

STOLEN INNOCENCE:
A DIAGNOSTIC STUDY OF TRAUMATIC CHILDHOOD AND
ITS AFTERMATHS BASED ON SELECTED LITERARY WORKS

Thesis
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for the award of the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in
English Language and Literature

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DECLARATION

I, **Ameera. V. U.**, hereby declare that the dissertation titled **Stolen Innocence: A Diagnostic Study of Traumatic Childhood and its Aftermaths based on Selected Literary Works** submitted to the University of Calicut for the Degree of **Doctor of Philosophy in English Language and Literature**, is an original bona fide work of research carried out by me under the supervision of **Dr.V.Prathiba**, Reader, Department of English, University of Calicut and that it has not formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, or similar title.

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled **Stolen Innocence: A Diagnostic Study of Traumatic Childhood and its Aftermaths based on Selected Literary Works**, submitted to the University of Calicut in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy in English Language and Literature**, is a bona fide work carried out by **Ameera. V. U.**, under my guidance and supervision. Neither the dissertation nor any part of it has been submitted for the award of any degree, diploma or title before.

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Childhood / the Prelude

No social problem is as universal as the oppression of the child. No slave was ever so much the property of his master as the child is of his parent. Never were the rights of man ever so disregarded as in the case of the child- Maria Montessori.

The thesis titled, “Stolen Innocence: A Diagnostic Study of Traumatic Childhood and its Aftermaths based on Selected Literary Works” owes its primary idea to a quote from John Milton’s *Paradise Regained* (1671), “The childhood shows the man, as morning shows the day” (Book 1V, 220-221). But to be specific and honest, the need and relevance of the study became convincing to me, or the thoughts on the impacts of painful experiences from childhood began to haunt me after a personal talk with a friend, who revealed to me how she dreaded throughout her pregnancy period giving birth to a girl child, how distressed she was on hearing the doctor’s voice that, ‘you have got a cute baby girl’, how hesitant she was, for hours, to look at her baby’s face and how she contemplated strangling the little girl. These shocking and unnatural responses came from her memories of trauma she suffered in her childhood –sexual molestation within her family. Her lack of confidence to bring up a girl in a world of predators and the yearning to save her baby from the trauma she herself suffered, planted such a horrible thought in her mind. The enormity of her feelings became visible in her eyes, whenever the baby’s father and other male relatives touched her baby. Till then, Toni Morrison’s Sethe from the novel, *Beloved* (1987), who had killed her eldest daughter to save her from the clutches of slave

owner, had seemed an unconvincing character to me. But the firsthand experience of my friend opened a new realm of stories to me – the stories of betrayal of trust, helplessness, secrecy, imposed silence, terror, despondency and dejection. A reference in Dr. Rajan Chungath's book *Smartham* (2016) to the possibilities of child sexual abuse that Thathrikutty is said to have undergone, also ignited my interest. Hers is a name that shook the patriarchal foundation of Kerala with the revealing of the names of 64 men who had mated with her, an early link to Me Too Movement. A byword for licentiousness as well as boldness, Thathrikutty is continued to be criticized and extolled even today. Was she a nymphomaniac as it was presented and if so, what are the factors that led her to choose such a means of revenge to men or was she just deliberately flouting the double standard of morality set by patriarchy, we do not know. But the possibility of sexual abuse in early childhood cannot be discounted as studies have shown that early sexual experiences in a girl's life and the loss of trust with the intimate relatives may lead a girl to form numerous sexual relations in her adult life. I often encountered the doubtful queries regarding the choice of my subject which showed that even today people are not comfortable with a talk over that. Years after the publication of Pinki Virani's *Bitter Chocolate* (2000), which recounted the naked reality of what our children suffer, incest and child sexual abuse still remain tabooed subject for us. Malayali readers' shocking response, to the social media writings of Echmukutty, who gives the realistic unfolding of incestuous child sexual abuse, shows that the subject remains unpalatable to us, and the deliberate silence or the act of silencing hangs like a pall over the hushed sobs of our children. It is true that children are suffering in other ways too, especially in the war-torn areas and the racial and gender segregation too cause psychological problems for them. But

the difference in the trauma produced by the child sexual abuse is that when the other traumatic events are shared by the whole community, as in war, slavery, trafficking etc. the element of shame too will be shared by the concerned lot, but in the cases of individual trauma, the child will be burdened with guilt and self-blame.

Childhood is often conceived as a mere introductory stage in life before reaching the ultimate destination, i.e. adulthood, an age of dependency and sometimes a facet of servitude. Rather, childhood of a person moulds his/ her adulthood. Childhood is the seminal period of an individual's life. It is a set of outlooks, manners, incidents and practices which lay the foundation for an energetic and spirited adult life. The key to success and failure in adulthood is vested with the childhood itself. People erroneously think that harmful consequences of child abuse will be contained by childhood itself as children easily forget things. But the painful truth on childhood trauma is that the aftereffects of particular incidents of trauma in children's life, do not confine to childhood, but is carried over to adult life, sometimes in delayed and concealed form. In other words, the scars of childhood trauma never get healed fully.

Different forms of child abuse are recognized like physical abuse, psychological abuse, emotional neglect and sexual abuse. Children also suffer because of alcoholism and drug addiction of their parents. Recent studies have recognized other forms of child abuse too like witnessing family violence, especially mother beating; social segregation, racial discrimination, gender discrimination and wars. Though the trauma arising from sexual abuse is gaining more attention, other kinds of abuse cannot be considered less traumatic; it depends on the severity of the trauma and the resilience capacity of the child.

As Judith Herman writes, “Repeated trauma in adult life erodes the structure of the personality already formed, but repeated trauma in childhood forms and deforms the personality” (96). The impact of traumatic abuse is much amplified for the child because of his or her limited view of the world, and shortage of words to explain what is happening around them. They do not even understand whether these experiences are rare or common and whether they should share it with someone else or keep it to themselves.

The morbid atmosphere of childhood victimization results in the development of strange fits of consciousness that normal affinity between body and mind, reality and fantasy etc. do suffer, which comes out in the form of somatic as well as psychological symptoms. These symptoms may not appear in their real form but sometimes they may make an oblique entry. These terrible yet camouflaged manifestations of trauma of childhood victimization were attributed in the early years to the supernatural beliefs. Freud recognized the correlation between his theory of hysteria and this supernatural possession, and concluded that both states originated from child abuse and the resulting trauma and children were not possessed by the devil but by the evil family members:

By the way, what have you got to say to the suggestion that the whole of my brand-new theory of the primary origins of hysteria is already familiar and has been published a hundred times over, though several centuries ago? Do you remember my always saying that the medieval theory of possession, that held my ecclesiastical courts, was identical with our theory of a foreign body and the splitting of consciousness?

But why did the devil who took possession of the poor victims invariably commit misconduct with them, and in such horrible ways? Why were the confessions extracted under torture so very like what my patients tell me under psychological treatment? (qtd. in Herman 97).

But, interestingly, yet agonizingly it can be discerned that when the trauma was caused by the natural calamities or when the trauma was attributed to the wrath of God, people showed the propensity to empathize with the victim but when the traumatic deeds were premeditated and perpetrated by human beings and that too by the relatives of the victims, people around them were compelled to take doubtful stands, which often turned out to be unfavorable for the victims.

Child abuse, according to the standard diagnostic system used by physicians and psychologists, comes in the same class of traumatic events as combat, rape, and natural disasters and the element of trauma is implicit and inculcated in it. By tradition, symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder are found in sufferers of natural catastrophes, natural disasters, war experiences or accidents. However, in recent times, clinicians have applied this diagnosis to victims of interpersonal violence like rape, physical assault and child abuse.

Herman writes:

Only after 1980, when the efforts of combat veterans had legitimated the concept of post-traumatic stress disorder, did it become clear that the psychological symptoms seen in survivors of rape, domestic battery, and incest was essentially the same as the syndrome seen in

survivors of war. The implications of this insight are as horrifying in the present as they were a century ago: the subordinate condition of women is maintained and enforced by the hidden violence of men. There is war between the sexes. Rape victims, battered women, and sexually abused children are its casualties. Hysteria is the combat neurosis of the sex war (32).

McNew and Abell conducted a study comparing the posttraumatic stress symptoms in Vietnam veterans and adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse and the study discovered that childhood sexual abuse is traumatizing and can result in symptoms comparable to symptoms from war-related trauma (116). Vietnam veterans who had been physically abused as children were considerably more likely to develop post-traumatic stress disorder after combat than were veterans who had not been abused as children (Bremner et al. 536). Putting trauma in wider ambit and discussing post-traumatic stress disorder in the background of Vietnam War, Herman also points out that even among those men who had gone through the most tremendous warfare, had been able to recover the trauma over course of time. But there were some who suffered from persistent and unrelieved infirmity. Those men, who recovered from trauma, had enjoyed many benefits and gains in their prime of life, education field and the socially conducive background. On the other hand, the men whose early lives had been wounded by harsh conditions exhibited the most lasting psychological scars of combat. The background of childhood abuse rendered men predominantly susceptible to the mounting chronic post-traumatic stress disorder. As Herman continues:

Young age upon entering the military, low educational level, having a family member with drug or alcohol problems, and having a family member in prison were additional prewar “risk factors” that predicted long term difficulties after returning from the war. Among the men who had experienced both childhood adversity and heavy combat, the great majority still met criteria for the PTSD diagnosis some ten to fifteen years after their return home from Vietnam (251, 252).

So, it can be seen that one of the major psychological disturbances found in adolescent and adult victims of child sexual abuse is the posttraumatic stress disorder. i.e. a definite lasting psychological symptom that unfailingly happen in reaction to a highly upsetting and psychically unsettling event. An aversive event of sufficient severity causes major psychological disturbances in the victim that the victim will be frequently re-experiencing the same in the form of nightmares, meddling thoughts, or flashbacks. In other words, trauma arising from abuse seems to produce both interfering and disturbing memory, which is often explained as flashbacks and amnesia over overpowering incidents, attended by emotional freezing. According to Blanksby and Barber, the mental, physical and social problems that can occur due to childhood sexual abuse are “depression, low self-esteem, anxiety, behavioral problems, social problems, drug use and impaired relationships and a range of sexual relationships” (177). Traumatic events devastate the commonplace human capabilities to fight against adversities. It may cause serious and enduring alterations in physiological awakening, sensations, learning and understanding abilities and recollecting capacity. Traumatic episodes disrupt these incorporated and intertwined

systems often producing contradictory feelings, impairing memory and causing anxiety for unknown reasons.

In a study conducted by V.J Felitti et al, it is noted that, a landmark epidemiological study called the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) study, focused on the long term health consequences of child abuse and the result showed that adverse experiences in childhood like physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect and witnessing domestic violence, presence of drug addicted, alcoholic or mentally ill parent or the absence of parent strongly interrelated with greater incidence of ten leading causes of death including heart disease, lung disease and liver disease and other less grave factors like smoking, obesity, alcoholism, risky sexual behavior and injection drug use.

A study conducted by Frank Putnam, Noll and Penelope Trickett under the patronage of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) earlier, and later at the Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Centre, found that there is considerable divergence in the average life course of the abused girl compared to that of the girls who were not abused. Comparing both the groups of abused girls and non-abused girls, they found that:

Biologically, the abused girls developed abnormalities in stress hormones and autonomic nervous system arousal, high rates of obesity, and early onset of puberty. Educationally, they had more learning difficulties. Psychologically, they were more depressed, and many were highly dissociative. In their teens, or even earlier, they developed high rates of substance abuse and self-harming

behavior. Their social development tended to be maladaptive, with early and risky sexual behavior and high rates of Revictimization by both casual and intimate partners. They were more likely to drop out of school, become pregnant in their teens, and have premature deliveries when they gave birth (qtd. in Herman 259).

All traumatic episodes are not irreparable. As traumatic episodes in life cause damage to relationships, people in the immediate surroundings of the survivor and the society have the power to influence the eventual outcome of the trauma. A compassionate response from those around them may alleviate the impact of the event, while an antagonistic or depressing response may intensify the hurt and worsen the traumatic condition. On confronting the traumatic life events, survivors become highly defenseless and their sense of self and identity are crushed. The afflicted persons crave for emotional support from family, friends, beloveds, and immediate relatives. The victimized person might be facing danger and fear, so they immediately need the renewal of some trusted relations. They should be constantly assured of safety and security. The terror-stricken situation of the victims demands the presence and care of sympathetic person. Once victimized, the afflicted person might be harboring a fear that no emotional attachment may help her in a moment of threat. So, she has to be constantly reassured that she will not be left open to the danger of loneliness and abandonment again.

The U.S Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) envisaged a system of three E's of trauma to approach the problem as a whole- Events, Experience and Effects and the four R's- Realization, Recognize,

Respond and Resist Re-traumatization. These approaches to make recovery from trauma possible are adopted extensively.

Portrayal of children's trauma in literature is said to have started with the publication of Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885). With its focus on the theme of abandonment and neglect a child suffers, the novel set a tradition of trauma studies where the child's psychological response to trauma was shown and the role of imagination in surviving trauma was depicted. This literary tradition was followed by other writers like William Faulkner, Toni Morrison, Jonathan Safran Foer, J.K Rowling and Suzanne Collins. This new focus on the identity and consciousness of the child was made possible with the changes that occurred in the Romantic and Victorian period especially with the writings of Charlotte Bronte and Charles Dickens.

While these writings focused on the childhood abuse and trauma in general, Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970), was much more explicit with the trauma arising from sexual victimization. Later, Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1982), Jane Smiley's *A Thousand Acres* (1991), Dorothy Allison's *Bastard out of Carolina* (1992), and Sapphire's *Push* (1996) were added to this tradition. Incestuous narratives were flowing in the closing decades of twentieth century, revealing the trauma children suffered. The process of telling and writing itself became a means of recovery in these writings.

In the present study, the impact of child sexual abuse is focused and the works are selected according to that preference. The texts selected for the present study are Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970), Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1982) ,

Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* (1955) , Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* (2003), Dorothy Allison's *Bastard out of Carolina* (1992), Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969) , Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997), Sapphire's *Push* (1996), Mahesh Dattani's *Thirty Days in September* (2001) and Virginia Woolf's selected autobiographical essays, diaries and letters.

I have made a random selection of works to illustrate that societal backdrop may differ; there may be economic discrepancies, national setting also may be dissimilar, individual characteristics and situations may vary but the bondage of deplorable early days that the abused children bear to their mature lives, knows no boundaries. The thesis examines various symptoms expressed by the children in response to sexual victimization, the ways they reacted, their attempts to withstand the mistreatment by different family members, and the role played by their family members in equipping them to face the hostile situation. And in all works, children are not the main narrators, for e.g. in *Lolita*, things are presented through the eyes of the perpetrator of abuse.

Major theoretical frameworks for the concerned study are psychological studies and trauma studies. The empirical findings based on psychological studies will shed light on the mental as well as physical distresses associated with child abuse and it has been mainly depended upon and incorporated for the present study.

Chapter 1 *A Prologue to the Tales of Abuse: A Glance into History and Literature* sets the background for the study and examines how the concept of childhood is evolved throughout the centuries, the various ways children were

subjected to different kinds of abuses and how they were denied of their rights and identity and were considered property of the adults.

Chapter 2 *(Un)Hushed Voices: Initiation into a Forbidden World* focuses on the various definitions and the historical background of child sexual abuse and approaches the intra familial and extra familial abuses separately, examines the various reasons and motives behind the heinous crime of abusers based on the studies and surveys already conducted in the field.

Chapter 3 *The Presence of the Past in the Present: Perennial Trauma* analyses the various after effects as explicit in the behavior and personalities of the characters in the works selected for study, trying to find out to what extent problems in childhood impinge on to adult life, to consider whether the same circumstances bring forth similar responses from abused children and to examine whether it is indispensable that all abused children will end up as distorted adults. This study depends on the psychological approach and inferences done in the particular field of child sexual abuse, based on several case studies, especially the works done by David Finkelhor, Briere, Diana Russell, Cathy Caruth, Judith Herman etc.

Chapter 4 *From Betrayal to Fealty: Fostering Resilience in Trauma Victim* discusses the role of mother and family in aggravating the trauma of children. It examines whether domestic disharmony proves unhealthy to children and the role played by the family in aggravating the hurt of children who are maltreated whether mother plays a more pivotal position than other family members in aggravating the trauma of the abused children.

Chapter 5 *An Epilogue to the Open and Unending Palimpsest of Trauma* sums up the arguments in the earlier chapters examining along with it the positive factors that may equip the child to survive the trauma and unconstructive factors which drive the victims to lifelong trauma.

“What have they done to you, poor child?”

- Goethe, *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*

Chapter 1

A Prologue to the Tales of Abuse: A Glance into History and Literature

Everyone has a childhood in his or her baggage, with the memories, the knowledge, the attitudes, the sensory and cognitive mind-sets this involves...some long for childhood, some are stuck in it, some seek to be rid of it. Whatever the case may be, one does not escape the fact that one has had a childhood” (qtd. in Norozi and Moen 75).

Childhood has become much attention-grabbing and challenging theoretical arena through the constructive discourse and has been constantly subjected to study and analysis. While some approaches tend to identify it as a chronological marker, some try to give it a metaphysical coloring. Constituting one component in the binary of adult/child, it is often evaluated in relation to the other.

UNICEF (The United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund) describes childhood:

as the time for children to be in school and at play, to grow strong and confident with the love and encouragement of their family and an extended community of caring adults. It is a precious time in which children should live free from fear, safe from violence and protected from abuse and exploitation. As such, childhood means much more than just the space between birth and the attainment of adulthood.

According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child approved by the United Nations General Assembly in 1989, childhood should exist as a separate space from adulthood as everything that seems suitable for an adult may not be proper for a child. It affirmed that children are independent agencies in their own growth and maturity and also recognized the human rights of children including civil, economic, political, social and cultural rights.

In many cultures, childhood is conceived as mere preparatory or introductory time for adulthood and children too were considered as people already on their way to maturity. In other words, the concept of childhood as a developmental phase indicates that childhood acquired significance mainly in the terms of its outcomes for adulthood. Since the adults did not attach too much sanctity to childhood, they did not value the experience too peculiar to childhood. This adult concept on child revealed that, they thought of children as worthy as far as it is served as an elementary age for adulthood.

The border line between the childhood and the adulthood i.e. the age at which the childhood comes to an exact end varies across the societies and cultures for varied purposes including socio political and legal purposes. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child define child as a person below the age of eighteen years. In Medieval Europe the state of childhood existed till the age of seven considering the child's competency to perform domestic chores while Rousseau considered the perfect childhood as the one existing between birth and twelve years. Sociological approaches to childhood also postulated a single age marker is not possible as the

concept of childhood is different for different societies. They pointed out that there existed a plurality of childhood instead of single category.

So, it is not an easy task to formulate a single and universal theory on childhood and it can be discerned that the idea of childhood is not as simple as it was thought to be but rather an intricate one laden with multifarious interpretations. Philip Aries' judgment that the idea of childhood did not subsist before the early modern period led to animated and dynamic discussions on the notion of childhood and its expediency. Based on the studies of Aries, Montgomery observed that "childhood is socially constructed and that it changes depending on the historical and cultural setting" (51).

A reading of the history of childhood leaves an incomplete picture. History often left childhood out of the picture, while it expended thousands of its precious leaves recording the rivalries of royal courts, political and military intrigues and bloody battles. The earsplitting sandbox of history sung on social and communal affairs, finding the private events improper to be brought into the public.

As Peter Laslett wonders:

Crowds and crowds of little children are strangely missing from the written record...There is something mysterious about the silence of all these multitudes of babes in arms, toddlers and adolescents in the statements men made at the time about their own experiences...We cannot say whether fathers helped in the tending of the infants...Nothing can as yet be said on what is called by the

psychologists toilet training... It is in fact an effort of mind to remember all the time that children were always present in such numbers in the traditional world, nearly half the whole community living in a condition of semi-obliteration (104).

Even the researchers on the evolution of educational practices had a propensity to focus on the organizational structure and curricula of the schools and theories of education, thus almost neglecting the ordeals of childhood at home as well as in society. History of childhood deserves better portion, as it is indispensable for any study on the development of human society.

Historians try to vindicate themselves from the blame of not producing any serious study on childhood in the past by pointing out the paucity of the sources. As the family sociologist James Bossard puts it, unfortunately, the history of childhood has never been written, and there is some doubt whether it ever can be written because of the dearth of historical data bearing on childhood (598).

