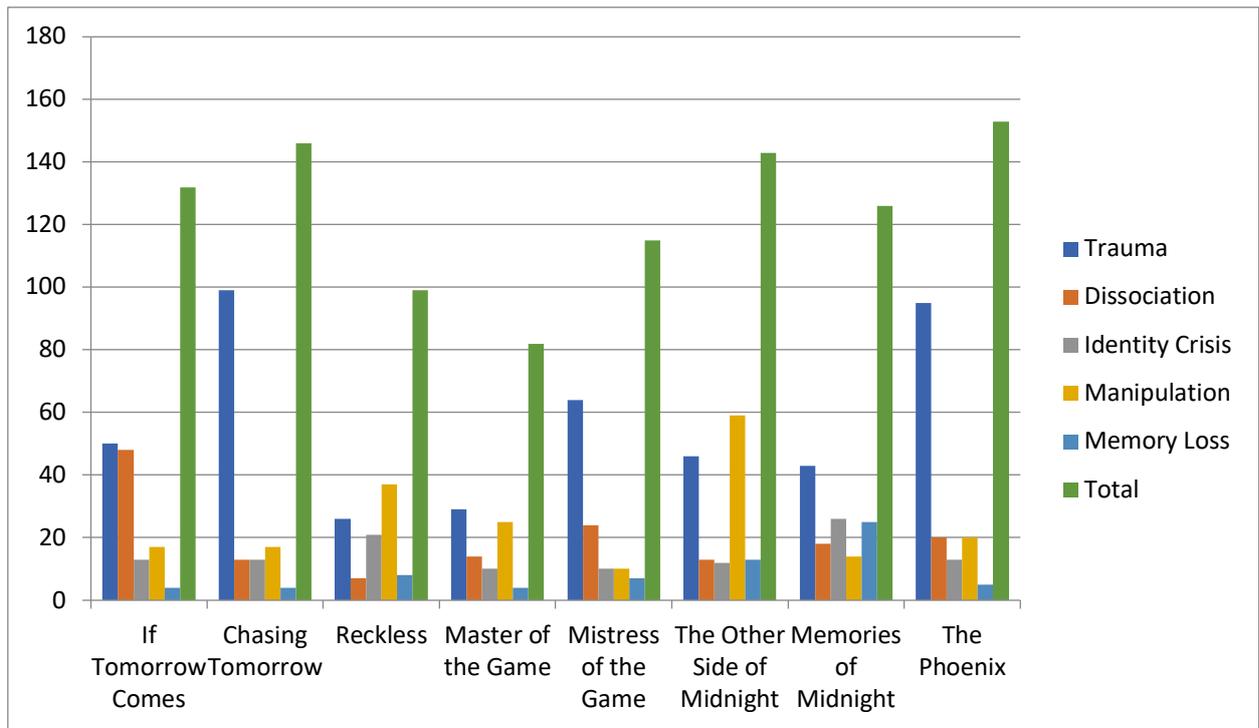
Comparative Investigation of Psychological Concerns Deployed by the Authors

The result is an apparent distinction in the writers’ fields of focus as the incidents in each of their four novels are averaged together. The descriptive data nonetheless display an obvious disparity in creative preferences of thematic handling, although a formal t-test analysis discloses that these variations fall short of the standard threshold criteria for statistically significant differences ($p > 0.05$) and this possibly a result of small sample size. With an average frequency of 71.0 per novel in comparison to Sheldon’s usage that is 42.0, Bagshawe incorporates trauma theme substantially more regularly, pointing to an even more current and close connection with the concept of trauma as such. On the contrary, subject matters associated with psychological handling of trauma have been more prevalent with an average in Sheldon’s writings: Memory Loss theme (11.5 vs. 6.0), Identity crisis (15.25 vs. 14.25), Mental manipulation (28.8 vs. 21.0) and Dissociation mention (23.3 vs. 16.0). The notion that Bagshawe has altered his legacy by redirecting the narrative interests from the personal, constantly perplexing after effects of trauma toward a more comprehensive presentation of traumatic incidents and their psychological outcomes is backed by this noteworthy shift in authorial intent, nevertheless of the p value.