Yet, historical investigations on the childhood from the available sources explode the myth of blissful childhood. An honest excavation of historical mines will yield thousands of doleful and despondent stories of child abuse. It does not mean that parents never cared for and provided for their children in the past, but the general attitude towards children was not that much rosy. One must not be surprised to learn the history of child abuse as even in this modern era of heightened humanitarianism, appalling and dreadful tales of child battering and child trafficking are coming out in plenitude. One may not be able to ascertain whether adults were cruel and violent particularly towards children, or whether it was a mere manifestation of their basic

and innate vindictiveness and brutality, yet being the powerless party in the adult-child binary, either physically or materially, they were unable to resist the aggression and were subjected to abuses even in unthinkable ways including infanticide, purposeful starving, abandonment and neglect, solitary confinement, battering and raping.

Early authoritative studies on the history of childhood were those of Aries Philippe and Lloyd deMause. Both of them analyzed that the concern over children developed right through the last centuries and that medieval times was not at all convivial towards children.

DeMause makes the following observation on childhood in the edited collection, *The History of Childhood, The Untold Story of Child Abuse* (1995):

The history of childhood is a nightmare from which we have only recently begun to awaken. The further back in history one goes, the lower the level of child care and the more likely children are to be killed, abandoned, beaten, terrorized and sexually abused (1).

At the same time, Aries proposed that the traditional child was contented in some aspects as he could mix freely with many classes and ages. So, every facet of social life was open to them, whether high or low. They took part in every social activity alongside their parents and licentious acts, foul lingo, dirty jokes etc. were tolerable in their presence. They were not considered worthy of special concern and handling, so in receiving punishments too, there were no discriminations between children and adults.

J.H. Plumb observes:

Certainly, there was no separate world of childhood. Children shared the same games with adults, the same toys, the same fairy stories. They lived their lives together, never apart. The coarse village festivals depicted by Bruegel, showing men and women besotted with drink, groping for each other with unbridled lust, have children eating and drinking with the adults. Even, in the soberer pictures of wedding feasts and dances the children are enjoying themselves alongside their elders, doing the same things (qtd in. DeMause 251).

Iona and Peter Opie maintain that,

Not even nursery rhymes belonged to children. From before 1800, the only true nursery rhymes (i.e. rhymes composed especially for the nursery) are the rhyming alphabets, the infant amusements (verses which accompany a game), and the lullabies. Even the riddles were in the first place designed for adult perplexity (qtd in. DeMause 251).

Aries raised the argument that the concept of childhood was discovered and revealed somewhere between the thirteenth century and modern times. All through the middle ages children were not considered as distinct and separate entities but showed and considered as small or miniature figures of adults and they were expected to behave accordingly. Children were considered just an extension or projection of adult personality that they did not feel guilty of punishing the children.

Apart from the physical ordeal, they subjected children to another controlling device. i.e. frightening. Numerous unearthly and eerie figures like Lilith, Mormo, Canida and Gorgon were invented and used by adult to terrorize the children. They also used the images of witches who will steal away the children, gobble them, tear them to pieces or suck their blood. In the post Reformation era, God himself was made the bogeyman to scare the children, who keeps in store hell for the wicked children to burn them in red –hot oven. Later religion was replaced in the terrorizing mission by the werewolf, the black man or the chimney sweep. Historians said that the terrorizing process was started by the nurses who ensured discipline from their wards with the supernatural stories when they went off at night for parties. An instance recorded in Rhoda E. White's book reveals the horrifying nature of this practice by quoting a real incident from an American mother:

Her friend's two- year –old girl whose nurse, wanting to enjoy herself for the evening with the other servants while the parents were out, assured herself she wouldn't be disturbed by telling the little girl that a horrible Black Man...was hidden in the room to catch her the moment she left her bed or made the slightest noise...to make double sure that she should not be interrupted during the evening's enjoyment. She made a huge figure of a black man with frightful staring eyes and an enormous mouth, and placed it at the foot of the bed where the little innocent child was fast asleep. As soon as the evening was over in the servant's hall, the nurse went back to her charge. Opening the door quietly, she beheld the little girl sitting up in

her bed, staring in an agony of terror at the fearful monster before her, and both hands convulsively grasping her fair hair. She was stone dead! (31)

Another method of terrorization practiced at that time was the exposure of children to the decaying corpses, in order to remind them of the need to keep moral values intact. Such a scene is depicted in Mrs. Sherwood's novel, *History of the Fairchild Family* (1847), "These horrifying customs came to be reproached by the educated people by the advent of the nineteenth century on the ground that these terrifying practices were driving the children to insanity" (121).

Another not a less common practice started from the pre historic period and continued up to the modern period was infanticide of both legitimate and illegitimate children, though the proportion of murdered legitimate children became less by the passing of time. The sights of babies becoming "a prey for birds, food for wild beasts to rend" as Euripides puts in *Ion* (qtd in DeMause 26) was not exceptional. Children were often thrown into water, hurled into dung heap, pickled in jars, starved to death and left orphaned on roadsides.

A brutal custom prevalent in every age and everywhere was the sacrifice of children to gods. As Plutarch observes on Carthaginian child sacrifice:

with full knowledge and understanding they themselves offered up their own children, and those who had no children would buy little ones from poor people and cut their throats as if they were so many lambs or young birds; meanwhile the mother stood by without a tear

or moan; but should she utter a single moan or let fall a single tear, she had to forfeit the money, and her child was sacrificed nevertheless; and the whole area before the statue was filled with a loud noise of flutes and drums so that the cries of wailing should not reach the ears of the people (493).

Archeologists have dug out thousands of bones of sacrificed children as early as from 7,000 BC. Sealing children in walls, bridges and foundations of buildings to ensure its strength was widespread, examples ranging from the building of the wall of Jericho to present day India where children are sacrificed for treasure finding and well-being of the family. As Henry Bett points out even the famous nursery rhyme “London Bridge is Falling Down” is reminiscent of sacrifice of a child for strengthening the structure” (35).

Massacre of noble children of one’s enemy was not a rare thing and the longevity of children was also dependent on the political fortunes of their parents. As Philo records the dreadfulness of infanticide:

Some of them do the deed with their own hands; with monstrous cruelty and barbarity they stifle and throttle the first breath which the infants draw or throw them into a river or into the depths of the sea, after attaching some heavy substance to make them sink more quickly under its weight. Others take them to be exposed in some desert place, hoping, they themselves say, that they may be saved, but leaving them in actual truth to suffer the most distressing fate. For all the beasts that feed in human flesh visit the spot and feast unhindered on the infants,

a fine banquet provided by their sole guardians, those who above all others should keep them safe, their fathers and mothers. Carnivorous birds, too, come flying down and gobble up the fragments... (181).

The recounting of Louis Adamic throws light to the fact that infanticide was frequent even in the late nineteenth century. Brought up in an Eastern European village of “killing nurses”, where mothers sent the children to be exterminated, he gives a firsthand experience of witnessing the murder of infants,

By exposing them to cold air after a hot bath; feeding them something that caused Convulsions in their stomachs and intestines; mixing gypsum in their milk, which literally plastered up their insides; suddenly stuffing them with food after not giving them anything to eat for two days...” (qtd. in DeMause 30).

DeMause believed that childhood came to be idealized rather as the result of the work done by official biographers and even when social historians, who were bound to dig out the skeletons of dark secrets, observed condemnable practices, tried to give unbelievable interpretation to it and to disguise it under the veneer of disciplinary process. He observes that evidences of abuses were shrouded; concealed, distorted or neglected by the social historians that they even went to the extent of describing infanticide as admirable and humane. Even the mothers who used to beat with sticks their infants in the cradle were hailed as stern disciplinarians. Mothers who dunk their babies into ice water to strengthen them were not considered cruel even if the children were dead. William Sloane admits that “at school and at home seems to have been as common in the seventeenth century as it was later” yet he hurries to add

that “children, then as later, sometimes deserved whipping” (19). Philippe Aries, while giving an instance of public sexual molesting of children describes a scene where during train travel a stranger throws himself on a little boy roughly groping the child’s private parts and that too in the presence of child’s parents. But Aries softens it by the statement that “playing with children’s privy parts formed part of a widespread tradition” (103) “all that was involved was a game whose scabrous nature we should beware of exaggerating” (105).

Apart from killing, the tendency to disfigure, smolder, sink, shake, fling and ice up were some of the violent activities practiced by parents in the past. Cutting the cheeks of male newborns, burning the neck with hot iron, dropping burning wax candle on baby skin, cutting the string underneath the newborn’s tongue, mutilating for begging, dipping in ice water, rolling in the snow and tossing the children back and forth through the ridge of an open window were not new to the people of every age. To quote Walter Scott, “my mother confessed she was under a strong temptation of the Devil, to cut my throat with her scissors, and bury me in the moss.” (Wagenknecht 5). This was reinforced by an eighteenth-century pediatrician, William Buchan, when he says, “almost one half of the human species perish in infancy by improper management or neglect” (qtd. in DeMause 31).

DeMause suggests that if the pediatric literature of the past was flooding with the stories of children complaining of intermittent nightmares and outright deliriums, it was not accidental; rather it was the psychological outcome of the physical and sexual abuse. He elaborated that ‘witch on the pillow’, ‘a large black dog under the bed’, ‘a crooked finger crawling across the room’ etc. were not mere children’s

babbling but the products of the abuse they undergone at home. The inexplicable changes in the behavioral patterns in children, like convulsive fits, loss of speech, loss of memory, phantasm, admission of sex with devils and dancing mania were attributed to witchcraft, while later psychologists could trace it to the abusive surroundings of child (50).

Aries said, “It is hard to believe that this neglect was due to incompetence or incapacity; it seems more probable that there was no place for childhood in the medieval world” (33). He also comments “There was no concept of childhood as a state different to adulthood in these centuries, and therefore, even if parents did feel affection for their offspring, they did not fully understand how to respond to the emotional needs of their children” (34).

While physical torture was proving unbearable on one side, institutionalized abandonment practices were in rife on other side. Children of wealthy families were often left with wet nurses or servants that they could not enjoy the caring of their parents. Besides this, children were often put for sale in various European communities, even in the nineteenth century. Another practice which dates back to the Middle Ages, was the use of children as political detainees and security for debts:

Young animals and plants are given rest, and arbitrary interference with their growth is avoided, because it is known that the opposite practice would disturb their pure unfolding and sound development; but, the young human being is looked upon as a piece of wax or a lump of clay which man can mould into what he pleases (qtd. in DeMause 58).

DeMause even goes to the extent of observing that,

Children in the past were actually retarded physically as a result of their poor care. Although swaddling by itself usually does not affect the physical development of primitive children, the combination of tight swaddling, neglect and general abuse of children in the past seemed often to have produced what we would now regard as retarded children. One index of this retardation is that while most children today begin to walk by 10-12 months, children in the past generally walked later (50).

Though a complete change or difference cannot be claimed in the present status of children from the earlier times, a slow but sure change is perceptible in the attitude towards children. From old times to almost fourth century AD parents were not at all hesitant to kill their children to avoid the burden of looking after them.

As Prudentius describes a popular Biblical scene of butchery of the innocents in his poem,

The bodies were so tiny
That there was almost no space
For the gaping wounds; the blade
Was much larger than the throat.
A barbarous thing to see!
A head was broken on stones
And the milk white brains splashed out

As the eyes fell from their pits.
A child's quivering body
Was thrown in the raging stream
Where, in his constricted throat,
Water and air caused spasms.

(The Twelfth Hymn for the Epiphany 208)

From fourth century to thirteenth century, killing slowly gave place to abandonment, either physical or emotional. Children were sent to the wet nurse, monastery or foster homes. Church played a vital role in this striking change in attitude by propagating relentlessly that children are pure souls, loved by God and they should not be killed or left abandoned and these teachings also paved the way for the legislation process. By seventeenth century, children begun to be viewed emotionally, yet severe punishment was given to them even for silly mistakes. People believed that children should be given education to save them from their innate evilness. The ambivalent nature of the age is visible from the words of John Earle in *Microcosmography*, "A child is a man in a small letter, yet the best copy of Adam before he tasted of Eve or the apple...his soul is yet a white paper unscibbled with observations of the world...he knows no evil...(5).

Aries explains that the notion of childhood as a time of sexual innocence, developed concomitantly with the changes in the other attitudes towards children. He elucidates that concept of child sexuality were much more liberated and relaxed before

the seventeenth century, by citing the diary of the French Royal Physician who cared for the young Louis XIII:

It was a common joke, repeated time and again, to say to him: “Monsieur, you haven’t got a cock. Then, “he replied: ‘Hey, here it is!’ - laughing and lifting it up with one finger.” These jokes were not limited to the servants, or to brainless youths, or to women of easy virtue such as the King’s mistress. The Queen, his mother, made the same sort of joke: “The Queen, touching his cock, said: ‘Son, I am holding your spout.” Even more astonishing is this passage: “He was undressed and (his sister) too, and they were placed naked in bed with the King, where they kissed and twittered and gave great amusement to the King. The King asked him: ‘Son, where is the Infanta’s bundle?’ He showed it to him, saying: ‘There is no bone in it, Papa.’ Then, as it was slightly distended, he added, ‘There is now, there is sometimes” (101).

Aries does not interpret this verbal licentiousness as an offshoot of erotic childhood, but he admits that there existed a general lack of reticence regarding the sexuality of children. Children’s lack of sexuality was an accepted notion of the time. Fondling, kissing or hugging a child in public or exchanging sexual notes in their presence was not considered wrong as the child was “believed to be unaware of or indifferent to sex. Thus, gestures and allusions had no meaning for him; they became purely gratuitous and lost their sexual significance” (106).

From eighteenth century to present, children begun to be treated tenderly by the adults who could empathize with the needs and feelings of children. Theorists like Jean Jacques Rousseau and John Locke played a pivotal and radical role in constructing the concept of modern childhood in the 18th century. Deviating largely from the earlier representation of children as miniature adults and original sinners, Rousseau and Locke presented the child as schmalzy, guiltless and distinct from adults. Locke in his *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689) put forward the theory of 'Tabula Rasa' or blank surface which conceptualizes that child's mind is a plain surface which needs to be set for inscription according to the specific social standards and he added that it is the obligation of the parents to permeate the children with acceptable impressions. Puritanism stressed the significance of individual deliverance and concern for the spiritual wellbeing of children. There came an overall and discernible change in this approach to children; the unique and distinctive quality as well as the susceptibility and responsibility of children came to be fully acknowledged. Innocence of childhood too was recognized and childhood is considered as nothing but another stage of life. Aries connects this change with the prosperity and affluence of middle-class society. With the advent of capitalism, the rise of a large and commercial middle class occurred which brought about a new family ideology centered on the rearing of children. Earlier, when modern amenities were not available, the infantile death rate was high. So, parents tend not to be over sentimental over the children. Moreover, in most of the societies, children were considered the earners not as mere children who need care and protection. So, it is the change in material comforts and status, along with the changes in the European educational system, increasing class categorization and a slow yet steady departure of

the family from wider web of social relations that determined the mind-set towards children and childhood. So, when parents found that children may survive childhood issues and difficulties, parents begun to shower more care and affection and offer better treatment. Aries validates this argument by pointing out the increasing number of family portraits where children got due space and also the portraits of dead children, which indicated both the decrease in infant mortality rate as well as the rise in the status of children to be mourned enough. This newly found fondness and consideration for children paved the way for the beginning of a new culture of childhood. Children's natural expressions, pranks, words and mispronunciations were begun to catch the attention of adult world. Prior to seventeenth century, the dressing style of children was mere imitation of the dressing style of adults, slight changes begun to appear in it by the seventeenth century. This new culture of childhood became perceptible in lately invented and assigned games, pastimes, special holidays etc. for children. Earlier, fairy tales, party games etc. were enjoyed by children and adults alike, but later separate games like snowball fights and holidays like Halloween became special areas of children. The newly invented childhood resulted in a dictatorial concept of the family which imposed restriction on the children and cut their wings of freedom. Children were begun to be taken as vulnerable fellows who were looking for protection. The idea of protection was followed by the idea of discipline too.

Though, exclusivity was attributed to childhood in this age, another apparent tendency was there to bundle women and children together as objects of patronizing patriarchy as reflected in the usages like 'save the women and children' or 'women

and children first'. Any approach to childhood at that time is tinged with moral preaching and often accentuated the inevitability of indoctrination.

The shift in the concept of children as sexually unconcerned individuals to sexually innocent children, whose sexual purity was facing constant threat from corruptive forces, happened with the development of modern educational system too. Educators of the time were much concerned about the sexual behaviors of their students and controlled their unhealthy sexual habits. This development of modern education system also brought in the practice of division of individual students into age-based classes, childhood begun to be classified into specific stages. This increased the scope of surveillance and control of students which later led to the prevalence of corporal punishment as a means of discipline.

The modern conception of childhood with its own independence and objectives evolved with 18th century enlightenment and the romantic period which followed it. Rousseau described childhood as a short interlude or safe haven before they enter the world of dangers and adversities of adulthood. This changed view of the age is visible in the reception given to Sir Joshua Reynold's painting, *The Age of Innocence* which captured the innocence and natural loveliness of children. With the advent of industrialism by 1750s, the discrepancies between the loud proclaimed ideals of childhood and the gnawing reality of child exploitation in the workplace became perceptible. The tales of children working in factories and mines and as chimney sweeps, the little children used to retrieve cotton bobbins strewed under machinery, boys and girls working in the coal mines for meager pay, became common. Children were used to crawl through tunnels which were too narrow and low to take

an adult. Children in large numbers were used for hazardous and risky jobs and that too for long hours, and their income was added to family budget. Children were made to work as errand boys, shoe blacks and sellers of matches, flowers and other cheap goods etc.

Childhood is hyped as the most idyllic phase of one's life when one can be ignorant of life's bleak side. But whether it was as heavenly as it was puffed up is a troubling question. The idealistic halo over childhood that it enjoys even today is often credited to Wordsworth and other romantic poets. As literature is said to reflect the society, people also misunderstood that child life before industrialization era was quite blissful. Depiction of children as archetypes of innocence in literary works or such a general presumption of children as paragons of virtue and the impression that adults except a few wicked ones treated them tenderly, that a reader of literary works from different periods of English literature gather, was not always true to the reality.

Children and childhood are portrayed fundamentally as the part of adults' mind's eye i.e. children are not yet given subject position. They are considered emotionally, culturally and communally the metaphysical spring of the grownups. This is well represented in literature too. Childhood, especially as portrayed in literature often symbolizes innocence, creativity and joyousness. It is premeditated in the literary works as the unadulterated facet in one's life while adulthood connotes somehow the loss of innocence too. Childhood is shown as the period of serenity, harmony and quietude in contrast with the adult world of stress and strain. As Peter Coveney observes in his *The Image of Childhood*,

The child could also serve as a symbol of artist's dissatisfaction with the society that is in process of such harsh development around him. In a world given to increasingly utilitarian values and the Machine, the child could become the symbol of Imagination and Sensibility, a symbol of Nature set against the forces abroad in a society actively denaturing humanity (31).

Coming to the literary field, till the mid-19th century, the majority of children's stories constituted largely of ethical principles and sensible and rational standpoint of the society. They were the attempts to imbibe its essence, to describe the experience of being child and to elucidate the nature and special characteristics of childhood. But concept on childhood as presented in literature tends to change according to the changes in the society and with regard to their timely expectations. It is not a stagnant perception but emerging, surfacing and shifting one as it is depicted in literature crossing the time, space and cultural boundaries.

Children were the subject of a large number of Elizabethan lyrics as later in the works of John Dryden and Alexander Pope. Metaphysical poets like Henry Vaughan and Thomas Traherne wrote on the childhood innocence and simplicity. In his poem, "Childhood" published in 1665, Vaughan portrays a romanticized aspect of childhood as a period of

Dear, harmless age! the short, swift span
 Where weeping virtue parts with man;
 Where love without lust dwells, and bends
 What way we please without self ends

An age of mysteries! Which he
Must live twice that would God's face see;
Which angels guard, and with it play,
Angels! Which foul men drive away.

Changing notions on childhood are partially obvious from the literature written over the course of time. The Christian doctrine of original sin was reflected in the work like *A Token for Children* (1671) written by Janeway in the late seventeenth century, who believed that all children are born wicked and in order to attain deliverance, they have to devote them to the will of God. The writings in the century were slanted towards exceedingly moralized, religious versions of childhood with its prime belief in the fallen state that a pessimistic pall wrapped them. But the dawn of eighteenth century with its emphasis on reason, provided a much more buoyant outlook on childhood. This might be taken as a transition period for childhood as it gave liberation to childhood from the previous era's negative connotations associated with that and instead made childhood as the positive symbol rejoicing the cult of Nature, the righteousness of psyche and spirit and the triumph of inherent virtues. The paucity and hardships of innocent, intuitive and righteous children became the much-loved theme of sentimental writings of the day like Elizabeth Bonhote's *Hortensia* or *Distressed Wife* in 1769.