3. Novel Specific Distribution Patterns

These thematic rhythms are not unified, more accurately they are carefully adjusted in order to satisfy the distinctive demands associated with each story, based on to the research carried out at individual novel level. The data clarifies how the author strategically employs psychological themes to further improve the emotional effect created by the narrative:

Novel	Trauma	Dissociation	Identity Crisis	Manipulation	Memory Loss	Total
<i>If Tomorrow Comes</i>	50	48	13	17	4	132
<i>Chasing Tomorrow</i>	99	13	13	17	4	146
<i>Reckless</i>	26	7	21	37	8	99
<i>Master of the Game</i>	29	14	10	25	4	82
<i>Mistress of the Game</i>	64	24	10	10	7	115
<i>The Other Side of Midnight</i>	46	13	12	59	13	143
<i>Memories of Midnight</i>	43	18	26	14	25	126
<i>The Phoenix</i>	95	20	13	20	5	153



The Persistence of Trauma-Informed Issues Throughout the Eight Thriller Novels

For instance, Tilly Bagshawe’s *Chasing Tomorrow* possesses the greatest amount of trauma mentions (99), making it suitable as a sequel which specifically emphasizes lasting impact of the devastating events on the central figure. On the other hand, *If Tomorrow Comes* by Sheldon encompasses a record score for mentions of dissociation (48), which indicates the main character’s mental disconnect as a means of dealing with unfair treatment and adversity. Likewise, in *The Other Side of Midnight* the key narrative theme is psychological manipulation (59), whilst its sequel *Memories of Midnight* suitably has a greater number of memory loss motifs (25) and identity crisis theme (26).

4. Correlation Analysis and Thematics Integration

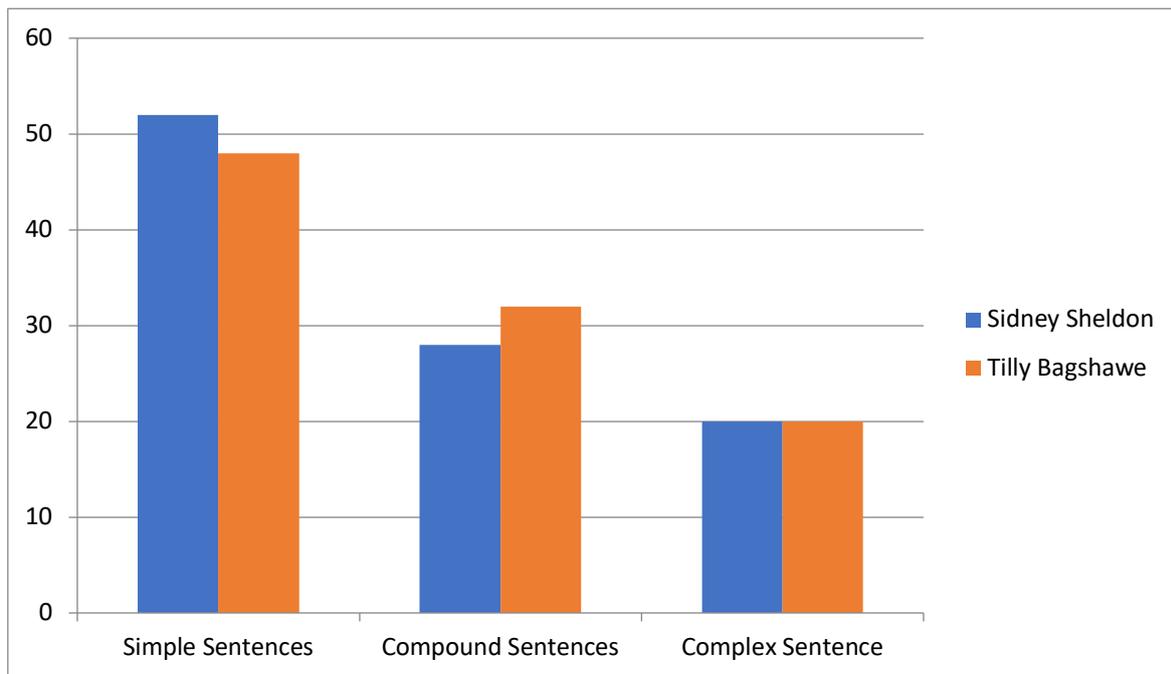
The most unanticipated results are obtained through correlational analysis which evaluates the propensity of themes to come together in combination and effectively puts down the idea of strongly interconnected psychological thematic networks. The five selected psychological subject matters under study have been observed having insufficient and predominantly weak positive correlation with each other, proving how they are employed carefully and effectively autonomously as opposed to as a seamless and interdependent arrangement. Identity crisis and memory loss mentions possess a strong positive correlation ($r=0.763$) which is in fact a bit more than a mediocre one. It also makes obvious sense as an individual’s identity issues can often directly result in their lack of memory or memory related issues. The correlation between memory loss mentions and mental manipulation is just $r=0.096$, a stark contrast which reveals that these subject matters operate independently. Further more shocking is the extremely weak positive correlation $r=0.087$ between dissociation and trauma themes. The writer’s perspective on psychological realistic storytelling is greatly affected by how they choose to depict dissociation and trauma as two different independent narrative variables instead of clinically and technically dependent cause and effect combination that someone may think of, as demonstrated by this extremely weak positive statistical correlation.