Rousseau's *Emile* or *On Education*, (1762) made indubitable impact on the literature of the times with its understanding of childhood as the metaphor for mind's eye, responsiveness, purity and nature. In his *Emile* Rousseau defied the prevailing tendency of the age which gave importance to *raison d'être* and practicality and

focused on the importance of artlessness, intuitiveness and emotions in the approach towards children and childhood. In accordance with the romantic ideals, Rousseau advocated the idea of the essential righteousness, innocence and honesty of childhood. He portrayed childhood as diverse, distinct and blissful period of life, flowing naturally. He described childhood as a short phase of asylum, before, as adults, they stumble upon the hazards and adversities of adulthood.

The advent of romanticism marked a specific shift in the attitude towards children. The modern idea of childhood with its own independence and targets began to materialize during the Enlightenment and the Romantic period, especially in the writings of Blake and Wordsworth. Though Blake recognizes the uncontaminated and impulsive bliss of childhood, he recognizes the damaging and destructive power of surroundings to corrupt the defenseless childhood. The poet's divergent bearings on childhood are well captured in his poems, *Infant Joy* and *Infant Sorrow*. For Wordsworth, the child was the symbol for natural devoutness and insight. Wordsworth's famous poems like *Ode on Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood*, *We are Seven*, *My Heart Leaps Up* etc set the tone for the poems on childhood. His famous line that 'the child is the father of the man' became a popular motif forever. In his opinion, the untarnished innocence of this period equals most precisely the majesty of their extraterrestrial dwelling. Wordsworth also drew attention to this childhood purity and innocence, where nature seemed much beautiful and varied and which charms were denied to the corrupted world of adults.

There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
 The earth, and every common sight,
 To me did seem
 Appareled in celestial light,
 The glory and the freshness of a dream.
 It is not now as it hath been of yore; –
 Turn wheresoe'er I may,
 By night or day,
 The things which I have seen I now can see no more.
 - Ode on Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early
 Childhood

Victorian Age witnessed marked difference in the representation of childhood. Growth of trade and industry made it possible for the families to have the larger homes and thus to develop the concept of privacy with the separate sleeping rooms for parents and children. But industrialization with its full-fledged factories, increased population in towns and cities was much tempting for the employers which in turn only worsened the lot of poor children. Thousands of poor orphaned children were taken to distant towns from their homes and were made to work in squalid and fetid conditions. So, nineteenth century gives a picture of child as the object of pity or compassion. Distressed by the plight of children working in factories, reformers like Peel and Wilberforce started working for legislations to curb those practices.

Charles Dickens in his oeuvres foregrounds child characters, who show qualities of both the Puritan as well as Romantic ideals of childhood. Dickens gave a flagrant understanding of childhood through his novels like *Oliver Twist* (1839),

Nicholas Nickleby (1839), *Dombey and Son* (1848), *David Copperfield* (1850), *Little Dorrit* (1857) etc. His innocent and loving characters served as contrast to the hideous, inhuman, and callous adult world of Industrial London. Dicken's child characters are generally abandoned, maltreated and suffering under the yoke of evil adults. Dicken's child characters like Oliver Twist, Little Nell, Tiny Tim, Paul Dombey are embodiments of virtuousness and artlessness, but they are presented as in dangerous situation, cornered by filthy, vicious, abusive and manipulative adult world.

Charlotte Bronte in her magnum opus, *Jane Eyre* (1847), gives an account of the downbeat effects, complicated childhood might have on adult's life. She explored the theme of persecution, seclusion and segregation children felt in a hostile background through her delineation of Lowood School where poor and orphaned students are subjected to a miserable and abject life. Henry James also found the subject of childhood attractive and brought to home the concept that innocence of childhood will be in danger in an intimidating and antagonistic family and his works *What Maisie Knew* (1897) and *The Turn of the Screw* (1898) analyze the effect of early exposure to sexuality on children. Lewis Carroll came on the scene with his works like *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), *Through the Looking Glass* (1871) and *Sylvie and Bruno* (1889), the exclusive writings on children, especially targeting the child audience, though the works were politically laden. By the turn of twentieth century, childhood became such a favorite subject that different genres came to employ that. Two world wars with their horrifying corollaries and the response of children to this catastrophe was the subject of C.S. Lewis' poems. Many heartrending poems, diaries and writings also came from children narrating their horrible exposure

to war, the famous example being *The Diary of Anne Frank* (1952). Authors like J.M Barrie and Ray Bradbury embodied in their works the enchantments, wonders and humanity of childhood. Graham Greene's novels like *A Gun for Sale* (1936) and *The Man Within* (1929) inadvertently express the inexorableness and unavoidability of childhood experiences in forming the adult personality. William Golding also does not present a rosy picture of childhood rather he gives the picture of childhood crushed under the wheel of adverse circumstances. His *Lord of the Flies* (1954) presents a subverted image of childhood innocence. Golding shatters the myth of childhood innocence by presenting the evil instincts in children. The concept of wicked child was not confined to William Golding alone; post Second World War era, with all its disillusionment and loss of convictions in customary values, witnessed the figure of sinful child in various works including those of Doris Lessing. A tendency to idealize children and an inclination to centre the writings on them became perceptible by the advent of twentieth century, as a result of universal literacy mission, increase in the number of reading public and growth in book publishing industry. With this started a stylization of childhood and resulted in the creation of acceptable stereotypes for children who were devoted, trustworthy, exploratory and valiant. Media like radio, television, popular film etc. added colors to this image.

The profusion of literary works for children, starting with the publication of Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* in 1865, also underscored the changed position of the children in society. The introduction of compulsory state schooling in the second half of the nineteenth century also did a commendable work in improving the lot of children, or at least in that direction. The marketing strategies

of the industrialized society also played a vital role in vesting childhood with an aura of fun and happiness. Doll industry was thrived targeting girl children and sports industry and fitness centers were developed particularly aiming the boys.

Studies on childhood like Philip Aries' *Centuries of Childhood* (1960), George Boas' *The Cult of Childhood* (1966) and Hugh Cunningham's *Invention of Childhood* (2006) also promoted serious yet separate approaches to the childhood. So, the concept of childhood has developed and altered according to the general changes in the adult life. The glaring impression on children, which, however, remained was that children are devoid of worries and lead a trouble-free life without doing any work. Childhood is considered a time for merry making, playing, learning and mingling without any unnecessary adult interference. With the advent of modernism and later post structuralism, the phenomenon of childhood became more intricate and inexplicable. The idealized state of childhood came to have a severe jolt with the postmodern approach to childhood. The search for the lost childhood innocence became a favorite theme of writers of modern era. Loss of Innocence became an oft depicted theme in children's literature, especially that of 'coming of age' literature, which shows children's confrontation with evil forces in the world. The closing decades of twentieth century witnessed the emergence of the notions like the "disappearance of the child" where childhood is said to have returned to the early stage of no distinction between adults and children as the childhood innocence cannot be retained in an age of new media technologies. The concept that children are the apprentices to adulthood became outdated in the digital age especially when focus

also largely showered on the child centered entertainment programmes or with the advent of new entertainment culture for the children known as kinder culture.

A decisive turn in the approach to childhood in literature and literary criticism occurred with the theories of Freud and Lacan. Freud reinterpreted the Wordsworth's philosophy that, "The child is the father of man". Freud undercut the conservative opinion of childhood innocence by his elucidation that children are sexual from birth and they try to suppress their erotic urge as they grow up. Freud also attributed adult neurotic diseases to the trauma and guilt undergone in child sexual abuse experiences. Lacan reconstructed Freud in his concept with his focus on the role of the pre-oedipal stage in constructing one's identity and selfhood.

Childhood, it is said, provides one's own self-image. This is what has paved the way for Jung's concept of childhood to selfhood. Jung in his *Psychology of the Transference* (1983) states, "The evolution of the child's identity is in a sense the making of the individual self itself" (20). Accordingly, to Jung, selfhood is a psychological fact. He remarks that childhood is the complete picture of the self: "...a characteristic of childhood is that thanks to its naiveté and unconsciousness, it sketches a more complete picture of the self, of the whole man in his pure individuality, than adulthood" (272).

Thus, childhood functions as a mirror to self-recognition and a tool for self-designation. Every human often takes a return trip to childhood especially when put in the intricacies of human life.

So, a superficial reading of English literature leaves the impression that in spite of the divergent concept on the innocence of children from Calvinist perspective as well as romantic perspective, i.e. whether children are innately evil who need to be strictly monitored to lead a virtuous life or whether they are born blameless and occasional intrusion of adult vindictiveness to the world of children, the state of being children was quite glowing experience. The romantic halo over the childhood got shattered only with the advent of industrialism and the resultant social disparities and the exploitation of poor labor classes and the period leading to world wars.

The bubble of childhood as the time of innocence and care-free life was exploded and campaigns were held for taking legal measures for the protection of children. These campaigns for the introduction of laws for the betterment of children's life were accentuated by the ghastly picture of childhood as portrayed by Charles Dickens, which resulted in the implementation of the Factory Acts. The Victorian society emphasized the role of the family and importance of children, which determined the attitude to children in Western societies thereafter. Dickens's *Oliver Twist*, *Little Nell* and other child characters articulated the deplorable conditions of the nineteenth century England. Thackeray and Bronte sisters wrote about the ill-treatment, seclusion and segregation of children in the antagonistic atmosphere at boarding schools. With the advent of confessional literature, attention was drawn to scenes depicting domestic violence and sexual assault on children. Freud's psychoanalytic theories of child sexual abuse became much influential in the studies on childhood trauma. Theories of Freud have led critics to treat literary works from the vantage point of psycho-biography, inquiring about personality traits or traumas that

shed light upon an author's work. By the closing decades of the twentieth century, sexual as well as psychological abuses of children became a familiar issue, especially in postcolonial literary works. While some works focused on the changing aspects of childhood in different ages in which they were written, a number of oeuvres, coming under the genre of bildungsroman novels tracked the psychological or emotional disturbances that children with dreary background carried to their adult lives. Psychological investigations have proven that depressing incidents of childhood leave negative outcomes on an adult's life. It is not necessary that all abused and neglected children will experience long term consequences. There will be variations in the outcome depending on the child's age, the type of abuse and the severity of abuse. Some children carry the bitter memories of abuse and neglect till the end of their lives while others emerge relatively unscathed. The ability to survive the distressing experience depends on the individual characteristics, positive influences like teachers or relatives and social milieu. The immediate emotional effects of abuse and neglect are isolation fear and an inability to trust which can work out into lifelong consequences including low self-esteem, melancholies and relationship difficulties. Dejection and withdrawal symptoms are common among children who experienced emotional, physical or environmental neglect. Sufferings of children and its end results do not confine to their family circle. Sometimes mistreatments in childhood days get sociological implications. Children with grimy back ground are likely to develop anti-social traits as they grow up. Adults suffering from social phobia or adults with anti-social mind-set tend to have a history of harrowing childhood. Dorothy O. Lewis in her book *Guilty by Reason of Insanity: A Psychiatrist Explores the Minds of Killers* (1998) makes the shocking discovery that most of the murderers had endured

perverted physical and sexual violence and abuses in their childhood. Abusive parents often have experienced abuse during their own childhoods. Psychological researches done by Diana Russell and Finkelhor have proved that approximately one third of abused and neglected children will eventually victimize their own children. “There is little doubt that child abuse and childhood experience of loss, where no effective opportunity is provided for the child to make sense of these experiences constitutes unresolved trauma which is likely to manifest itself in some way at a later date” (Boswell 35).

The present thesis tries to diagnose the impacts of child sexual abuse in particular on the selected literary characters. It is quite natural that after effects of sexual abuse will definitely coincide with other types of child abuses too, like psychological abuse, neglect and physical abuse. So, before going to the definition and impacts of child sexual abuse, a short analysis on the other types of abuses are attempted here.

Loveleen Kacker defines child abuse as:

any action or failure to act, that violates the rights of the child and endangers his or her optimum health, survival and development. Child abuse or maltreatment encompasses all forms of physical and/ or emotional ill- treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment and commercial or other exploitation resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power (4).

Child abuse is “any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker that results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse, or exploitation;” or “an act or failure to act that presents an imminent risk of serious harm.” (Goldman and Salus 20).

Child abuse has been categorized into four major types: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological abuse and neglect. Myths, folk tales and fairy tales have handled many themes like monsters eating children; cruelty inflicted by stepmother, beating and murder attempts at the hands of the caretakers, spells and curses on beautiful maidens etc. Bettelheim points out that many fairy tales begin with the death of a mother or a father, and this problem creates the most terrible agony a child might encounter. Child abuse was well depicted by writers such as Hans Christian Andersen, Mark Twain, Lewis Carroll, Charles Dickens, Fyodor Dostoevsky and Le Guin. These writers have depicted the abuse issue in their works which were full of “harrowing scenes of suffering children” (Langbauer 89). Langbauer even argued that the works of some of the writers such as Charles Dickens, Fyodor Dostoevsky, and Le Guin were biographies of their own childhood in which they endured a lot under ruthless state of affairs.

Loveleen Kacker explains physical abuse of child as “any action that results in actual or potential physical harm resulting from an interaction- or lack of one- which is reasonably within the control of a parent or person in a position of responsibility, power or trust. There may be single or repeated incidents” (5).

Though physical abuse is often inflicted by adults to control or rectify children’s behavior, it has some kind of social acceptability. But substantial numbers

of children are severely maltreated by their parents or care givers which often result in brain damage, skull fractures, dislocations, internal injuries, serious burns etc.

Another common form of child maltreatment is psychological abuse which may have adverse effects than usually deciphered. Though psychological abuse cannot be defined in a single sentence, psychologists have pointed out some instances. Major forms of psychological abuse as given in Hart et al. and Garbarino, Guttman and Seeley are:

- Rejection or denunciation as the child is made to feel worthless, undesirable and unaccepted and thus keeps low self-esteem.
- Demeaning or undervaluing as the child is always disparaged, stigmatized and disgraced resulting in the loss of self-respect.
- Frightening or terrifying as the child is always threatened or scared with psychological harm
- Isolation or separation as the child is denied social relations or outside communication, often kept in confinement.
- Corrupting the child's behavior by inculcating in them anti-social behavior, interests and desires
- Utilization of the child to cater to the needs of caregivers.
- Depriving them of emotional care and love

- By giving undependable and defective parenting to the child often found in the cases of parental substance abuse.

Psychological abuse is an inherent and inbuilt ally of all forms of child maltreatment as every abuse in more or less in the same way, affect the psyche of the child. As Garbarino et al. observe, psychological mistreatment, by virtue of its capacity to disfigure insights and suppositions regarding self, others, the background and the future, and its incidence in other types of abuse, has wide impacts on later psychosocial operation. It is, in this view, an important and serious form of child abuse.

Another variant of psychological abuse is emotional neglect. Emotional neglect is defined by Dean, cited in Schakel, as an

act of omission, frequently the result of parental ignorance or indifference. As a result, the child is not given positive emotional support and stimulation. Parents may give adequate physical care to their child but leave him or her alone in a crib for long periods of time, seldom cuddle or talk to the child, or fail to give him or her encouragement and recognition (19).

Studies show that children brought up by unloving, unresponsive or emotionally negligent parents exhibit psychological disturbance in the short- and long-term including attachment issues in their relationships.

According to the World Health Organization:

Emotional abuse includes the failure to provide a developmentally appropriate, supportive environment, including the availability of a primary attached figure, so that the child can establish a stable and full range of emotional and social competencies commensurate with her potentials and in the context of the society in which the child dwells. There may also be acts towards the child that cause or have a high probability of causing harm to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. These acts must be reasonably within the control of a parent or person in a position of responsibility, power or trust. Acts include restriction of movement, patterns of belittling, denigrating, scapegoating, threatening, scaring, discriminating, ridiculing or other non- physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment (qtd. in Kacker 63)

The children who are emotionally mistreated undergo thoughts of being derisory, lonely, discarded, or despicable. Their self-esteem is low; consequently, they deem themselves worthless. Sometimes, they fight back, become antagonistic, destructive, or they turn their anger inward, becoming self-destructive, miserable, introvert or plunge into the depths of despair (Tower 213).

Another considerable form of abuse is the consequence of parental alcoholism or drug addiction. The family dynamics arising from sustaining parental alcoholism causes psychological disturbance in children. Alcoholic family need not be the only underlying trauma inducing factor as child abuse occur in other contexts also. i.e. in the absence of alcohol or substance too. But alcoholic use and consequent behavior

may represent one of many toxic incidences concurrently present within a family, in a way that parental substance obsession and concomitant physical, psychological or sexual abuse may have both exceptional and overlapping adverse impacts on the child's current and future psychological functioning.

Witnessing family violence, especially, father battering mother, often causes psychological disturbances in children. In male children, exposure to parental spouse abuse in childhood results in later inclination to be violent in relationships.

Bullying is another form of abuse. "A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students" (Olweus 5-6). Mobbing is another form of bullying in which it takes place in groups. It involves making cruel jokes, mortification, spreading gossips, isolating and rejecting, spurning, terrorization, intimidating, treating a person like an object, stalking and vindictiveness. Mobbing has an overwhelming effect on everyone who is exposed to it. It contributes to segregation, physical or mental illness, gloominess, aggressive or self- destructive behavior and distrust. The victim may act unbecomingly due to extended severe trauma. According to Elliot, the targeted person generally feels confused, feels anxious, feels physically sick, becomes depressed, doesn't know whom to trust, engages in self-isolation, may develop feelings of persecution or paranoia, may act inappropriately, may engage in destructive behavior, toward themselves or others, may develop acute anxiety or post-traumatic stress disorder, and may suffer permanent physical or emotional damage" (14).

Compared to abuse experienced by a person in his or her adult life, abused children undergo significant psychological suffering and dysfunction, because they

are troubled during the most decisive period of their lives. It is the time when their ideas on self, others and society are formed and their coping skills are developed. Post-traumatic experience does have impact on subsequent psychological and social maturation and dysfunctional development. Child abuse reactions are varied from person to person with regard to the nature and severity of the abuse. Briere identifies three stages in child abuse impact.

1. Initial reactions to victimization, involving post-traumatic stress, alterations in normal childhood development, painful affect and cognitive distortions.
2. Accommodation to ongoing abuse, involving coping behaviors intended to increase safety and/ or decrease pain during victimization
3. Long term elaboration and secondary accommodation, reflecting (a) the impacts of initial reactions and abuse related accommodations on the individual's later psychological development and (b) the survivor's ongoing coping responses to abuse- related dysphoria. (17-18).

The victims of all type of abuse survivors show complicatedness with trust, which is a basic aspect of socialization. The ability to trust begin from early childhood, so any kind of breach of it affects the child adversely in his/her adulthood too. Children who lose the trust in the ability of parents to protect them from all harm, naturally will become distrustful of themselves, others and even of their environments.

The present thesis mainly focuses on the trauma impact of the child sexual abuse and the psychological scars; so, the theoretical framework of trauma studies and psychological studies are largely used for the studies.

Trauma is defined as a psychosomatic and emotional scar originated from an outside danger that brutally upsets normal course of life, thus making internal and outside resources inadequate to deal with it. It is such an intricate occurrence, the ramifications of which are felt in various disciplines like psychiatry, medicine, literature, law, sociology, anthropology, cultural studies etc. Though the concept of trauma has been increasingly used in medical aspects, it can be widely connected to broader political structure including reactions to genocide, Holocaust, war calamities sometimes in the form of survivor narratives. As Caruth explains:

The phenomenon of trauma has seemed to become all-inclusive, but it has done so precisely because it brings us to the limits of our understanding: if psychoanalysis, psychiatry, sociology, and even literature are beginning to hear each other anew in the study of trauma, it is because they are listening through the radical disruption and gaps of traumatic experience (*Trauma* 4).

This inclusivity of trauma studies can be attributed to the fact that trauma is related to psyche, a vital aspect of humanity.

Depiction of psychological trauma in language and literature and the study on the role of memory in determining the nature of individual, cultural and social identity constitute the primary area of trauma studies. Traumatic event is commonly perceived as a serious unsettling event that negatively and adversely affect the emotional well-being of an individual and makes up the person's insight on outside world. In the words of Dori Laub, trauma survivors "live not with memories of the past, but with an event that could not and did not proceed through to its completion, has no ending,

attained no closure, and therefore . . . continues into the present and is current in every respect”(“Bearing Witness” 69).

Trauma studies draws from Freud to explain a traumatic event as an extreme kind of experience that disrupts the human sensibility beyond imagination and crossing limits of capacity for endurance and representation in language. The association between mental illness and trauma was first examined by Jean Martin Charcot, who studied elaborately on hysteria, a common disorder found in women. Sudden paralysis, amnesia, sensory loss and convulsions were recognized to be the primary symptoms of hysteria. Till Charcot approached the studies seriously, the advent of hysteria was attributed to the problems related to uterus. It is Charcot who for the first time diagnosed that hysteria is not physiological in nature rather psychological one. Pierre Janet analyzed the relation between the victim’s traumatic experiences and personality development. He found that the intense emotions shown by the patients were their reactions to the traumatic events happened in their life. He further analyzed that these symptoms can be cured by methods like hypnoses or re-exposure to the traumatic events and memories. He defined that trauma occurs from the horror of unexpected facing of an incident which cannot be contained by the existing system or knowledge and frequently comes back precisely later. As it is not fully incorporated at the time of occurrence, the event cannot be receded into the past to become a part of narrative memory.

Freud along with Breuer argued in that earlier experience of sexual assault in an individual’s life causes hysteria. They emphasized that the actual event causing trauma itself might not be that much traumatic but its repercussions were felt in its

recollection. The effects are realized after a delayed period when an existing incident calls forth the already subdued events i.e. past episode of trauma is experienced in the process of remembrance.

Thus, the major realization of trauma occurs in the process of recollection as an event contained in the psyche of an individual which causes dissociation, a defense mechanism to ward off trauma. Though Freud later withdrew his theory that hysteria is caused by early child sexual abuse experience, the concept developed by him that the gap between the traumatic event and its pathological consequences and the disruption of psyche may result in dissociation continues to influence the contemporary trauma studies.

Freud further analyzed that traumatic events can cause split in ego and the repressed materials make an entry through dreams. Freud explained that the victims of trauma cannot reproduce the whole thing suppressed in him and even if he remembers, he may fail to remember the indispensable part of it. Moreover, patient may repeat the repressed things as present instead of reliving the experiences as something happened in the past.

The contemporary theory on trauma as propounded by Cathy Caruth, Shoshana Felman, and Geoffrey Hartman develops on the concept laid by Freud that traumatic event is not well turned-out in its entire enormity and revealed the intrinsic contradiction within language and experience. According to Felman, literature creates a new form of narrative as testimony not merely to record, but to rethink, and therefore, transform history by bearing literary witness to trauma (93).

Lenore Terr observes that “psychic trauma occurs when a sudden, unexpected, overwhelming emotional blow or a series of blows assaults the person from outside. Traumatic events are external but they quickly become incorporated into the mind” (*Too Scared* 90).

Dori Laub too writes on the ungraspable nature of traumatic event:

The traumatic event, although real, took place outside the parameters of “normal” reality, such as causality, sequence, place, and time. The trauma is thus an event that has no beginning, no ending, no before, no during and no after. This absence of categories that define it lends it to a quality of “otherness”, a salience, a timelessness and a ubiquity that puts it outside the range of associatively linked experiences, outside the range of comprehension, of recounting and of mastery (69).

As Caruth points out trauma unsettles the normal mechanism of consciousness and memory, instead, traumatic event is dissociated from cognitive process and returns only in the form of flashbacks and nightmares. “What returns to haunt the victim is not only the reality of the violent event but also the reality of the way that its violence has not yet been fully known” (*Unclaimed* 5). And “the painful repetition of the flashback can only be understood as the absolute inability of the mind to avoid an unpleasurable event that has not been given psychic meaning in any way” (*Unclaimed* 59).

Leys explains the experience of trauma occurring as responses to the emotions of fright and shock caused by certain events. As a result, the mind of the afflicted

person gets distanced and dissociated. The regular mechanisms of cognition already being disrupted, it fails to record the hurt to mind. So the upsetting experiences remain beyond the grasp of normal consciousness of the victim and she is troubled by intrusive traumatic memories, “the experience of the trauma, fixed or frozen in time, refuses to be represented as past, but is perpetually re-experienced in a painful, dissociated, traumatic present” (2). Traumatic memories are different from narrative memory, it is not voluntarily accessible as they remain “outside the verbal-semantic-linguistic representation” (Leys 7).

Whitehead elaborates:

Trauma carries the force of a literality which renders it resistant to narrative structures and linear temporalities. Insufficiently grasped at the time of its occurrence, trauma does not lie in the possession of the individual, to be recounted at will, but rather acts as a haunting or possessive influence which not only insistently and intrusively returns but is, moreover, experienced for the first time only in its belated repetition (5).

Cathy Caruth focuses on how trauma disorders the consciousness of the victim, thus thwarting the attempts to direct linguistic representation. Along with Cathy Caruth, other trauma theorists like Judith Herman, Shoshana Felman, Geoffrey Hartman and Dominick LaCapra agreed upon this unrepresentative and ungraspable nature of trauma.

Dominick LaCapra observes that:

Trauma is a shattering experience that distorts memory in the “ordinary” sense and may render it particularly vulnerable and fallible in reporting events. What has been called in traumatic memory refers to symptoms of the traumatic experiences such as nightmares, flashbacks, startle reactions and compulsive behavior. Giving testimony involves the attempt to address or give an account of the experience one has had oneself and through which one has lived. In a sense, one might understand giving testimony as the fallible attempt to verbalize or otherwise articulate bearing witness. Testimony is itself both threatened and somehow authenticated or validated insofar as it bears the marks of, while not being utterly consumed and distorted by the symptomatic effects of trauma (61).

According to Dori Laub, the victims of severe trauma are unable to relate their disturbing experiences, for they go beyond “the human cognitive capacity to perceive and to assimilate the totality of what was really happening at the time” (84). He makes it clear that:

The victim’s narrative- the very process of bearing witness to massive trauma does indeed begin with someone who testifies to an absence, to an event that has not yet come into existence, the trauma –as a known event and not simply as overwhelming shock has not been truly witnessed yet, not been taken cognizance of. The emergence of the narrative which is being listened to- and heard is, therefore, the process

and the place wherein the cognizance, the “knowing” of the event is given birth to (57).

Thus seen, trauma theory underlines the fact that traumatic event is indefinable, inescapable and mysterious experience and complete deliverance is not possible from it. Here literature plays a significant role as it testifies and bears witness to trauma. Narrating the event to someone else or writing about the trauma may provide a release, though not complete, from the inevitable grip of trauma.

Bringing home the significant ties between literature and trauma studies through the example of Freud, Caruth opines that:

If Freud turns to literature to describe traumatic experience, it is because literature, like psychoanalysis, is interested in the complex relation between knowing and not knowing. And it is at the specific point at which knowing and not knowing intersect that the language of literature and the psychoanalytic theory of traumatic experience precisely meet (*Unclaimed* 3).

In short, the victim can escape from the traumatic entrapment only through the verbalization of the traumatic experience as narrative or testimony. Elissa Marder in her essay, “Trauma and Literary Studies: Some Enabling Questions” states on “the importance of finding new ways to acknowledge the impact of events that can only be known belatedly and of listening to the power of experiences that can only be expressed indirectly” (qtd. in Heidarizadeh 791) and she stresses the connection between literature and trauma studies, “literature is one of the ways we tell one another

about aspects of human experience that cannot be contained by ordinary modes of expression and that may even exceed human understanding (qtd. in Heidarizadeh 791). Trauma studies make use of literary texts that depict trauma to bring home the special experience of trauma. Literature explains what seems to be ungraspable experience. Literature becomes successful in voicing trauma as it can resist conformist storyline arrangements thus making the traumatic scars viewable and silences capable of being heard.

Discussing the recovery process from trauma, Laub gives much significance to the role of listener, whom he addresses even as the participant and co-owner of the abusive experience. According to Laub, healing of trauma is dependent also on the victim's capacity to narrate the event:

Trauma survivors live not with the memories of the past, but with an event that could not and did not proceed through to its completion, has no ending, attained no closure, and therefore, as far as its survivors are concerned, continues into the present and is current in every respect. The survivor, indeed, is not truly in touch either with the core of his traumatic reality or with the fatedness of its reenactments, and thereby remains entrapped in both (69).

Trauma, when it happened was external, but the victim internalized it, but it can be externalized again by the process of forming a new narrative and telling it to a listener. But during the second time, the peaceful setting of narration and the empathy expressed by the listener produces different experience. The victim narrator goes for re-introspection of the traumatic episode. According to Laub, this re-externalization,

to some extent, gives deliverance to the victim from her feeling of guilt and self-blame:

Re-externalization means that one puts it back into the outside world where there is a perpetrator who one has not provoked, and who has carried out the atrocity, and should be held responsible and guilty for it. And it is no longer in one's personal domain. There can be anger directed at the perpetrator and no sense of guilt or responsibility for having taking part in it. it is making it into an objective outside event at a certain time in history (qtd. in Klemppner 6).

Klemppner further explained that telling the traumatic narrative, some of its toxicity is removed and re-internalization of the event happens in new light (7).

All trauma theoreticians recognize the concept of the post-traumatic stress disorder and its symptoms identified with veterans returning from war, and which later came to be applied to the victims of rape and child abuse also continue to be a complex phenomenon. While large number of the veterans from war, recovered from the trauma it is found out that those men who had suffered both childhood trauma and war brutality found it difficult to overcome the trauma and even when they did it took more time compared to the men who suffered trauma of war alone.

Post-traumatic stress disorder studies primarily yet simply consider it to be a fear evoking syndrome. Interruptions in brain system that control flight, fight and freeze reactions to danger are perceived in trauma survivors. As van der Kolk puts it:

Traumatized people chronically feel unsafe inside their bodies: The past is alive in the form of gnawing interior discomfort. Their bodies are constantly bombarded by visceral warning signs, and, in an attempt to control these processes, they often become expert at ignoring their gut feelings and in numbing awareness of what is played out inside. They learn to hide from their selves (97)

But the impacts of childhood trauma do not end there. Trauma arising from adverse experiences in early life usually affects the emotional brain i.e. the right brain, which develops speedily in the early years of life. According to these advances in the studies on trauma, post-traumatic stress disorder is now not limited to a mere anxiety disorder symptom. In DSM 5, the diagnostic manual of the American Psychiatric Association, aspects of Complex post-traumatic stress order, “resulting from prolonged and repeated traumas, especially those originating in childhood” (Herman 257) are included.

Judith Herman categorized the main symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder into three namely “hyperarousal”, “intrusion” and “constriction”. Hyperarousal is the state of anxious expectation of danger. Naturally after the traumatic experience, human being’s natural sense of self security leaves him on constant alert regarding the return of the dangerous moment. Vigilance, hyper-alertness, nightmares etc. are seen in this stage. In the second stage of intrusion, the immediate threat is avoided as the years pass by, but the victimized people relive the event in the present frequently thus disrupting their present life:

It is as if time stops at the moment of trauma. The traumatic moment becomes encoded in an abnormal form of memory, which breaks spontaneously into consciousness, both as flashbacks during waking states and as traumatic nightmares during sleep (37).

Constriction is a state of numbness, when a person feels completely helpless and feels all resistance mechanisms are complete failure:

The person may feel as though the event is not happening to her, as though she is observing from outside her body, or as though the whole experience is bad dream from which she will shortly awaken. These perceptual changes combine with a feeling of indifference, emotional detachment, and profound passivity in which the person relinquishes all initiative and struggle. This altered state of consciousness might be regarded as one of nature's small mercies, a protection against unbearable pain (43).

These traumatic symptoms as put forwarded by Herman or different aspects of post-traumatic stress disorder are clearly visible in the characters selected for study and it is detailed in chapter 3.

Herman points out that the trust in basic human relationships is destroyed by the traumatic event. The self of the person is formed in relation to others. So, the breach of attachment from family, friends, lover, immediate community and society completely questions the victim's conviction in the divine force thus driving him to perpetual gloom. It was believed that the harm done to the individual's intimacy with

family and society is the secondary effect of trauma. But actually, the traumatic incidents primarily affect psychological systems of the self as well as the attachment that individual have with her family and community.

As Erik Erikson analyzed, the individual's feeling of safety is formed in the very childhood itself from the kid's relationship with the first caretaker. The trust formed in this relation sustains the child throughout her life. This importance attached to the basic trust formed in the relationship with the primary caregiver is reinforced by Herman,

In situations of terror, people spontaneously seek their first source of comfort and protection. Wounded soldiers and raped women cry for their mothers, or for God. When this cry is not answered, the sense of basic trust is shattered. Traumatized people feel utterly abandoned, utterly alone, cast out of the human and divine systems of care and protection that sustain life. Thereafter, a sense of alienation, of disconnection, pervades every relationship, from the most intimate familial bonds to the most abstract affiliations of community and religion. When trust is lost, traumatized people feel that they belong more to the dead than to the living (52).

A child's sense of self depends on the powerful nature of the care taker and his or her ability to wield it. The child feels respected when a powerful caretaker values the child's individuality and identity. The child learns to have then an autonomous feeling and tries to control her bodily function and to voice her opinions always. Another factor that has got some significance in the recovery process of the

individual is her resilience capacity. Highly resilient people can overcome the post-traumatic stress disorder by their ability to form and maintain creative relation with the society even when facing terrible traumatic incidents. Chapters 4 and 5 examine these aspects i.e. the support from primary caretaker or their failure and the recovery process of the children.

Before approaching the selected literary texts through the theoretical framework of psychological studies and trauma theories, an analysis of early theories on child sexual abuse, various kinds of abuse etc. will be attempted in the next chapter. Freedom from sexual exploitation being the human right of a child, the denial of that right deserves serious study and the present thesis will examine how the right of child is violated in the personal and public sphere and what impacts it had on the lives of those children.

It's not the prince at all,
but my father
drunkenly bent over my bed
circling the abyss like a shark,
my father thick upon me
like some jellyfish.

-- Anne Sexton, *Transformations*

Chapter 2

(Un)Hushed Voices: Initiation into a Forbidden World

Time does not cure the effects of incest. Although the memories go underground, the consequences of the abuse flourish-

-E. Sue Blume

The monster of child sexual abuse has eyed almost all children of ours and none can be said to be safe here. Often this monster takes the forms of fathers, brothers, uncles, cousins, teachers and even strangers. In other words, they take the form of the loved ones and trusted ones, most often, which aggravates the traumatic impact of child sexual abuse.

The World Health Organization (WHO) explains child sexual abuse as:

The involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared, or else that violate the laws or social taboos of society. Children can be sexually abused by adults or other children who are – by virtue of their age or stage of development – in a position of responsibility, trust, or power over the victim (10).

Briggs states that, sexual abuse included,

exposing one's genitals to a child, fondling a child's genitals, forcing a child to touch an adult's genitals or to engage in self-masturbation, exposing children to prostitution or pornography, involving a child in vaginal, oral or anal sexual activity, anal or oral penetration of a child with a penis, finger, or other object and involving a child in sexual behavior with an animal (8).

The Children's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, in their 2003 report on child maltreatment, describes child sexual abuse as:

the involvement of the child in sexual activity to provide sexual gratification or financial benefit to the perpetrator, including contacts for sexual purposes, molestation, statutory rape, prostitution, pornography, exposure, incest, or other sexually exploitative activities (107).

Ratican describes childhood sexual abuse as:

Any sexual act, overt or covert, between a child and an adult (or older child, where the younger child's participation is obtained through seduction or coercion). Irrespective of how childhood sexual abuse is defined it generally has significant negative and pervasive psychological impact on its victims (33).

The American Academy of Pediatrics indicates that sexual abuse occurs when "a child is engaged in sexual activities that the child cannot comprehend, for which

the child is developmentally unprepared and cannot give informed consent, and/ or that violate the law or social taboos of society” (186).

Sandra Butler defines child sexual abuse as “any sexual activity or experience imposed on a child which results in emotional, physical or sexual trauma” (5). Sexual abuse is the most denied, concealed, distressing and controversial form of child abuse (Summit and Kryso 238).

All these descriptions of child sexual abuse focus on the lack of consent from the child or the child’s inability to comprehend the unnatural happenings and the impacts it leaves on his/her mind. Definitions given above also make it clear that to describe it as child sexual abuse, it need not be sexual intercourse with the child in its complete sense, even the unnecessary touch with undesirable intention can cause lifelong trauma in child. It is a crime, an act of cruelty and brutality perpetrated on the young bodies, which are not ready for the act of sexual intercourse, in an age not emotionally ripe for either for sexual passion or for the consequent feelings of guilt, shame, anxiety and fear, thus causing bleeding wounds on the child’s psyche for a lifetime. It also becomes an imposition of power by a sadistic and exploitative adult, who gives vent to his sexual frustrations on a child who is too fragile to oppose, too terrified to complaint, and much reliant on the adult for its protection and survival.

Different definitions of child sexual abuse categorize abuses as contact and non-contact abuses. Contact abuse may include any activity from kissing to oral sex to intercourse while non-contact abuse comprises activities like exhibitionism of sexual organs like walking naked in front of the child, sexual talk proposed to arouse the abuser, sexual innuendoes etc.

According to Conte, sexual abuse may include exhibitionism, voyeurism, kissing, fondling, fellatio, cunnilingus, vaginal or anal intercourse or child pornography. Suzanne Sgroi writes that abusive behavior can comprise nudity, the adult disrobing in front of a child, exposing genitals to the child, stealthily watching the child undress, kissing the child in unwanted way, fondling or hugging the child in improper way, masturbating in front of the child, or making the child a participant in the masturbation, either one side or each other, fellatio, cunnilingus, anal penetration or normal sexual intercourse (116).

Child sexual abuse cannot be counted as a recent phenomenon, though it came to be acknowledged as abuse and discussed extensively only by the later decades of twentieth century. Child sexual abuse, a social predicament of endemic magnitude, has subsisted in all historical eras and societies. Since ancient times, almost all anecdotal records like legal, creative, theoretical, and fictional accounts have recorded activities that can be recognized as child sexual abuse. So adult- child sexual encounter is nothing new to modern era and such episodes can be picked from history too, but the perceptions on it were fluctuating, as in some eras, adult-child sex were viewed healthy and understandable, thus having social reception, while in some societies it was considered sinful all time.

At any cost, it cannot be considered a non- existent issue. One clay tablet from Sumerians, done in Cuneiform system of writing, relates the story of God Enlil and Goddess Ninlil, where the goddess shows her unwillingness to respond to his sexual desires,

My vagina is too little.

It knows not how to copulate

My lips are too small.

They know not how to kiss (qtd. In Rush 16)

In ancient Middle East, to ensure the support of his brothers and sons, a tribal chief gave his young daughters to them in marriage. In Pre- Islamic Arabia, fathers used to marry their favorite daughters. As Rush observes,

Mosaic Law, derived from Middle Eastern Legislation, also permitted marriages between brother and sister (same father only), cousins and uncle and niece. Men were even urged in the apocryphal Book of Tobit to “take wife of thy father’s tribe and not a strange wife which is not of thy father’s seed” in order to discourage them from straying from the Judaic faith (135)

There are biblical references to child sexual abuse and records on Greek and Roman civilizations too also accentuate that point. There are evidences that a considerable number of adults in ancient Greek and Roman cultures openly indulged in pederasty or rape. Boy brothels and rent-a-boy service was rampant in many cities. Law allowed men to use slave boys for their sexual gratification. As DeMause writes, “even where homosexuality with free boys was discouraged by law, men kept slave boys to abuse, so that even free-born children saw their fathers sleeping with boys” (43). Literature of Greece and Rome are abundant with examples where young

children, especially boys were used for fellatio and anal sex, quite often with the knowledge of parents too. Many infants were even castrated in the cradle itself, as the castrated infants were said to be the favorite sexual arousers for the noble men.

In Petronius' *The Satyricon*, deflowering scene of a seven-year-old girl, Pannychis, by Giton is presented as something natural and it is not depicted to evoke fear and horror in the readers.

Plato despises the practice of pederasty, "Learn the lesson that there is no kindness in the friendship of a lover; its object is the satisfaction of an appetite like the appetite for food. As wolves for lambs, so lovers' lust for boys (41). According to the traditional Talmudic Law, a girl child who is over three years of age could be engaged by sexual intercourse with her father's consent. Though the sexual intercourse with a child below three years was considered invalid- it was not considered crime. Even if the child was raped, it was not considered as a crime on the body of small girl, but as a crime of theft against the father, which could be legitimized through payment and marriage. Florence Rush quotes another situation:

According to Jewish folklore, a woman came before the renowned, revered second century Rabbi Aka ben Joseph. She complained that sexual intercourse had been forced upon her before she reached the age of three. After pondering the problem, the Rabbi compared the situation to a baby who submerges his finger in honey: "the first time he cries about it, the second time he cries about it, but the third time he sucks it. He ultimately enjoys the experience (18).

Pederasty was so prevalent in England too that in 1548, England passed a law for protecting boys from forced sodomy. In 1576, England passed another law too to put a stop to the forceful rape of girls under the age of 10. Christianity introduced the concept of childhood innocence where they are completely oblivious to sensual pleasures and special care was bestowed on them to keep them safe from wicked servants or nurses. As Cardinal Bernis puts it:

Nothing is so dangerous for morals and perhaps for health as to leave children too long under the care of chambermaids, or even of young ladies brought up in the chateaux. I will add that the best among them are not always the least dangerous. They dare with a child that which they would be ashamed to risk with a young man (qtd. in deMause 50).