5. Narrative Structure and Linguistic Patterns

Added evidence of stylistic variations is found in the fictions’ foundational linguistic framework. Despite discernible variances, both the authors under study embrace a balanced approach in the usage of three basic types of sentence structures in building their dramatic scaffolding.

Sentence Structure Distribution:

Author	Simple %	Compound %	Complex %
Sidney Sheldon	52	28	20
Tilly bagshawe	48	32	20



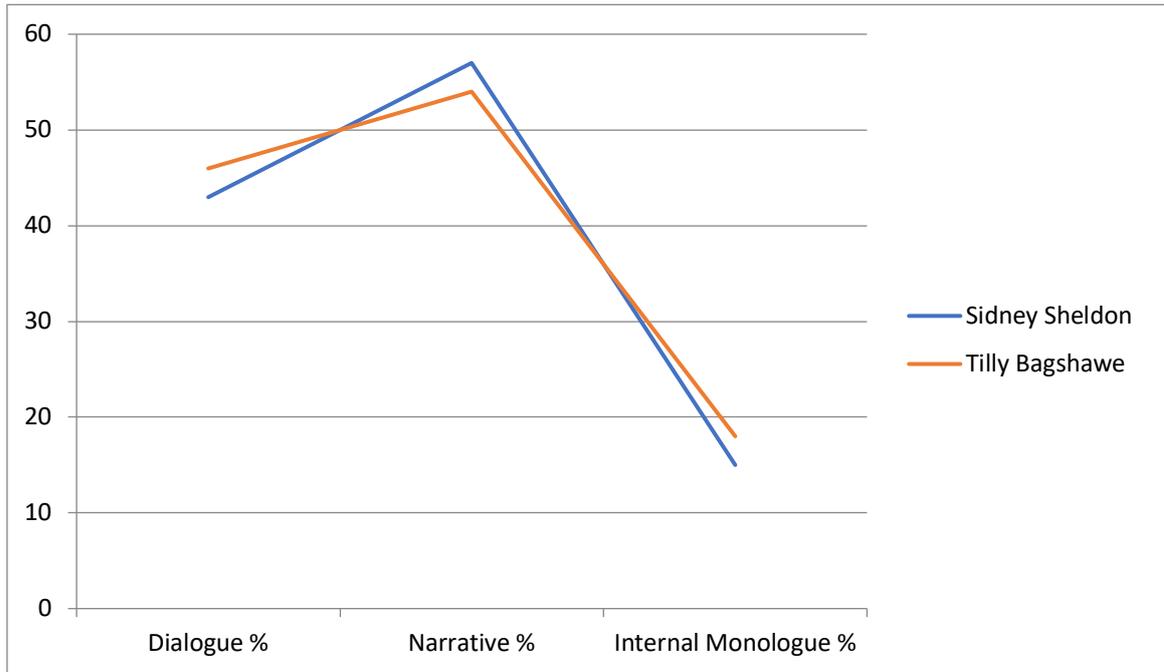
Graphical Representation of Usage of Simple, Compound and Complex Sentences in the Novels of Sheldon and Bagshawe

Sheldon holds onto his psychological profundity whilst making his works available to a broader demographic audience simply due to his more frequent use of simple sentences (52%). Bagshawe adopts a bit more complicated plot structuring, yet preserves readership, as proven by the rise of compound sentences (32%) and consequently makes it possible to present more than one idea in a single sentence. A uniform strategy to complicated psychological descriptions, representations and illustrations is provided by the two novelists’ similar and equivalent incorporations of complex sentences (20%).