The three hundred years of Europe's witch hunt witnessed many instances, where sexual offense at the hands of intimate relatives were attributed to a supernatural spirit. The stories of powerless, frustrated, sexually abused children who claimed to be invaded by an alien force became a recurrent narrative throughout the Europe for centuries.

Victims of sexual abuse, without a recourse, found it simpler to blame or even believe that spectral demons rather than flesh and blood men had violated them. During the three hundred years of Europe's witch hunt it was recorded that the daughter of Donald McGrigor said that she had been confronted by the devil in the shape of a man who "offered her a dollar if she should go with him." Margaret Duchall "did

freelie confess hir paction with the diwell, how he appeared first to hir in the likeness of a man in braun cloathis and ane blak hat. (qtd.in Rush 89)

Though there was strong condemnation of using children for sex from the eighteenth century, the practice of using them continued unabated and the belief that sexual intercourse with children is a good cure for venereal disease still drove men to the children.

Literature is abounded with the images of the seductive girls. In seventeenth century, John Dryden, presented the picture of an under-fifteen-year-old who impatiently implored to take her. Robert Burns also presented the picture of a virgin who begged to be robbed of maidenhood. The Victorian Age celebrated the cult of little girl and romanticized her with regard to her role relation with men. The girl was presented as the bewitching one who can tame the savage men with her charming ways, dedication and obedience. As Rush illustrates it, folklores of the day presented the tales of maidens whose kisses turned the ugly frogs into handsome princes. Shirley Temple was another such seductive image. This redeeming capacity of girls was a deep-rooted notion that it was not easy for the girl children to close the eyes to offer of prize for their sacrifice to an old man. Though with the course of time, conditions improved, and stories of good parenting flowed, it is possible that abusive and healthy child rearing practices have always coexisted in history. Rene Guyon in his work *Ethics of Sexual Acts* mentions how in China, it became a normal practice to use both little boys and girls to masturbate dinner guests under the table.

Florence Rush who made an extensive study on the nature and incidence of child sexual abuse, pointed out that that patriarchal system, in which women and children are considered mere properties of the male members of the family, paved the path for child sexual abuse. She points out that child molesters do not even understand that they are committing a crime and fathers have even got a belief that they have sexual rights over their children. Film, advertisement and pornography media, frequently depicting erotic and sensual pictures of children, reemphasized that notion. These incestuous fathers were further supported by the professionals and history books from Hebrew, Christian, Greek and Roman cultures. Instances were quoted from the past where marriage and cohabitation between men and children was common in certain parts of the world,

In Lepcha, for example, old men of eighty copulate with girls of eight and nobody minds. The fictional prototype pedophile, Humbert Humbert, justified his interest in Lolita by pointing to Dante, who fell in love with his Beatrice when she was nine, and Petrarch, who fell in love with his Laura when she was twelve (14).

Till 1800s child sexual abuse was not even recognized as abuse and the psychologically afflicted victims were counted as hysterical who suffered because of their weird imagination. The first extensive work on child sexual abuse was written by a French forensic-medical expert named Ambroise Tardieu, who approached the problem of child sexual abuse professionally and compassionately for the first time. While Tardieu chose to stand with the victims; another neurologist and physician of Hysteria from France, Jean Martin Charcot, was more concerned with the offenders

whom he preferred to call psychologically ailing rather than inhuman. He even dared to exonerate these offenders, branding them as honest family men and declared that eighty percentages of accusations against them were false.

Alfred Binet, another notable writer on child sexual abuse pointed out that all offenders had experienced some serious episode in their childhood, thus trying to mollycoddle the offenders and the child victims were put under a cloud. Masson, an expert critic on Freud points out that other French authors like Fournier, Bourdin and Brouardel too tried to defend the offenders. They held that children's assaults were imaginary, and these fancied lies originated from their hysteria. Bourdin even went to the extent of saying that the victims were not only lying but also took pleasure in their lie because of vice instincts and sinful passions. He also added that children are vulnerable to rapacity, loathing, vengeance, antagonism, jealousy and almost all passions that trouble the heart of the adult and it provoke them to lie against adults. Brouardel even said that, "Girls accuse their fathers of imaginary assaults on them or on other children in order to obtain their freedom to give themselves over to debauchery" (qtd. in Masson 44).

Freud's later observations on child sexual abuse were influenced by the writings of these French predecessors and by his own theory of unconscious. The theoretical base for child sexual abuse studies was given by Freud's seduction theory. Freud's exploration of the realm of unconscious laid the platform for his studies on child sexual abuse. In his ambitious venture to find the causes of hysteria in women, he heard the agonizing memories of childhood sexual encounters of women from affluent, conformist families with the men they had trusted and depended: family

friends, relatives and fathers. He took their pain to his heart and he published three papers entitled, *The Aetiology of Hysteria* (1896), where he presented a sample of 18 hysteric patients who were the victims of child sexual abuse by various caregivers. He announced that he had solved the mystery of the female neurosis and childhood sexual trauma is the fundamental cause for every case of hysteria:

All the strange conditions under which the incongruous pair continue their love relations-on the one hand the adult, who cannot escape his share in the mutual dependence necessarily entailed by a sexual relationship, and who is at the same time armed with complete authority and the right to punish, and can exchange the one role for the other to the uninhibited satisfaction of his whims, and on the other hand the child who in his helplessness is at the mercy of this arbitrary use of power, who is prematurely aroused to every kind of sensibility and exposed to every sort of appointment, and whose exercise of the sexual performances assigned to him is often interrupted by his imperfect control of his natural deeds- all these grotesque and yet tragic disparities distinctly mark the later development of the individual and of his neurosis, with countless permanent effects which deserve to be traced in the greatest detail (qtd. in Masson 6).

Freud explained further that child sexual abuse was responsible for the victims' neuroses the symptoms of which included "loss of voice or appetite, compulsive vomiting, sneezing, coughing, temporary blindness, deafness, paralysis or epilepsy and these symptoms, with no discernible organic base, were resistant to

medical treatment” (qtd. in Rush 82). Freud thought that he had got the solution for an issue that haunted thousands for a long time. He revealed that most of the offenders were fathers. Freud himself described his paper as, “one of those who had disturbed the sleep of the world” (Standard Edition, 21)

But Freud’s sympathy towards these women was short-lived. To put it in other words, his sympathy was not deep enough to outlive his subservience towards the respectable family men. His hysteric patients from upper class family and their revealing of incest obliterated the false notion that that was an unusual type of abuse and was the business of poor and the mentally challenged, but the hushed secret of the patriarchal upper-class family, where that was an endemic. Freud’s analysis made waves in the academic circle and his colleague Charcot found it outrageous that parents would assault their own children and rejected Freud’s theory. Freud realized that accusing fathers as sexual abusers would shake the foundation of deep-rooted patriarchy. Though he did not deviate much from his theory of hysteria ideologically or internally, in public conversations and lectures, he falsified his incest cases. Freud therefore included governesses, nurses and maids in the list of offenders. He was so zealous in perpetuating patriarchy that, in some narratives he even replaced fathers with uncles. Sensing the hostile medical and academic climate, Freud, in his famous letter to his friend Fliess, declared that he lost belief in his own theory of neurotica and thus disclaimed his own findings with the conclusion that his patients’ reports of sexual abuses were fantasies, originated from their own incestuous wishes.

Freud further added that most of the assaults never occurred as he believed and reported and he moved to the other side of the fence, by his statement that young

girl, needing to release sexual tensions, desired for the sexual consideration from her father. His last words on the subject appear in 1933 in a lecture on femininity,

Almost all my women patients told me that they had been seduced by their fathers. I was driven to recognize in the end that these reports were untrue and so came to understand that the hysterical symptoms are derived from phantasies and not from real occurrences. It was only later that I was able to recognize in this phantasy of being seduced by the father the expression of the typical Oedipus complex in women (qtd. in Masson 199).

He attributed this fantasy as a product of love and revenge of daughters towards their fathers:

Since childhood masturbation is such a general occurrence and is at the same time so poorly remembered, it must have an equivalent in psychic life. And, in fact, it is found in the fantasy encountered in most female patients-namely, that the father seduced her in childhood. This is the letter reworking which is designed to cover up the recollection of infantile sexual activity and represents an excuse and an extenuation thereof. The grain of truth contained in this fantasy lies in the fact that the father, by way of his innocent caresses in earliest childhood, has actually awakened the little girl's sexuality (the same thing applies to the little boy and his mother). It is these same affectionate fathers that are the ones who then endeavor to break the child of the habit of masturbation, of which they themselves had by that time become the

unwitting cause. And thus, the motifs mingle in the most successful fashion to form this fantasy, which often dominates a woman's entire life (seduction fantasy): one-part truth, one-part gratification of love, and one-part revenge (Minutes, 4).

Searching the reason for Freud's suppression and recantation of theory, Bolen emphasized role of the Victorian social and political environment which sheathed Freud and surmised that he "effectively colluded with a society that wished to deny the existence of child sexual abuse" (20).

Freud recognized that sexual tensions are quite normal in various developmental stages. Later, on developing his theory of Oedipus complex, Freud fortified his case of seduction. He explained that the girl child who primarily admires her mother, later shifts her awe towards her father on seeing his male genitalia. She holds him superior and powerful and she falls a victim to penis envy. Freud theorized that girls weave incestuous fantasies around their fathers and the cases of incest are mere contemplation intended to possess the love object. And the poor father/offender was considered a victim who fell within the seducer's spell.

Freud's refusal to validate common female experience, led to a dignified silence on the subject. As the customary practice, psychologists of the time were concerned with the psychology of men. Many psychological studies of the era including Helene Deutsch's massive *Psychology of Women*, published in 1944 makes no reference to incest. Freud's studies made such a negative impact on later cases of incest that the complaints of children were dismissed as fantasy, even in the presence of irrefutable physical evidence, such as venereal disease in children. This prejudice

against the child victim is reflected in legal profession too. For e.g. one of the most famous legal texts, John Henry Wigmore's *Treatise on Evidence* (1934) explained that women and girls tend to bring false accusations against men of good character, so that every girl who makes an accusation against her own father should be examined by a psychiatrist to prove the veracity of her words.

As Hare- Mustin put it, patients are made sick by their flight of the imagination, not by these experiences (26). Karl Abraham, another follower of Freud, opined that there must be something fundamentally wrong with those daughters as all girls are not molested (Rush 96).

Freud should be given the credit for putting forward a formal theory on child sexual abuse first, though he renounced it later due to the pressure from academic circle. Thus we can see that the historical phase of identification and then repression of the problem of child sexual abuse, as in the case of Freud was visible related to the studies conducted by Ambroise Tardieu too, with the difference that while Freud chose to withdraw his theory fearing the consequences of his contemporaries, Tardieu's findings were suppressed after his death. Freud's repudiation of his theory had negative impact on the later studies on child sexual abuse. People of his time wanted to reject the veracity of child sexual abuse, and their preaching against that epidemic got ingrained in the conscious of the society in such a way that, Freud's denial of his theory got warm reception than his theory on child sexual abuse. Subsequent approaches to the child sexual abuse were prejudiced by Freud's findings and his theory of Oedipus complex was readily acknowledged by his followers that, in later years, the narratives on child sexual abuse came to be regarded tall tales or the

products of untainted imagination. In some cases, where even proof existed for the occurrence of the abuse, these abusive episodes are presented as the daughter's seduction of her intractable father and child sex abuse events were narrowed to father daughter incest, and the tendency of blaming the victim and considering the victims not as victims but as participants even influenced the literature of the time till two surveys done by Russell and Wyatt proved contrary.

How far Freud had gone back from his early theory of hysteria is comprehensible from the treatment he extended to the ideas of his colleague, Sandor Ferenczi. Ferenczi had presented a paper, "Confusion of Tongues between Adults and the Child" (1932) where he emphasized that children were being sexually abused. Ferenczi was denounced by Freud for reviving interest in the magnitude of child sexual abuse.

Apart from these isolated voices like those of Tardieu and Ferenczi in favor of children, psychiatric community of the day chose to speak the same language. Even psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers disparaged the abused daughters for their abusive behavior. More often, child sexual abuse was hidden and even denied in order to ward off the blame on the victim or her family. Before 1960's even the psychiatric studies approached child sexual abuse as an exotic or rare occurrence, in which only the mentally challenged or promiscuous girls engaged along with sexually deviant men. Researchers in the field were hostile to the victims of abuse and chose to justify the abuser or sometimes to undervalue the pathetic experiences of the victim saying that it is a silly occurrence and no psychological damage is ensued from it. Notable

academic writers of the period like Bender, Blau and Grugett tried to shift the blame to the seductive nature of the children.

As Bender and Blau write,

...these children undoubtedly do not deserve completely the cloak of innocence with which they have been endowed by moralists, social reformers and legislators. The history of the relationship in our cases usually suggested at least some cooperation of the child in the activity, and in some cases the child assumed an active role in initiating the relationship...it is true that the child often rationalized with excuses of fear of physical harm or the enticement of gifts, but these were obviously secondary reasons. Even in the cases in which physical force may have been applied by the adult, this did not wholly account for the frequent repetition of the practice...Finally, a most striking feature was that these children were distinguished as unusually charming and attractive in their outward personalities. Thus, it is not remarkable that frequently we considered the possibility that the child might have been the actual seducer rather than the one innocently seduced (514).

Based on their study, Dr Karl Menninger, suggested that children who had premature sexual experiences usually turn out to be “unusually charming, attractive and emotionally healthy” (45).

After 15 years Bender and Grugett accused that “it was highly probable that the child had used his charm in the role of the seducer” (826). Though various surveys

came out divulging the enormity of child sexual abuse problems like the one conducted by Kinsey and his team in 1953, the general tendency of the time was to sweep the truth under the carpet and even in those cases where sexual abuse was admitted, the blame was shifted from the offender to the victim, who almost in all cases turned out to be the daughter. Though Kinsey's survey reported that significant number of girl children, i.e. 1 out of 4 girls and 1 out of 10 boys had been sexually assaulted before the age of eighteen, and that 85 percent of the offenders were known to their victims, he made a comment that,

It is difficult to understand why a child, except for its cultural conditioning, should be disturbed at having its genitalia touched, or disturbed at seeing the genitalia of other persons, or disturbed at even more specific sexual contacts. Some of the more experienced students of juvenile problems have come to believe that the emotional reactions of the parents, police and other adults...may disturb the child more seriously than the contacts themselves. The current hysteria over sex offenders may well have serious effects on the ability of many children to work out sexual adjustment some years later" (Kinsey et al. 56).

They even went to the extent of saying that children might be or might not be disturbed by the abuse or genital contact but actually they are even more disturbed by the responses of the adults. Writers like Kaufman, Peck, and Tagiuri argued that girls were fulfilling their Oedipal wish through the incestuous relation with their fathers: "The girls reacted to their mothers' unconscious desire to put them in the maternal

role. They at the same time received gratification from the fathers as the parents who loved them in this pathologic way” (277).

Literature abounds with examples supporting the recantation of seduction theory. An analytical study published in 1980 allied itself with the findings of Freud, with the conclusion that if the abuse had occurred more than once, it shows the active participation of the victim (Krieger et al.82). The report even went to the extent of affirming that the many of the abused children were not the victims but participants and the failure on the part of children to report the abuse shows that they enjoyed the satisfaction provided by the incest. Plummer recorded that, “It is comparatively rare that the sex act is forced upon the child” (225). West wrote that, “It is probable that most child victims could have removed themselves from the situation rather easily had they chosen to do so” (264).

Cohen suggested that the abused girls found justification for the gratification of their incestuous desires by taking it as their responsibility to keep the family unity and harmony through incest. Another theory suggested that the daughter victim was actually seeking verbal indulgence from the father as a vengeance for the neglect of mother (Alexander 80).

However, there arose some dissenting voices, though not too loud to be reverberated in the academic corridors. One of the outstanding followers of Freud, Carl Jung, was at loggerheads with him in his views on child sexual abuse. Another follower who was at odds with Freud was Otto Rank. It is said that Jung and Rank were victims of child sexual abuse and that might have been a reason they chose to defy Freud’s later theories (Bolen 20).

Kempe and his colleagues learnt the concept of the battered child syndrome which brought medical professionals and other professional groups in fighting for the legislative changes and it resulted in the passing of new legislation by fifty American states regulating child abuse (18). Same developments occurred in Canada, the United Kingdom and other countries thus setting the tone for the befitting recognition of the problem of child sexual abuse.

The problem of child sexual abuse was brought to public notice through the labors of feminists functioning within the anti-rape movement in the 1970s. Feminists took sexual violence against children as an artifact of patriarchy, where fathers were granted power and sway over all family members. The working of feminists resulted in the framing of child sexual abuse as a medical or criminal problem, thus absolving the children of the responsibility. By the early 1990s, there ignited a vigorous and dominant countermovement, led by the False Memory Syndrome Foundation. The organization was made up of the parents, accused by their children of abuse and those professionals who supported their cause. The countermovement disputed the authenticity of recovered memories of formerly forgotten abuse, collecting academic substantiations for the untrustworthiness of childhood memories (Whittier 15)

As Waldby et al. defined, “Patriarchy is the world view that seeks to create and maintain male control over females-it is a system of male supremacy” (97). So feminist discourses claim that child sexual abuse, one form of sexual assault, is inherent to and offshoot of a system of male dominance. As Herman and Hirschman state:

Whereas male supremacy creates the social conditions that favor the development of father- daughter incest, the sexual division of labor creates the psychological conditions that lead to the same result. Male supremacy invests fathers with immense power over their children, especially their daughters. The sexual division of labor, in which women nurture children and men do not, produces fathers who are predisposed to use their powers exploitatively. The rearing of children by subordinate women ensures the reproduction in each generation of the psychology of male supremacy. It produces sexually aggressive men with little capacity to nurture, nurturing women with undeveloped sexual capacities, and children of both sexes who stand in awe of the power of fathers (62).

Sexual abuse was considered as a system of a bigger predicament- a male sense of privilege to use females and children for sexual gratification. It was the expression of socially normative behavior, where power was synonymous with manhood. Feminists were not ready to exonerate the offender at the expense of culpable victim, family and society, as put forwarded by Freud and his followers and family system theory and they pointed out that offenders were completely responsible for the abuse.

The family in a patriarchal society is completely under the male dominion that, the defenseless and reliant position of the members of the family is worsened. The members of the family place trust in the authoritative father and the incest occurrence results in the treachery of this trust. In the traditional family structure, inflexible

gender disparities are so visible that mothers often become defenseless to defy the freedom taken by fathers in the capacity of elder male. Mothers also rendered powerless because of several reasons, including the high number of children, low education, and economic dependence.

Feminists believe that the abuser “is not the product of a disturbed or dysfunctional family and may be as normal or abnormal as the rest of the so-called normal population” (Rush 2). They propose that the unequal power structures favoring males explains the reasons for the parental incest.

Feminist theory also hypothesizes that incest is exploitation not only of power, but of a potent, overriding and calculating patriarch (Herman and Hirschman 24). Alexander and Schaeffer report that in families where intrafamilial abuse occurred, level of physical violence was high and, in these families, father was the prime perpetrator of violence (460). In some families, an older son is also found to be sexually abusing the victim or another sister. Another study revealed that abuse by a brother was often preceded by father – daughter incest in one –third of the families in which sibling abuse occurred (Smith and Israel 102). One study points out that in families where father- daughter incest occurs, high levels of patriarchal authority and control are extensive (Dadds et al. 578). As Cole states, “Incest will stop when males, of any age, are no longer more powerful and more privileged than females” (88).

By the 1970s, feminist scholars began to question the patriarchal justification that incest was a rare incidence and they argued that only taboo existed on revealing the incest (*Rocking the Cradle* 12). Feminists rejected to believe that incestuous sexual abuse was the doing of vicious and perverted individuals alone but the natural

byproduct of patriarchal structure. Feminists emphasized that incest and sexual abuse are noted by conspicuous gender dynamics as most victims are girls, and most perpetrators are men. Incest is created and upheld by male-dominant culture. Sexual abuse mirrors masculine sexual concept of bracketing together sex, dexterity, authority, subjugation, and ascendancy (Driver 48).

Incest underpins conservative feminine sexual norms of submissiveness, serving men's needs and obtaining a sense of self-esteem from serving family members and subservient relationships with others. In incestuous families, the father has complete clout over his family members and he keeps a Lear complex that he deserves complete obedience and loyalty from his wife and children (Gordon 121). Feminist accounts of incest and survivor testimonials replaced the seductive daughters, inefficient mothers and trapped fathers formula of male version of incest family depiction with themes of betrayal, breach of confidence, abuse of authority, and misuse.

In a patriarchal society, men can take sexual advantage of women and children easily. Family members are considered the properties of male head that he tends to take unwanted liberties with the women and children of his family. He gets the cultural back up too as the sexual urge of man is considered uncontrollable and need to be satisfied always, and this superior yet double standard helps him to justify his sexual exploitation of weaker ones in family.