Dialogue Analysis:

Novel Type	Dialogue %	Narrative %	Internal Monologue %
Sidney Sheldon	43	57	15

Tilly Bagshawe	46	54	18
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Line Graph Representation of Dialogue, Narrative and Internal Monologue Percentage in Both the Writers’ Works Under Study

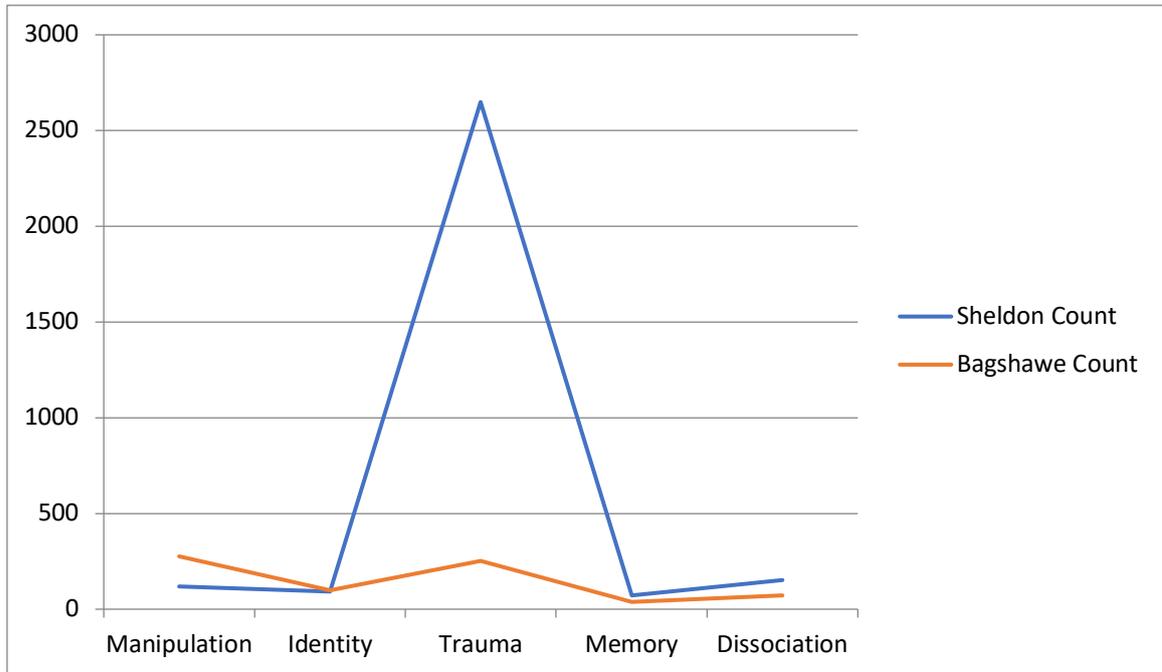
Bagshawe’s greater inclusion of internal monologues (18% vs. 15%) and a little greater dialogue percentage (46% vs. 43%) suggest an effort in direction of greater character-centered mental, behavioural and philosophical inquiry whilst safeguarding Sheldon’s key narrative structural balance.

6. Thematic Vocabulary and Psychological Authenticity

A review of specific psychology related terms and expressions illuminates these writers’ extensive knowledge of psychological themes. This demonstrates an important distinction in the writers’ choice of vocabulary and furnishes proof against artistic consistency but makes the advancement and skillful utilization of specific vocabulary and phrases by Bagshawe, in the job of legacy continuation, visible as well:

Theme Related Vocabulary

Themes	Sheldon Count	Bagshawe Count
Manipulation	120	276
Identity	91	99
Trauma	2649	253
Memory	72	38
Dissociation	152	73



Representation of Theme Related Vocabulary Employed by Sheldon and Bagshawe on Line Graph