Florence Rush points out that most of the child sexual abuse victims are female children and the abuse perpetrators are male, and this falls in accordance with the wide framework of patriarchy where women are directly and indirectly

subjugated. She also accused that sexual molestation and abuse of female children do not become serious concern of the society and allowed the stealthy entry into the society through customs and mores which applauds the sexual violence of men at the expense of the agony of the women. She believed that the sexual abuse became a ubiquitous and allowed affair because it became a decisive factor, though always kept under carpet, in socializing girls to enact a secondary role throughout their lives. The girl is equipped to accept the power hierarchy in the patriarchal social structure, to view herself as guilty, while she is not at all the sinner, to feel embarrassed while it is the turn of the perpetrator of the abuse to feel mortified and to have a resigned feeling to everything and to put up with every humiliation. She accuses that male dominated society considers that childhood sexual experiences are the preparatory sessions to the girls for the future subjugation by her lover, husband and family, "In short, the sexual abuse of female children is a process of education which prepares them to become the wives and mothers of America" (qtd. in *Rocking the Cradle* 75,76).

As Sandra Butler puts it,

I suggest that incestuous assault is not an unnatural acting out of a particular configuration of family interaction or personality types but is simply further along on the continuum of societally condoned male behaviors. We must recognize incestuous assault as culturally and politically sanctioned violence against women and children (11).

Finding answer to the question why children are selected and used for the mistreatment, critics respond variedly. Theorists have analyzed different complementary reasons and explanations for the sexual craving or obsession with

children. Berlin attributed sexual interest in children to biological factors like hormone levels or chromosomal makeup. Some abusers choose children in particular, or show conscious sexual interest in pre-pubertal children because children have some compelling emotional meaning for them (35). Groth and Birnbaum maintained that child molesters are people having arrested psychosexual development. So, in their emotional immaturity they can find congruence with children alone (176). Loss and Glancy analyzed that molesters have low self-esteem and little efficiency in their social relationships that emotional and physical entanglement with children give them a feeling of being dominant, invincible and cherished (328). Howells finds that child rapists are trying to overcome the memories of their own traumatic experience, by reversing the role of victimized with that of powerful and aggressive victimizer. Storr remarks that child sexual abuse is an extension of some male socialization values placed on dominant person in the sexual relationship and values placed on youthful and subservient partners.

Wenet et al. postulated that early sexual experiences with children make men conditioned to the sex with children that they will always seek pleasure from children. Theorists dealing with pedophilia find that individuals feel a blockage in their ability to meet sexual and emotional needs in adult heterosexual relationships, which is considered to be normal. In accordance with the Oedipal theory, Hammer and Glueck points out that those having intense conflicts about their mothers find it difficult to keep a relation with adult women. Another group found to be suffering of this sexual blockage because of the impotency they felt in the first sexual attempts or the abandonment by their first lovers that they come to associate adult sexuality with pain

and disturbance that they prefer children as alternate source of satisfaction. According to Kinsey et al. the offenders are sexually frustrated and are unable to win attention from older females that they are drawn to children who are unable to protect themselves. Child molesters are timorous, unassertive, derisory, discomfited with poor social skills that they fail to develop adult social and sexual relationship. Storr remarks, a man inflicted with pedophilia, find it difficult to derive sexual pleasure from an adult. His inclination to children is not from superfluity or lust, but from a timid inability to make contact with adults.

In incestuous relationships, as the marital relationship breaks down and the wife gets separated physically and emotionally for some reason or other, and if the father is too egoistic and pseudo moralistic to seek sexual pleasure outside the family, father may decide to turn to his daughter as an alternate option (DeYoung 17). Critics like Weinberg, came out with strange arguments that norms tabooing extramarital affairs prevented incestuous fathers from seeking out other adult women rather than his child. Theoreticians also pointed out that child molesters are generally people with poor impulse control. Storr shows that even those men who are actually normal, resort to sexual molestation of children when their self-control and judgment abilities are impaired by brain damage or alcohol. All sexual molesters are not inhibited by pedophile motives and yet they lean towards pedophilic crime under conditions of personal strain arising out of unemployment, loss of love in the marital front, loss of a relative or friend etc. Feminist theories of sexual abuse projected certain social and cultural elements that supported or excused sexual feelings towards children. Florence Rush writes how religion and law gave sanction to adult - child sexual interaction.

Armstrong blamed the unwillingness of legal system to deal strictly with child sex abuse. Feminist theorists also held that public and professionals tend to blame victims rather than offenders that offenders use these justifications for their selfish motives. Rush writes that inhibitions against child molestation is minimized by the social approval for the excesses of patriarchal and paternal authority. In a patriarchal set up, families are viewed as private institutions where the will of fathers are executed:

The seduction of daughters is inherent in a father-dominated family system, where the man expects to have his will obeyed as head of household and expects his family to provide him with domestic and sexual services. When patriarchal beliefs about rights of fathers provide further excuse for initiating sexually gratifying relationships within the family, it is not hard to see how many “Mr. Averages” can manage to overcome all the social and emotional barriers to committing incest with their daughters (Nelson as qtd. in *Sourcebook* 114).

Many research studies show that adult sex abusers were said to have been sexually molested in their own childhood. A study conducted by Gebhard, Gagnon, Pomeroy and Christensen found that pedophile persons showed higher rates of childhood sexual contacts with adults compared to the normal persons controlling their sexual urges. Groth and Burgess’s study established that 32% of a group of 106 child molesters reported some form of sexual trauma like witnessing sexual acts, forceful watching of pornography etc. in their early formative period compared to 3%

of normal group. These offenders tried to subject the victim to the same sexual exploitation that they suffered in their younger age.

Seghorn, Binder and Prentky compared the rate of molestation in the backgrounds of both rapists and child molesters and observed that 57% of child molesters were sexually abused in their childhood while only 23% of rapists were sufferers of the same. The sexual aptitudes and fantasies of those who were sexually molested as children were modeled on their own experience that they try to repeat the same in their adult life by victimizing more children. Thus, reenacting the drama of victimization these adults abused as children are making an attempt to master their trauma. In a disrupted family, adults sometimes turn to the powerless children for their emotional, physical or sexual gratification. Sandra Butler describes it as follows: -

In many cases, incestuous behavior serves as a process initiated by an adult to arrest the rate of disintegration that is occurring within the family. When a marital relationship becomes strained, when the roles and responsibilities of the adults in a family become blurred, when pain and estrangement grow to an extreme, there can occur among the family members an unconscious search for alternatives to that erosion (139).

But instead of seeking fresh pastures outside and finding a solution for the emotional and sexual needs there, the dissatisfied person goes inward to the family to draw all kinds of consolation from its members so that they can keep up the pretense of the loving and happy family. The sexual dysfunction between the couple gradually affects the family as a whole. When the family members fail to contain these anxieties,

disintegration reaches the crucial turn, and the burden is carried by the family itself. In such a situation the worst sufferers are the children. Into the place vacated by spouses, children are pushed forward. Children sense it as their duty to keep the family members together, though the price they pay is their healthy and happy lives.

In a patriarchal system, where all power is vested with men and where much is expected of them, even small changes in his positions hurt his pride, the repercussions of which is reflected on the family.

For some men, decreasing status in the job market leading to a change in the family's social status can trigger long-buried doubts about their ability to provide and be successful in the limited definitions they were taught as young boys. For others, entering middle can provoke anxiety about loss of youth, which may precipitate angry and vitriolic behavior directed at their families. In an effort to maintain their image as head of the household, these men may become increasingly tyrannical. Threats, physical violence and alcoholism often surface as the symptoms of their inner pain and alienation and without recognition, will escalate as the men continue to find ways to mask their growing feelings of powerlessness and frustration (Butler 140).

Some adults, wallowing in their memories of past where they themselves felt powerless and helpless to stand boldly against the perpetrators of abuse, that they may not be able to meet other's need of care, nurturance, security and tenderness, may inescapably precipitate abuse upon their children. This may cause multiple generation of wounded and broken children within a family circle.

The cause for incestuous attack may be sought in the aggressor's mixed feelings of wrath, enmity, timidity, disappointment and loneliness. All men who feel sexually stimulated towards their children do not give vent to it. The reasons for this may vary.

As Summit and Kryso observe:

One problem is a lack of impulse control, either sexual or emotional. This may be the result of transient stress or may be characteristic of the individual. The second problem is a confusion of roles. The child is regarded at times as something other than a child, or as a surrogate for someone else (qtd. in Butler 67).

Sandra Butler observes that: -

In nearly all the studies of adult male sexual offenders that have been done to date, well over half, and in some cases nearly three quarters, of the men studied who are serving time in prison were found to have been sexually abused as young boys without any intervention. Therefore, just as rigid definitions of maleness are passed on from generation to generation, emotional, physical and sexual abuses are behaviors exhibited by men who most likely experienced such abuse in their own childhoods. For it is in our homes that we learn or do not learn to develop ways of being loving, sensual and sexual, and, sadly, what these men learned from their parents they learned too well (67).

Though all aggressors are not the victims of the abusive environment in which they were brought up, factors like rigid family atmosphere, orphaned feeling, job dissatisfaction, discontented conjugal life etc. too lead men to abuse the victims. Patriarchal society has conditioned some roles for men like domineering husband, dictatorial father, sexually active, competent in the outside world, bread winner of the family etc. but when they fail to access this socially approved and directed model, they are inclined to use the other tool, sanctioned by patriarchy .i.e. their genitals.

Men expect their wives to play the traditional role of wife and mother as sanctioned by the society and they feel dejected and disappointed when these roles are reversed within the family. As Herman and Hirschman observe:

Fathers who feel abandoned by their wives are not generally expected or taught to assume primary parenting responsibilities. We should not find it surprising, then, that fathers occasionally turn to their daughters for services (housework and sexual) that they formerly expected from their wives (98).

When mothers refrain from their wifely and motherly duties, the abused daughter is somehow compelled to take her mother's role. She might be angry and confused inwardly but she sacrifices her peace for her family. She keeps the secret within herself and suffers victimization in order to avoid the disruption of the family.

Girls who are victims to incestuous abuse are doubly oppressed. First, by the parents, who, fail to give support and guidance to their daughters and secondly, by the society, which puts the responsibility of the abuse on the girls' shoulders.

Parents make great uproar when their child is abused by a stranger. Assailant will be prosecuted with immediate effect in such a case. At the same time, if the perpetrator of crime is a blood relation, the reaction might be cold, especially if the offender is the bread winner.

The publication of some serious studies on child sexual abuse like *Conspiracy of Silence: The Trauma of Incest* (1978) by Sandra Butler, *Sexually Victimized Children* (1979), *A Sourcebook on Child Sexual Abuse* (1986), *Child Sexual Abuse: New Theory and Research* (1984) by David Finkelhor, *The Best Kept Secret: Sexual Abuse of Children* (1980) by Florence Rush and *Sexual Exploitation: Rape, Child Sexual Abuse, Sexual Harassment* (1984), *The Secret Trauma* (1986) by Diana. E. Russell, *Kiss Daddy Goodnight: A Speak-Out on Incest* (1978) by Louise Armstrong had a tremendous impact on creating modern consciousness and exciting interest in recording the occurrence and outcome of child sexual abuse. The later flow of documents including autobiographical stories, research conducted in the field of social and behavioral sciences, interest shown by health, mental health, social service and legal professionals also played a pivotal role in bringing this tabooed subject out of closet.

Iceberg Slim, a notorious pimp revealed in his autobiography, how he was forced to perform cunnilingus at age three and he attributed his succeeding brutality towards women generally and prostitutes in particular to this abusive episode in his childhood. Lord Byron's biographers attributed his misogynic behavior and torment of women to his abusive experience at the age of eight at the hands of his nursemaid

The taboo on speaking on incest was exploded by incest narratives which came out in large numbers. Oprah Winfrey's talk show brought out first hand experiences of incest survivors including her own. The famous singer Billie Holiday in her autobiographical work, *Lady Sings the Blues* (1956) narrated how she was raped by an older man. Marilyn Van Derbur Adler, Miss America of 1958 publicly revealed in a program that she was raped by her father from the age of five to eighteen. Latino rock guitarist Carlos Santana, in a television program revealed that he was abused in his childhood for two years the memories of which haunted him throughout his life. Katherine Brady, in her book *'Father's Days: A True Story of Incest*, revealed the abusive experience she went through in painful language,

Each increase in my guilt, shame and disgust caused an equal increase in my need to create a glossy pleasing surface. The darker the inside the brighter the outside must be to hide it...By the time I reached high school, I had two absolutely separate personalities. The public one, exhibited to family and friends alike was friendly, stable, honest, thoughtful, courteous, trustworthy, reliable and cooperative. The private one was fearful, isolated, anxious and depressed (58,59).

Quentin Bill wrote a biography of his aunt Virginia Woolf, in which he explained how she was raped by her two step brothers. Claudia Dreifus in her work, *Woman's Fate*, wrote her bitter experiences with male baby sitter and his father. Robin Morgan, in her poem, *The Father*, wrote how she felt him between her legs.

In response to these horrifying revealing from hundreds of people, a counter movement called False Memory Syndrome was started. It alleged that therapists

deliberately and consciously planted in the minds of patients the idea that they were sexually molested in their childhood, thus trying to acquit the abusers of incest charges (Virani 13).

Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970), Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1982), Jane Smiley's *A Thousand Acres* (1991), Dorothy Allison's *Bastard out of Carolina* (1992) and Sapphire's *Push* (1996) were added to this tradition of incest stories. Incestuous narratives were flowing in the closing decades of twentieth century, revealing the trauma children suffered.

The narratives show that continual child abuse episodes are staged in an atmosphere of insidious domestic terror, where the normal caretaking association between the child and caregivers is already in ruin. Patriarchal families are like totalitarian regimes where the fatal wishes of the head are maintained by means of aggression and death warnings, rules are made and enforced by them, obedience and loyalty are bought with petty rewards and devastation of mutual relationships with the ruse of compulsive segregation, secrecy and treachery. This terrifying ambience makes the helpless children dependent on the abusers.

As Herman puts it,

The omnipresent fear of death is recalled in the testimony of numerous survivors. Sometimes the child is silenced by violence or by a direct threat of murder; more often survivors report threats that resistance or disclosure will result in the death of someone else in the family: a sibling, the non-offending parent, or the perpetrator. Violence or

murder threats may also be directed against pets; many survivors describe being forced to witness the sadistic abuse of animals (98).

Sexual predations by strangers or psychopaths who abduct and murder the victim still occupy the prime place in various false myths connected to child sexual abuse. It is high time that warning, about strangers lurking in the school yard in car, looking for a chance to pounce upon children, should give way to, or should include suggestive caution about those familiar hands, supposed to lull the children with love, but instead makes them preys to haunting nightmares throughout their lives. This myth on stranger perpetrator is refuted by DeFrancis who established that sexual exploitation occurs within the immediate circle of the child (34). Several critics came to the conclusion that, of the reported cases of child sexual abuse, most of them were perpetrated by known persons and no amount of force was exerted in it. The absence of physical force in an abusive relationship was in proportion to the familiar relationship between the victims and perpetrators. Sexual abuse of children occurs frequently, more often than rape, as a family member or friend can take advantage of children's helpless situation (DeFrancis 58). The perpetrators could easily abuse a child from its early age to ten years or longer without being caught out.

So, considering the prevalence of intra familial as well as extra familial child sexual abuse, novels depicting both kinds of sexual abuse have been included in this study. Russell differentiated between extra familial and intra familial abuse. She defines extra familial as:

...one or more unwanted sexual experiences with persons unrelated by blood or marriage, ranging from petting (touching of breasts or

genitals or attempts at such touching) to rape, before the victim turned 14 years, and completed or attempted forcible rape experiences for the ages of 14 to 17 years inclusive (35).

She defines intra familial abuse as “any kind of exploitive sexual contact that occurred between relatives, no matter how distant the relationship, before the victim turned 18 years old” (135).

Blume defines incest as:

... both sexual abuse and abuse of power, is violence that does not require force...It is abuse because it does not take into consideration the needs or wishes of the child, rather meeting the needs of the 'caretaker' at the child's expense... incest can be seen as the imposition of sexually inappropriate acts, or acts with sexual overtones, by - or any use of a minor child to meet the sexual or sexual/emotional needs of one or more persons who derive authority through ongoing emotional bonding with that child (4).

The Incest Survivors' Campaign gives the following definition for incest,

The sexual molestation of a child by any person whom that child sees as a figure of trust or authority... we see the questions of age, blood relationship and taboo as red herrings which obscure the central issue: the irresponsible exploitation of children's ignorance, trust and obedience. Incest is the abuse of power. (qtd. in Nelson 19)

Incest is a form of child sexual abuse, when an adult starts a sexual liaison, need not be sexual intercourse always, and with a person under the age of consent and this kind of sexual victimization becomes the critical one, leading to long term psychological trauma, compared to the sexual victimization of children at the hands of strangers. Critics have divided opinion over the prevalence of incestuous abuse; some reporting that father- daughter incest is the rampant one, while some argue that sibling incest i.e. the older brothers sexually abusing younger sisters is the commonest abuse. Compared to the extra familial sexual abuse, the trauma lasts for a long time in the cases of incestuous abuse, as the abuse too lasts for a long time and it involves breach of trust too.

Though most horrific and most depicted form of child sexual abuse is perpetrated by fathers, this study includes abuse by siblings, uncles, mother, peer and even stranger. As Bolen remarks, superfluous and erroneous way of focusing on intra familial child sex abuse and especially on father daughter incest, has limited the real scope child sex abuse issues (Bolen 20). Yet in this study more focus has been given to incestuous abuse of children, as it involves the family too more terribly than it is in the case of abuse done by strangers. Moreover, the family often sets the stage for the abuse, so any diagnostic study on child sexual abuse will not be complete without placing it in the context of family.

As Louise Armstrong says:

Rape by a stranger is quick and brutal. It allows for a straightforward reaction— anger, hate. But the seduction or coercion of a child by a needed and trusted parent is far more complex. It is not amazing that

some run away, that some turn to drugs, that some, having been called slut by their fathers, become promiscuous, prostitutes. What is amazing is that many (no-one knows how many) do not (Kiss Daddy 40).

Sexual deviation and perversion are considered something alien to well-to-do families and the monopoly of sexual abuse was given by the dominant culture to those fringe elements of society like gays, lesbians, black men, pedophiles etc. To explode that myth too literary works depicting abuses in both upper and lower classes are included in the study.

As Sandra Butler writes, “Victims are white, black, Latin and Asian. They are male and female. They are five, seven and twelve years old. They are fat, skinny, ugly, beautiful, poor, wealthy and middle class. Incest is relentlessly democratic” (28).

The scope of child sexual abuse studies has often been reduced to the question of absence or presence of penetration, while the traumatic effect of trauma is based on several other characteristics like frequency, duration, age at onset, type of abuse, relation with perpetrator and number of perpetrators. So, in my study, sexual abuse cases, in which direct insertion has not occurred, too are included.

The novels selected for study can be classified according to the nature of the relationship between the abuser and the victim.

Father –Daughter Abuse: -

In our childhood stories, stepmothers were the villainess for the girls always and there came, the princes for their salvation. But there are many untold or unpopular

versions, where girls are not harmed by their stepmothers but by their own fathers. The incestuous intent is an ingredient in many Cinderella variants, though the popular one presents the stepmother as the villainess.

Of all kinds of incest abuse, the one drawing the most notice at present is that of between a father and a daughter. Earlier it was thought to be a rare occurrence, which happened only in extremely disintegrated families. But later reports from treatment centers and clinics show that father –daughter incest is unbridled and of endemic proportions.

Many stories abound of fathers who fall preys to the charm of his own daughter after the deaths of their wives. In the tale of Many-Furs, a widowed king, in frantic search of a woman who takes after his departed wife, sends his soldiers every nook and corner of his kingdom. He gets no one who meets his expectation, but his own daughter and proposes her. The dejected daughter tries to thwart his ambition, by asking for three dresses, one as golden as the sun, one as silver as the moon and one as dazzling as the stars and a cloak made from the fur of every kind of bird and animal in the kingdom. When her father provides even that she flees from that castle, seeks refuge in another kingdom where her identity is revealed and she is married to the prince.

Another popular folk tale which narrates the incestuous love of father towards his daughter is that of the legend of Saint Dympna. Here again, the daughter makes her escape from the palace, only to be caught by the father later. The fifteen-year-old daughter is beheaded by her father for not giving consent to the marriage. Though her life is not recorded with authenticity, she was sanctified by the people as the one who

resisted incest. The Catskin category of fairy tales features a girl fleeing from a father who seeks from her a romantic relationship or marriage. There are other stories of this type like *The Princess Who Would Not Marry Her Father*, *The King Who Wished to Marry His Daughter*, *Little Cat Skin*, *Cap O' Rushes*, *Donkeyskin*, *Allerleirauh*, *The She-Bear*, *Mossycoat*, *Tattercoats*, *The Princess That Wore A Rabbit-Skin Dress*, and *The Bear*.

To be sexually exploited by a familiar and trusted person is a vital and seminal experience in the lives of many a woman. But studies have proved that it is not a rare occurrence in the world, but it has been time after time brought to light yet over and over again buried. Though many serious explorations into the emotional and sexual lives of women lead to the revealing of incest secret, timely attempts were made to suppress this unpleasant truth. Though cases were produced before the psychiatrists with all the vividness, the correctness of the detail, and the internal logical characteristic of real memories, conclusions often revolved around the point that women often fantasize or lie about childhood sexual encounters with adults, especially their biological fathers. This intellectual tradition of suppressing the truth about incest owes its origin to the works of Freud as already discussed.

Blaming the victim is another part of strategy used by the apologists for the father-daughter incest, once they fail to attest that it is an undamaging pastime. Quite interestingly, the direct and indirect victims of the incest, the daughter and wife of the incest perpetrator respectively, are held responsible for the wayward nature of the father. Thus, incest romances created three stereotypes-the naive father who cannot

resist seducing daughter, the tempting and enticing daughter and the frigid mother who drives the father to the lap of little temptress.

The image of seducing daughter is not a new one to literature. It was part of the mythical and religious tradition. The Biblical story of Lot and his daughters also shows the picture of seductive daughters thus exonerating the father completely, who had impregnated them. Secular literature also thrived with the seductive nymphets, from Nabokov's *Lolita*, being a brilliant example. The romance between father and daughter became a much-loved topic for every man's magazines. Even the clinical literatures of the time conjured up the image of mysterious child who is intent on entrapping men and is the instigator of the sexual relationship. D. James Henderson, a psychiatric authority on incest writes:

The daughters collude in the incestuous liaison and play an active and even initiating role in establishing the pattern. The girls may be frightened and lonely and welcome their father's advances as expression of parental love. The incestuous activity often continues until it is discovered, and the girls do not act as though they were injured... Like her mother, the incestuous daughter is unlikely to report the liaison at first or to protest about it. If she eventually does, it is as much precipitated by anger at her father for something else or jealousy of his friendship with another woman, as a real objection to his incestuous behavior. (qtd. in Herman and Hirschman 40)

But feminist critics here too postulated that father daughter incest is not an abnormality and aberration but banal and humdrum abuse of patriarchal authority. As

it is in the case of rape, domestic violence and sexual trafficking, incest is also a means of perpetuating the supremacy of fathers, brothers or male members in the society.

The impact of trauma is said to be high when sexual abuse was perpetrated by a relative especially from fathers or father figures. Finkelhor, Briere and Runtz and Russell found that abuse perpetrated by a father or father figure was more traumatic than any other kind of abuses occurred inside or outside of the family.

Mother –Daughter Abuse

Incest, or intrafamilial abuse is abuse by a family member namely fathers, siblings, uncles, cousins and sometimes even grandfathers, though with lesser regularity. Of all types of incest, mothers' sexual abuse of children is unthinkable matter for refined and civilized minds.

It is not intended to argue that only men sexually abuse children. Women do sexually abuse children, and low relative rates of abuse by women do not mean low absolute rates. Many critics think that there is an under-reporting of the prevalence of women who resort to the sexual abuse of children. But women often get the advantage of the general concept that, women fulfilling the roles of nurturers and care givers are general considered to be incapable of sexual aggression and violence. And this social construction of women as asexual caregivers and nurturers may lead to more severe psychological trauma for children abused by women.

As women are socialized to select partners who are older and more powerful, they naturally do not get attracted to children. Sexual contact with children may be condoned more by male subculture than by female subculture (Rush 76). Moreover,

as women are culturally and socially prepared to perform maternal responsibilities, they might be more sensitive towards the welfare and emotional comfort of the children and the fear of hurting children prevent them from such activities.

Stepfather-Stepdaughter Abuse

Kathleen Coulborn Faller observes that:

In about half of the cases of stepfather-daughter incestuous abuse and sexual abuse by the mother's live-in boyfriend in her study of over 1500 cases of child sexual abuse in Michigan, the sexual abuse began quite soon after the relationship with the mother was established. In such cases, one often finds the perpetrators simultaneously courting mother and daughter (15).

Incest has been defined as the "the crime of marrying, and /or having coitus with a person or persons who are biologically closely related (consanguineous)" (Beserra et al. 145). This stress on the blood ties leaves the impression that stepfather-stepdaughter incest is less severe than biological father-daughter incest. Judith Herman elaborates that "From the psychological point of view, it does not matter if the father and child are blood relatives. What matters is the relationship that exists by virtue of the adult's parental power and the child's dependency" (70).

Stepfathers are not heritably related to the stepdaughters, and so the incest taboo does not bother them much. And in the relationship between stepfather-stepdaughter, there lacks the usual bonding that supposed to exist between biological

father and daughter. Russell reports that abuse by stepfathers involved more serious violations.

Sibling Abuse

Of the various kinds of incest, that between father and daughter is the kind reported most frequently to hospitals, clinics and police. Yet there were doubts whether it was really the most common form or not. Finkelhor observes:

It has often been speculated that in fact brother-sister incest was the most common, but that it rarely came to public attention-in part because it was less taboo, in part because it involved minors, but perhaps most importantly, because it did not set up a similarly explosive family conflict (*Sexually Victimized Children* 89)

Definitely sibling abuse also disrupts the equations in relations and norms of sex in the family, but it does not reverse any kind of family roles as it is in father-daughter incest. So, family members, including mothers are not much aggrieved over sibling incest and even when it is discovered they tend to deal it easily within the family. Though literature often, trivialize sibling incest as sexual experimentation among the same age children, it is not the case always, especially when the abuser is five years or more, older than the girl. There were opinions as expressed by Walters, "It is rare for an older brother to force a younger sister into sexual relations" (128). But Finkelhor observed that the scarcity of reporting does not mean that it was rare but that it was unlikely to bring it out of the closet.

Sibling incest should not be romanticized as it is sometimes is in literature and in men's magazines (Pomeroy 78). The façade of innocent childhood sexual games cannot be given to every case, especially when the perpetrator is quite older and uses force. In a few societies, sibling marriages were sanctioned as it was among the royal families of the ancient Egyptians and the Incas. Philip Nobile states that, "brother- sister relations are attended by fewer complications (than father- daughter cases), since domination is not a factor" (157)

Many researchers of child sexual abuse were ready to put the cloak of innocence on the brother-sister incest. Social anthropologist Robin Fox, propounded that all sex between prepubescent children is harmless mutual sex play.

David Finkelhor writes:

Women who had sibling sexual experiences have markedly higher sexual self-esteem than women who had other kinds of childhood sexual experiences. Nor does it make any difference if a distinction is made between positive and negative childhood experiences ...Positive sibling childhood experiences had an impact that other positive childhood experiences did not. Something about the fact of having a positive experience with a sibling rather than some other partner seemed to be important for affecting adult self-esteem (*Child Sexual Abuse*187).

Brother –sister incest is often discounted when put in comparison with father-daughter incest, though in both cases power relationship exists. Joann DeLora and

Carol Warren describe: “incestuous sisters are more likely to be willing participants or even aggressors than are incestuous daughters” (244). Karen Meiselman opined that, “incestuous brother is often the oldest brother in a large family with weak or absent parents and thus has the intrafamilial power to effect incestuous relationship with his sisters” (293).

But the assumption that brother-sister incest is free of any kind of trauma is not reliable. An unwelcomed sexual experience with brother is traumatic in two ways, one is the trauma arising out of unwanted sex, second is the trauma resulting from the violation of the brother-sister incest taboo. Sibling love and care is an ennobled feeling and it is this relationship that is affected by this incestuous trauma. As Meiselman shows:

There seems to be no theories about family conspiracies, role reversals, or unconscious motives for the occurrence of incest, probably because sexual contact between brother and sister is seen as an understandable, completely natural consequence of a lack of parental guidance (269).

Stephen Bank and Michael Kahn attaches seriousness to brother-daughter incest as it was to any other incestuous abuse by other family members. They allege that the trauma arising out of sibling incest is greatly underestimated. They write that,

It is clear to us that the breaking of the incest taboo by siblings is special, and that its greater frequency does not mean that its ramifications are any less significant than are those of the least frequent type, that between mother and son... We believe that sibling incest has

profound implications for personality development because it is a basic attack on social custom and taboo and often involves such contradictory feelings as guilt, love, shame, empathy, and anger as well as the processes of identification (169).

Abuse by Uncle

Abuse by uncles are said to be a common thing, sometimes common than any other type of abuse. But as the incest taboo is not severe as it is in the case of fathers and siblings, it is not received with the same shock in the society. But that does not mean that impact will be less on the victim.

Two novels selected for the thesis, *The Bluest Eye* and *Push* come under the category of father-daughter incest.

The Bluest Eye (1970) is *the* first novel published by Toni Morrison, an American writer who had won Nobel Prize in literature. It is the story of a young girl, Pecola Breedlove who grows up in the state of Lorain, during the years after Great Depression. As the title of the novel shows, it depicts Pecola's frantic wish and pursue for the bluest eyes, which she associates with acceptance in the society. A victim of racial loathing, domestic disharmony and incestuous abuse, she falls into insanity by the end of the novel.

The story is told through the view point of Claudia McTeer, a nine-year-old girl. The miserable life of Pecola is presented through Claudia, who is so fond of Pecola. Cholly Breedlove, Pecola's father is a drunkard and does not care for family. Pauline Breedlove, her mother, is infatuated with the White family for whom she

works. Cholly and Pauline often fight and beat each other. Pecola's brother Sammy runs away now and then. Pecola, who witnesses these fights, longs to possess bluest eyes, which she thinks will play a magic charm on her family.

Cholly rapes Pecola in his drunken state, "the confused mixture of his memories of Pauline and the doing of a wild and forbidden thing excited him" (128). Pecola gets pregnant. Cholly runs away. Pauline completely turns hostile against Pecola and beats her severely. Then she abandons her. Pecola's baby dies prematurely. Pecola thinks that she has attained the bluest eye by the magic played by Soaphead Church and creates an imaginary self to speak her mind as she feels that others avoid her because of their jealousy towards her for her beautiful eyes.

The Bluest Eye was the forerunner of the growing list of female-authored novels that disagree with the Freudian contention that most claims of incest are fictitious expressions of prohibited daughterly craving towards their fathers and sought revision of the oedipal complex theory that postulated that incest claims are invariably false. All the works selected for the study disrupt the Freudian foundation for incest.

The second novel which falls in this category of father – daughter incest is Sapphire's *Push*. It starts with the lines:

I was left back when I was twelve because I had a baby for my fahver. That was in 1983. I was out of school for a year. This gonna be my second baby. My daughter got Down Sinder. She's retarded. I had got left back in the second grade too, when I was seven, 'cause I couldn't

read (and I still peed on myself). I should be in the eleventh grade, getting ready to go into the twelfth grade so I can go on graduate. But I'm not. I'm in the ninth grade.

I got suspended from school' cause I'm pregnant which I don't think is fair. I ain' did nothin'! (3)

It relates the attempts of a young black teenager to survive a childhood of physical abuse and incest. Told as a part testimonial of an incest survivor, the novel adopts naturalistic style as the author had collected the raw material from the life experiences of the girls, she had met at literacy workshops for abuse survivors. The novel depicts the most bizarre form of abuse inflicted upon a female child body. *Push* represents a rare incest scene in literature and in reality, as it depicts not only the father's incest but a mother-driven incest as well. She gets pregnant twice from her father, thus inviting the wrath and hostility of her mother. *Push* also shows the collapse in generational mothering as Toosie, Precious's grandmother is also seen as a complicit in Precious's marginalization. Precious's childhood and teenage are weighed down by neglect, psychological and emotional abuse, sexual abuse at the hands of both parents and adversary reactions of racial society. But Precious emerges from her long-term physical, mental, and sexual abuse by her parents into a functioning mother of two children, a young woman who gets educated and starts working. The pathetic scene of the novel is the one in which Precious realizes that she has caught AIDS from her father. It thwarts her dream of a happy life with her children. Yet she does not get dejected but keeps up her positive spirit by joining incest survivors' group, continuing her education and writing poems.

Set in the Harlem section of New York in the 1980s, what differentiates *Push* from other twentieth century novels, especially American novels depicting bad mother, is the narration of abuse at various level - verbal, physical, and sexual – of Precious not only from her father, but also at the hands of her mother.

Four novels in the study focus on the abuse by stepfathers. Maya Angelou's, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*, Dorothy Allison's *The Bastard out of Carolina* and Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita*.

The Color Purple (1982) written in the form of an epistolary novel, is set in rural Georgia. It tells the story of Celie, who is repeatedly raped by her stepfather, though at the time of rape she did not know that he, is not her real father. Celie gives birth to two children from this incestuous relationship but they are abducted by the father shortly after their birth. Celie's mother dies cursing her. Her stepfather loses interest in Celie as he starts eyeing her sister Nettie. So, he sells Celie to a widower with four children. Celie suffers physical, sexual and verbal abuse there at the hands of her husband and her step children too treat her mercilessly. She is separated from her sister too. But later Celie emerges as a strong and bold business woman with the help of Shug Avery, popular singer and mistress of Celie's husband. She is reunited with her sister and her lost children too, thus to find ultimate joy and self-esteem in her life.

Maya Angelou's, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969) is an autobiographical work. It is the first in the series of seven. It begins with the picture of three-year-old girl who along with her brother are sent to their paternal grandmother and ends with the picture of a sixteen-year-old unwed mother. At the age of eight,

Maya was raped by her stepfather, Mr. Freeman and Maya narrates the experience as, “then there was the pain. A breaking and entering when even the senses are torn apart. The act of rape on an eight-year-old body is a matter of the needle giving because the camel can’t. The child gives, because the body can, and the mind of the violator cannot” (84). Maya’s stepfather threatens to kill Maya’s brother Bailey, if she tells anyone of the abuse. But Maya’s mother finds out her blood-stained underwear and Maya is hospitalized. On being repeatedly asked by Bailey, Maya reveals the identity of the rapist. Mr. Freeman is convicted. Later he is found dead which causes great agony to Maya.

Bastard Out of Carolina (1992) is Dorothy Allison’s fictional autobiography. Through the child narrator of the novel, Ruth Anne Boatwright, Allison is sharing her experience of being raped by her stepfather since the age of five. Born with a certificate carrying the word ‘Bastard’, to a mother who thinks that her only duty towards her daughter is getting a certificate of legitimacy for her daughter, Bone’s childhood is marked by physical, psychological and sexual trauma and of all the characters selected for study, she is the one who is most brutally harmed. Bone’s mother knows Bone is physically abused by her husband, she sees Bone being raped by him yet she chooses him above Bone, and leaves with him abandoning Bone at the hospital alone.

Vladimir Nabokov’s *Lolita* (1955) tries to establish the seductive nature of girl victim and that too through the unreliable narrator, by picturing a relationship between a stepfather and an orphaned stepdaughter. As it is told through the view point of the abuser, nothing much is known about the sufferings of the victim, yet the novel is

included in the study to show the silencing of the victim by the perpetrator and how that denial of voice to her has made her name suggestive of a seductive girl even today.

Virginia Woolf was one of the well-known writers of English literature who is read widely even today. Her autobiographical essays, letters and diary notes reveal how the sexual abuse at the hands of her step brothers had serious consequences in her later life.

Mahesh Dattani's play *Thirty Days in September* (2001) deals with the theme of incest perpetrated on women and girls. Dattani explores the theme of incest in the Indian context, and shows that as it were in all part of the world, a shroud of silence, fear and shame engulfs this social taboo and injustice and violence meted out on the vulnerable family member is ignored in the name of family honor.

The play depicts a cycle of violence. When Shanta was raped by her brother, she had to swallow the pain and humiliation mutely, because of the antagonistic attitude of her circumstances. In turn, when her brother starts raping her own daughter, she acquiesces with the same unsympathetic attitude to her daughter and becomes a silent yet agreeing partner in the crime. Thus, Mala loses trust in her mother, who tried to perpetuate the abusive cycle by creating another victim in her own image and that victim is unfortunately, her own daughter.

The play focuses on the painful wailings of Mala, who is molested by her maternal uncle, Vinay. Mala makes many an attempt to reveal her mental agony to her mother, Shanta, but she fails to do that as she finds her mother always busy in her prayers and household works. Mala harbors hostile feelings to her mother, for this

apparent neglect and lack of care and for her present trauma as she keeps the feeling that her mother could have saved her from her mental agony by standing with her.

The incestuous shock she receives at her own home and her mother's response disrupts her behavioral impulses, makes her insecure and distrustful in the adult world and instills self-loathing and inferiority complex in her. The love she misses at her home makes her a beggar of love in the street.

Mala lacks the trust and constancy in her relationships and makes one lover after another. She disbelieves the long-lasting relationships that she abandons each of the boyfriends after a short interlude. One might interpret it as that it is sexual craving that she is trying to quench, but actually she is struggling to make up for the internal vacuum in her mind.

Shanta reveals the reason for her culpable silence that her brother assists her with money for domestic expenditures and she also does not dare to question the patriarchal society. Mala gets enraged on hearing this, "He bought your silence. So that you can never tell anyone what he did to your daughter" (52).

At the end, Mala realizes the real reason for her mother's silence, i.e. the abuse mother herself suffered at the hands of the same person. Shanta failed to react in her own case and lived with painful memories throughout the years that she feels incapable of responding in her daughter's case too. Once settled with her mother Mala recovers from the trauma with the help of her fiancée Deepak and through the counseling.

Girls are more likely to be sexually ill-treated than boys, and more likely than boys to be sexually abused by family members. Boys who are sexually victimized are more likely than girls to be abused by strangers taking into consideration the fact that in a normal patriarchal society, boys are less strictly supervised and they have more contact with strangers, as there are no restrictions on their movement. Boys are also to some extent less likely to tell anyone of their abuse than are girls.

Cases of two boys are also included in the study, Sohrab in *The Kite Runner* (2003) and Estha in *The God of Small Things* (1997). And in both cases, they were sexually abused by someone outside their families.

Estha is one of the twins born to Ammu. Along with his twin sister, Rahel, he craves for love and recognition from their family where they are neglected and subjected to strict discipline as their mother Ammu does not have any right in the family wealth. His experience with Orangedrink Lemondrink man in the theatre causes anxiety and fear in him. Later, Estha is sent to his father and stepmother, when the clandestine affair of his mother with Velutha, the untouchable is found out. The separation from his twin sister and his mother completes his suffering.

In *The Kite Runner*, Sohrab is a victim of civil war raging in Afghanistan. Being Hazaras, his family is fired to death and he is sent to an orphanage. But from there he is taken by military leaders and is sexually exploited by them. Later he is saved by Amir, his father's childhood friend.

It can be seen that all these works introduce a world of betrayal of trust, lack of care and concern, culpable silence, direct intimidation, threat, compulsion, loneliness and estrangement.

As Herman writes,

The abused child is isolated from other family members as well as from the wider social world. She perceives daily, not only that the most powerful adult in her intimate world is dangerous to her, but also that the other adults who are responsible for her care do not protect her. The reasons for this protective failure are in some sense immaterial to the child victim, who experiences it at best as a sign of indifference and at worst as complicit betrayal. From the child's point of view, the parent disarmed by secrecy should have known; if she cared enough, she would have found out. The parent disarmed by intimidation should have intervened; if she cared enough, she would have fought. The child feels that she has been abandoned to her fate, and this abandonment is often resented more keenly than the abuse itself (101).

The victimized children in their attempt to cope up with the reality, constructs some justification of their own, for e.g. the belief that the inherent evilness and intrinsic badness in the children caused the abuse. So, they believe that, if they desperately and earnestly go for a change, then that may correct their behavior and restore the love and care of their parents. So, self-accusation emerges as a means of recovery.

The thesis mainly focuses on the impact of child sexual abuse based on the characters given above i.e. how far the effects of traumatic experience are visible in the life and persona of these characters. The next chapter will be entirely devoted to that.

Their features reveal the deepest sadness; they are timid and apprehensive, often they look dazed and the expression in their eyes is lifeless. But sometimes, often in fact, it is very different; they have a precocious intelligence which only reveals itself in a dark fire in their eyes -Tardieu

Chapter 3

The Presence of the Past in the Present: Perennial Trauma

Survivors of chronic childhood trauma face the task of grieving not only for what was lost but also for what was never theirs to lose. The childhood that was stolen from them is irreplaceable. They must mourn the loss of the foundation of basic trust, the belief in a good parent. As they come to recognize that they were not responsible for their fate, they confront the existential despair that they could not face in childhood (Herman 193).