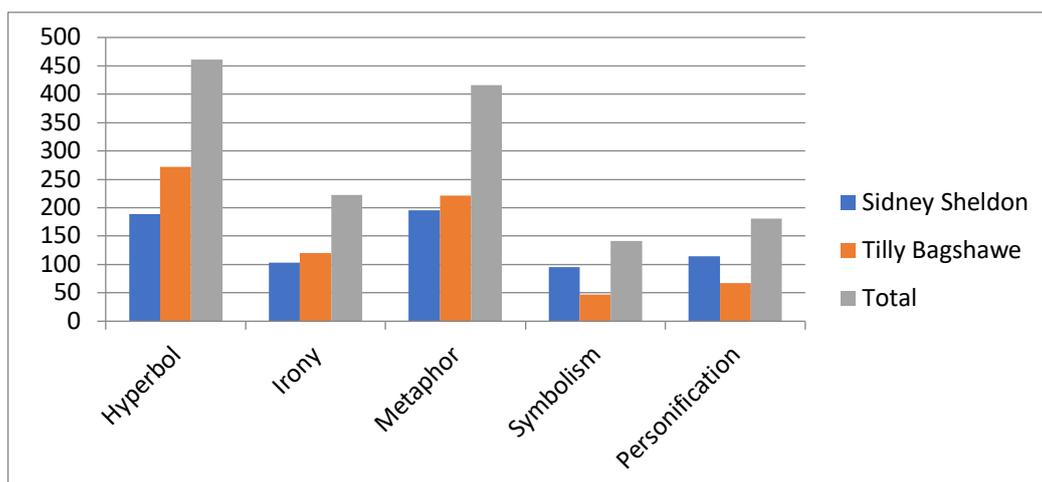
The utilization of these five types of theme related vocabulary by Sheldon and Bagshawe has a correlation $r = 0.546$. This simply implies a moderate positive connection. The biggest disparity lies in the usage of the trauma related terms with the evidence that the count of Sheldon’s usage is ten times more than Bagshawe. On the contrary, Bagshawe’s use of manipulation theme related vocabulary is clearly twice more. The above quantitative data depicts with clarity that although both the authors deal with the same kinds of themes, their handling of theme related vocabulary is distinguished and exhibits evolution and continuity both.

7. Literary Device Integration

Further evidence of change and advancement of style between Sheldon and Bagshawe can be clearly seen through the following analysis of occurrences of literary devices shown in the form of statistical table. As both the authors utilizes these narrative devices considerably in order to reinforce psychological subject matters embedded in their story, the statistical table demonstrates the variation in the usage noticeably:

Literary Device Usage:

Device	Sheldon Average	Bagshawe Average	Combined Total
Hyperbol	189	272	461
Irony	103	120	223
Metaphor	195	221	416
Symbolism	95	47	142
Personification	114	67	181



Representation of Usage of Literary Devices by Both the Writers on Column Graph

All in all, all these devices are employed over 1400 times, which eventually underlines their importance to both the authors' narrative approaches. This distribution is uneven and shows two main distinctions in style of their utilization:

- The difference in Bagshawe's and Sheldon's usage of hyperbol literary device that is 272 vs. 189 instances. The way she makes use of exaggeration to heighten the mental and emotional implications of external disputes and tensions fits in alongside her increasingly honest and compelling narrative techniques.
- On the other hand, Sidney Sheldon deploys symbolism and personification more which is (95 vs. 47) and (114 vs. 67) respectively. His fondness for deeper, more complex and conceptual approaches to interpretation backs his focus on his fictional characters' internal and cognitive landscapes and during this whole process the implication of meaning is often hidden and the surroundings correlate with the internal regions of human mind.

Whilst the use of irony and metaphor can be juxtaposed for comparison. The differences in the deployment of exaggeration and symbolism furnish extra statistical backing for the research papers' main findings. Thus it is clear that Bagshawe is not just simply copying the style of Sheldon's artistic techniques of presenting suspense and thrill but actually incorporates her own distinctive array of creative instruments to evolve and advance Sheldon's legacy.

Conclusion

As per the findings of this empirical study, the novels of Sheldon and Bagshawe have an extensive, measurable and verifiable basis that involves trauma, dissociation and multiple identity themes. This investigation reveals that the human mind's psychological depth in the literary works displays apparent associations that are open to quantification, comparative study, appraisal and assessment using precise and sophisticated mathematical data analysis.

The triumphant revival of Sheldon's aesthetic heritage via Bagshawe's novels is supported by significant and unique results indicating that the later novelist dealt with psychological subjects and themes with amazing and extraordinary thematic evolution, not stylistic replication. Literary legacy carryover may sustain concepts of themes and its originality whilst facilitating advancement and modifications as confirmed and illustrated quantitatively because of the weak correlation between writers throughout all assessed domains namely trauma mentions, dissociation references, identity crisis themes, psychological manipulation and memory loss motifs.

These discoveries present a captivating view where established literary heritage is reconstructed for today's generation readers. Statistical evidence including moderate correlation between theme related vocabulary ($r=0.546$), opposing tendencies in theme deployment, insufficient thematic synthesis across the works, provide concrete statistical proof that while preserving Sheldon's core storytelling essence, the stylistic execution has undergone considerable evolution. The high frequency of trauma mentions (45.4 %) and mental manipulation (20.0%) indicates genre's clear engagement with these subject matters but the weak internal thematic linkages reveal a compositional logic that privileges discrete, focused portraits of distinct mental states over a richly interwoven constellation of clinical symptoms. Methodologically, the present research paper work substantiates the value of statistical inquiry for literary criticism via objective measures capable of refining, challenging and elevating traditional qualitative approaches.

This objective study provides a grounded structure to analysing distinctive aesthetic doctrines as well that characterize Sheldon's and Bagshawe's fictions. The investigation surpasses the interpretative subjectivity to uncover the measurable and quantifiable systems underlying each authors' artistic impact, facilitating detailed and thorough deconstruction of their narrative techniques. The evidence validates that although each of these writers operate within equivalent thematic realms, their aesthetic philosophies -the guiding tenets shaping readers' creative experience- are substantially distinct.

The aesthetic value of Sheldon's novels and his style can be best described as a study of the human mind's psychological maze. This assertion is not subjective but a data-backed finding validated through examination of thematic markers shown in the form of tables which defines his creative fingerprints. His heavy reliance on motifs of memory loss and dissociation, alongside an extraordinary usage of trauma related vocabulary in the text of his novels underscores a fictional landscape, where the identities and memories of characters are fractured due to omnipresent, disorienting and frightening past and psychological tension produced by it.

The beauty and significance of his literary work emerges from its ability to produce an oppressive and profoundly meditative form of suspense. He crafts his storylines to reflect the cognitive disruption that trauma creates and building suspense not via external events but through the psychological destabilization of his main figures and the gradual, troubling excavation of suppressed memories. The readers' aesthetic engagement evolves into one of absorption within this bewilderment. They are encouraged to join the characters' endeavor to discern recollection from truth. His protagonists' conflicts are intensely personal, their confrontations executed within the maze-like, cyclical pathways of their psyche.

Conversely, the analysis reveals that Bagshawe's aesthetic philosophy centers on externalised, relationship-based confrontations. Her literary techniques create a distinctive type of literary effect, appreciated for its directness and palpable strain. Her notably higher frequency of visible trauma references and enhanced employment of manipulation theme related vocabulary serve as the foundational components of an aesthetic construction upon overt peril and rational authority exchanges.

The artistic merit of her stories originates from a more intense and direct form of suspense and apprehension. She targets concrete, relational and ramification of trauma – how it appears in visible power conflicts, calculated manipulation and mental cruelty among characters. In her

compositions tension develops not around the enigma of what has been erased, but also on the alarming certainty of what is intentionally being executed by one figure in the novels toward another. The readers' artistic encounter is not one of collective disorientation, but of an anxious observer watching and experiencing a calculated and frequently developed savage clashes. Consequently, the evolution from Sheldon to Bagshawe constitutes far more than an authorial succession, as it embodies a documentable transformation in the aesthetic paradigm. Bagshawe's continuation demonstrates a creative and skilled adaptation, maintaining allegiance to Sheldon's central themes while reconceptualizing them through prevalent aesthetic perspectives that shifts readers' encounter from psychological enigma to psychological conflict. The literary tradition, therefore, cannot be understood as a fixed monument demanding conservation but rather as a dynamic tradition and this aesthetic transformation has been effectively documented by this research. This study validates that quantitative approaches can function as potent mechanisms in aesthetic scholarship, illustrating with exactitude how the suspense thriller fiction, as embodied by these novelists, operates as a complex instrument for exploring human psychological intricacies through the study of unified strength of narrative craft and quantitative examination.

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