This chapter tries to focus on the perceptible havoc caused by the experiences of child sexual abuse on the individuals in the short term as well as in the long term. Not every character taken for study goes through the same distressing experiences. The aftermaths of abusive incident may differ from person to person, depending on the support they get from their immediate surroundings. Though usual symptoms found in victims are generally mentioned in this chapter, main focal point will be those symptoms which are visible in the selected characters.

Trauma is an individual's response to an overpowering event or series of events and has been described as "the realization of one's worst fears, the experiences that every human being would never want to have" (Klempner 77). Traumatic episodes disrupt normal structure of care and attention which usually provide a feeling of power, correlation and significance to the individual.

As Lenore Terr explains:

Like childhood rheumatic fever, which causes a number of conditions in adulthood ranging from mitral stenosis to subacute bacterial endocarditis to massive heart failure, childhood psychic trauma leads to a number of mental changes that eventually account for some adult character problems, certain kinds of psychotic thinking, much dissociation, extremes of passivity, self-mutilative episodes and a variety of depressive and anxiety disturbances. Even though heart failure and subacute bacterial endocarditis in adulthood look very different from one another and demand specific treatment, their original cause—the childhood rheumatic fever—gives an organizational pattern to the physician's entire approach (323).

American Psychiatric Association postulates that child sexual abuse episode poses direct threat to life or indirectly sets in same kind of deep tension, revulsion, shock or vulnerability that arise from life threatening events. As van der Kolk et al maintains child sexual abuse, like all other traumatic and upsetting experiences, disrupts victim's psyche because it is equally or more startling, gruesome, devastating and excruciating event when it happens like any other traumatic episode in life (315).

Childhood psychological trauma arising out of sexual abuse is a decisive causative factor for grave personality disorders in childhood and later in adulthood.

As Lenore Terr writes:

If one looks only at the clinical manifestations of trauma in a given day in the life of the traumatized child, one could diagnose conduct disorder, borderline personality, major affective disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity, phobic disorder, dissociative disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, panic disorder, adjustment disorder, and even such conditions, as yet unofficial in the nomenclature, as precursors of multiple personality or acute dissociative disorder (322).

Research conducted over the past decade indicates that a wide range of psychological and interpersonal problems are more rampant among those who have been sexually ill-treated than among individuals with no such experiences. Though a definitive underlying correlation between such problems and sexual abuse cannot be recognized using existing retrospective research methodologies, the cumulative result of dependable studies in this literature has led to the conclusion that childhood sexual abuse is a major risk factor for a variety of problems. The main crux of this trauma is the unforeseen crushing of the internal subjective world of an individual.

As Susan A Clancy points out:

Child sexual abuse experiences fall on a continuum of severity that describes the level of stress induced and predicts the extent to which the child will suffer long-term negative consequences. (The more traumatic the abuse was when it happened, the more acute the long-term negative outcome.) Put another way, the degree of traumatic

stress experienced during the sexual experience best accounts for variation in long-term adverse effects (26).

Research has established that the degree to which a given individual manifests abuse-related distress is a function of an undetermined number of abuse-specific variables, as well as individual and environmental factors that subsisted prior to, or happened consequent to, the incidents of sexual abuse. The severity of sexual abuse depends on many associated features like duration and frequency of the abuse, the number of perpetrators, actual vaginal penetration, physical force used during intercourse, early age of victim, substantial age difference with the abuser, simultaneous physical and emotional abuse, sex in deviant ways, victim's feeling of guilt for the molestation, the betrayed feeling and loss of trust that victim endures.

It has been found that certain indicators of child sexual abuse are more prone to come into sight when the abuse is carried out during specific developmental stages. Internalizing symptoms such as melancholy, dejection and nervousness are reported less frequently in early childhood but appear with larger frequency in adolescence (Berliner and Elliott 53). As Arias indicated that children are more likely to experience problems related to school, attention, social skills, and aggression, whereas adolescents are at greater risk for delinquency/violence, sexual problems, substance use, and self-injurious behavior (470).

Lenore Terr writes child sexual abuse is a "horrible external event in childhood rendering the young person temporarily helpless and breaking past ordinary coping and defensive operations" (323). There is no doubt that traumatic event leaves

psychological and physical harm too on the victims, especially on children suffering from child sexual abuse.

As Herman writes, “There is a simple, direct relationship between the severity of the trauma and its psychological impact” (55). In view of that if a victim persistently accounts for psychological problems it can be rightly assumed that child sexual abusive episode, when it happened, was a horrendous and crushing experience.

The grip of trauma arising from child sexual abuse on the emotional and mental well-being of the person is rather direct and explicit, as it keeps on for a long period and often till the death. Victims might not recognize the impact of trauma on their lives, as it is expressed in different negative forms in different persons, but all signs and symptoms relate to a lasting psychological disorder, which can be traced out to original sexual experience. And often, the after effects of sexual abuse are the collective product of sexual violence, physical abuse and psychological maltreatment.

As Linett writes:

Contemporary theories seem to agree on a definition of trauma in terms of overwhelming life experiences that shatter the social and psychological sense of self and precipitate existential crisis, characterized by flashbacks, nightmares and other re-experiences, emotional numbing, depression, guilt, autonomic arousal, explosive violence or a tendency to hyper vigilance (160).

Apart from its impact on the psychological level and sociological level, child sexual abuse related difficulties are also apparently visible in the interpersonal and

physiological realms. Child sexual abuse experiences have been linked to difficulties in interpersonal relationships, including poor social adjustment (Friedrich et al 48) and developmentally unsuitable sexual behaviors and disturbed attitudes related to sexuality (Kendall-Tackett et al 165). Research studies have also acknowledged several physiological or neurobiological linkages, such as reduced salivary cortisol levels in recently abused children, early beginning of menarche, increased sympathetic nervous system activity, and a range of neurobiological sequelae. Alexander defines sexual abuse as a "chronic neurologic disease" and goes on to converse that the negative consequences for victims last for years (607).

In short, the consequences of child sexual abuse may include depression, eating disorders, post-traumatic stress and an impaired ability to cope with stress or emotions (Allnock et al. 12). Apart from these symptoms, childhood sexual abuse has been correlated with higher levels of, guilt, shame, self-blame, somatic concerns, anxiety, dissociative patterns, repression, denial, sexual problems, and relationship problems. Problems in self-perception and identity formation, relationship with others and general attitude towards world that individuals face in adulthood or in the formative years are logically connected to childhood maltreatment. In many cases, adult psychopathology actually is the tell-tale evidence for the childhood abuse. Early evaluation of the long-term effects of child sexual abuse on a number of grown-up survivors point out that child sexual abuse leads to a multiplicity of depressing effects on adult survivors, including many negative sexual health outcomes (Finkelhor et al.21).

Among the major symptoms of trauma, post-traumatic stress disorder is the widely discussed and identified aspect. Cathy Caruth in her work, *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995) defines post-traumatic stress disorder as:

there is a response, sometimes delayed, to an overwhelming event or events, which takes the form of repeated, intrusive hallucinations, dreams, thoughts or behaviors stemming from the event, along with numbing that may have begun during or after the experience, and possibly also increased arousal to (and avoidance of) stimuli recalling the event (4).

Elaborating that, child sexual abuse produces both immediate and long term post-traumatic stress disorder, McLeer et al reported that most of their sample of sexually abused 3-to 16-year old met diagnostic criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder (651).

So, the major symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder may include frequent return to the traumatic memories through nightmares or intrusive thoughts, lack of responsiveness to present, sensitive startle responses and persistent sleep disturbance or poor concentration. They may also show physiologic reactivity in an exposure to similar traumatic events. Therapists who support recovered or delayed memory claim that amnesia for traumatic events is a general resistance, mostly of children (Briere 17). Elizabeth Loftus, a memory researcher and False Memory Syndrome Foundation ally, points out that intrusive remembering is a much more ordinary outcome of trauma than is amnesia.

Studies show that post-traumatic stress disorder is visible in sexual abuse victims to an extent and the most outstanding and alarming post traumatic disorder symptom is the irrepressible attack of wacky and weird flashbacks. These unexpected, invasive sensory memories include the visual images of some aspects of the actual sexual assault, or the image of the abuser's face or hearing the abuser's voice making obscene statements, pungent sensation related to forced oral intercourse, often accompanied by the taste of semen, smelling the alcoholic breath of the molester and feeling hands clutching one's legs, thighs or genitals. These flashbacks may make sudden entry or when the survivor comes in contact with abuse related events like sexual stimuli or interactions, abusive activities by other adults, revelation of one's abuse experiences or reading or seeing sexual or brutal media depictions (Courtois 178). Herman explains this traumatic revisit in the form of flashbacks and nightmares as intrusion.

Freud observes that some experiences, memories, or impressions from the past makes a re-entry later to collude with the fresh experiences. The traumatic experience is not fully recognized at the time of occurrence but reappears with full impact in a situation of extreme emotional crisis. This focus on deferred action is reinterpreted as belatedness by Cathy Caruth. In *Moses and Monotheism* (1939), Freud explains that traumatic event makes a delayed return,

It may happen that a man who has experienced some frightful accident a railway collision, for instance - leaves the scene of the event apparently uninjured. In the course of the next few weeks, however, he develops a number of severe psychical and motor symptoms which

can only be traced to his shock, the concussion or whatever else it was. He now has a `traumatic neurosis' (309).

Cathy Caruth works on this Freudian concept and emphasizes that trauma arising out of a painful event comes as an interruption on history or temporality. According to her, the traumatic episode is not experienced or imbibed fully when it happens but makes a belated but intrusive entry as it does not get direct entry to memory:

The pathology consists, rather, solely in *the structure of its experience* or reception: the event is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time, but only belatedly, in its repeated *possession* of the one who experiences it. To be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or event (4-5).

So, trauma is fully experienced in different times or in different occasions. Trauma assumes a lasting and evocative tendency and continues to haunt the victim with recurring visits from history. As Caruth reaffirms “trauma is not experienced as a mere repression or defense, but as a temporal delay that carries the individual beyond the shock of the first moment. The trauma is a repeated suffering of the event, but it is also a continual leaving of its site” (18). This haunting nature of traumatic abuse is surfacing in the testimony of a victim:

I kept the memory of these experiences inside for the first twenty years of my life. I prayed day and night that by the time I was a teenager the memory would have gone from me and I could finally have

freedom through amnesia. But once a teenager, I realized I would have to live with the memory—it would never leave. I think I intuitively knew it was not a natural experience that had happened to me. And because such subjects were still in the closet in those days, there was nothing for me to read in order to get information. It was like invisible scars from a childhood disease (qtd. in *Rocking* 16).

Caruth again stresses on this pursuing nature of trauma through flashbacks:

As modern neurobiologists point out, the repetition of the traumatic experience in the flashbacks can be itself re-traumatizing; if not life-threatening, it is at least threatening to the chemical structure of the brain and can ultimately lead to deterioration. And this would also seem to explain the high suicide rate of survivor, for example, survivors of Vietnam (*Unclaimed* 84).

In Sapphire's *Push* (1996), the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder are visible. Precious had psychologically repressed her traumatic memories, but they make a delayed entry through piecemeal memory, her present life often sets off post-traumatic stress issues related to her past. Her life is presented through her consciousness which becomes a jigsaw puzzle of dreadful scenes. The truth that, Precious' inability to cope with trauma affects her thinking process badly is explicit from her sudden jump into past and back. These flashbacks become less recurrent and she starts to stick to present comparatively good time, once she becomes normal with her feelings, once Precious starts to survive the traumatic memories, with the help of her teacher Rain and other members and classmates at the Each One/ Teach One

alternative school. Precious remembers, during her second pregnancy, the callous behavior of her mother and how her mother almost killed her when she came home with her first baby at the age of twelve:

I'm twelve, no I was twelve, when that shit happen. I'm sixteen now. For past couple of weeks or so, ever since white bitch Lichenstein kick me outta school shit, 1983 and 1987, twelve years old and sixteen years old, first baby and this one coming, all been getting mixed up in my head. Mama jus' hit me wif fryin' pan? Baby, brand new and wrapped in white blankets, or fat and dead eyed lying in crib at my grandmother's house. Everything seem like clothes in washing machine at laundry mat- round' n round, up' n down. One-minute Mama's foot smashing into side of my head, next I'm jumping over desk on Mrs Lichenstein's ass.

But now, right now, I'm standing at the sink finishing the dishes. Mama sleep on the couch. It's Friday, October sixteen, 1987. I got to get through Saturday and Sunday 'fore I get to Monday- the alternative (21- 22).

Everything in her life get mixed up and messed up. Her thoughts float from abuse at home to psychological treatment from her friends at school. Mary and Carl, her parents rob her of not only her childhood but also her sense of time. Precious has great difficulty to stand firm in the present, she travels from present to past and vice versa often. She is much confused and perplexed about the happenings in her life. Now and then she loses her track of thought and sits staring into space. She often falls

into day dreaming or reflections on the past. Her lack of concentration arising out of her trauma from parental abuse affects badly her learning skills, which makes her a butt of ridicule in her school:

Carl come over fuck us'es. Go from room to room, slap me on my ass when he through, holler WHEEE WHEEE! Call me name Butter Ball Big Mama Two Ton of Fun. I hate hear him talk more than I hate fuck. Sometimes fuck feel good. That confuse me, everything get swimming for me, floating like for days sometimes. I just sit in back classroom, somebody say something I shout on'em, hit 'em; rest of the time I mine my bizness (35).

Precious then thinks of where she does not feel comfort. She is humiliated by her classmates for the way she talks, so she stops talking,

Secon' thas when the "I' mma joke" start. When I go sit down boyz make fart sounds wif they mouf like it's me fartin.' When I git up they snort snort hog grunt sounds. So I jus'stop getting up. What for? Thas when I start to pee on myself. I just sit there, it's like I paralyze or some shit. I don't move. I can't move (36).

She realizes the humiliating remarks of her classmates and loses concentration on anything said at class by teacher, "No boyfriend no girlfriends. I stare at the blackboard pretending. I don't know what I'm pretending-that trains ain'riding through my head sometime and that yes, I'm reading along with the class on page 55 of the reader" (38).

She continues to think how her teacher hated and always made complaints against her to her principal, but the very next moment she starts thinking on her father, “Seven, he on me almost every night. First it’s just in my mouth. Then it’s more more. He is intercoursing me. Say I can take it. Look you don’t even bleed, virgin girls bleed. You not virgin. I’m *seven*” (39).

These thoughts pass through her head on her first day travel to school, in between, she expresses her anxiety over school, her difficulties to reach there in time, hunger, her plans to steal something from chicken stall and its execution. As Precious puts it, “my head is like the swimming pool at the Y on one- three-five. Summer full of bodies splashing, most in shallow end; one, two in deep end. Thas how all the time years is swimming in my head” (38). As it is clear from above quoted passages from the text, her memories travel from past to present and it is juxtaposed often. As Freyd puts it, in another way, she sways between traumatic memories and amnesia, or moments of dissociation and this serves as a coping mechanism for her (116).

As shown in the above passages, the recurring and disturbing memories of sexual victimization makes it difficult for the survivor to concentrate for long times or to have normal mental life. Moreover, the victims’ thoughts tend to hover over themes like menace, shame, sex, guilt and evilness. Recurring flashbacks related to abuse even in unrelated contexts and the frequent visits of nightmares are short and long sequel of trauma.

In Mahesh Dattani’s *Thirty Days in September* (2001) too, past and present mix up for Mala. Flash back revisits her often causing depression and it leaves her unable to reciprocate to any man’s love sincerely. The memory of abuse peeps in when

she tries to enter a loving relation. When Deepak, her lover, tries to hold her hand lovingly offering her a new life, Mala gets reminded of her uncle. The play is bringing home this intrusiveness of past in a special way that Mala feels the presence of her uncle who is mentioned as man in the play, but Deepak does not understand that. When Deepak offers his hand to Mala, she sees the uncle instead. Her uncle had made her touch his private parts, exploiting her emotions and love towards him. Uncle tells Mala that what she is asked to do is just an expression of her love towards him:

MAN. There! You feel that? It means I love you. Your uncle loves you.

MALA begins to cry.

DEEPAK (*stroking her hand gently*). It's okay. It's okay. Cry if you want to.

MAN. Shhh! Don't cry. You want to come here in your holidays, no? Then don't cry. This is your seventh birthday, no? You are seven now. Ready for a real birthday present. Lie down. Come on, quickly.

DEEPAK. Look into my eyes.

MAN. If they hear you, they will say you are a bad girl. This is our secret. (Like an order but in a whisper) Don't cry! (43).

Mala's uncle had asked her to cover her face with frock during the time of molestation promising not to hurt her. When Deepak also asks Mala to trust him, she cannot differentiate both and she covers her face with her T-shirt, thus revealing her bra. But Deepak pulls it back down asking her not to abuse her body. Mala's uncle had molested her saying he is loving her more than her parents, though she is very ugly and though she is only good for that. Mala too comes to believe that uncle loved her when he did things to her so she starts giving her body to others for mere attention

and consideration. So, when her uncle later leaves her accusing her of seducing him, Mala fails to adjust and begs him not to leave her because sex is the only way of love she knows.

MAN (*now more moralistic than before, the furtiveness gone*). You like it! You enjoy it. After four years, you have become a whore! At thirteen you are a whore!

MALA. I won't tell anyone. But don't leave me alone!

MAN. Bitch! Whore!

DEEPAK. Mala. No! that's no good! It's no good for you! (44).

The intrusive nature of past into the present in the case of abused victim is observable in Mala's intimate scene with Deepak. In umpteen numbers of licentious affairs, she distances her mind from her body, but once Deepak loves her sincerely and behaves so, every gesture or word from him brings forth her painful memories from her past with uncle and it destroys her present. Her uncle had made her believe that his sexual approach to her was a sign of love, while her parents neglected her. The child Mala had believed that too but once she grows up, she realizes the abusive nature of that relation, so every expression of love drives her back to her past with uncle. Her uncle had made her recite the nursery poem, 'thirty days in September' which makes Mala incapable of continuing a relation beyond thirty days.

Mala's agony arises from the intrusive memory of her abuse. The ghost of past haunts her throughout, "But I do see what she has been through. It's been more difficult for her, I guess. He comes back. He ruined my mother's life too. No matter what I try to do, it all seems to come back to him. I want to forget! I just want to..."

(57). “That I should eat well and go to sleep and the pain will go away. But it comes back. It didn’t go away forever” (26).

Another recurrent and important symptom of post-traumatic stress disorder is night mares. Precious in *Push* is also haunted by nightmares. Though Precious was much upset and afraid on the first day at alternative schools, by the end of the day she feels that she has found a place of her own for the first time. Her learning of alphabets helps her to counteract with abusive memories. She dreams of alphabets too while the abusive episode with her mother haunts her in her nightmare:

That night I dream I am not in me but am awake listening to myself choking, going a huh a huh A HUH A HUH A HUH. I am walking around trying to find where I am, where the sound is coming from. I know I will choke to death I don’t find myself. I walk to my muver’s room but it look different, she look different. I look like little baby almost. She is talkin’ sweet to me like sometimes daddy talks. I am choking between her legs A HUH A HUH. She is smelling big woman smell. She say suck it, lick me Precious. Her hand is like a mountain pushing my head down. I squeeze my eyes shut but choking don’t stop, it get worse. Then I open my eyes and look. I look at little Precious and big Mama and feel hit feeling, feel like killing Mama. But I don’t, instead I call little Precious and say, Come to Mama but I means me. Come to me little Precious. Little Precious look at me, smile, and start to sing: ABCDEFG... (58,59).

That the post-traumatic stress disorder and resultant nightmares are common, is established by the writings of Virginia Woolf too. Virginia Woolf also suffers of nightmares. In *A Sketch of the Past*, she describes a dream, “I dreamt that I was looking in a glass when a horrible face- the face of an animal- suddenly showed over my shoulder. I cannot be sure if this was a dream or if it happened” (Moments 69).

This dream is a reminder of her traumatic abuse experience. She had to expect the emergence of her bestial brother anytime. The face that haunts her in the dream is the face of her brother, whom she had seen in the mirror at the time of molestation. In a letter to Ethel Smyth, Virginia describes another recurring dream that filled her with fright. She dreams that she is caught in a drainpipe alone at the end of which is madness: “Suddenly... I approach madness and that end of a drainpipe with a gibbering old man.” (Letters 5:23335).

Another symptom of traumatic burden of the child is the experience of general numbness in his or her general responsiveness to the world, which is also explained as constriction by Herman. In *The Color Purple* (1982), Celie endures a kind of emotional numbness too, may be because of her separation from her children that she does not feel any kind of attachment to her step children, “I don’t feel nothing for them. Patting Harpo back not even like patting a dog. It more like patting another piece of wood. (30). Herman points out that this kind of depersonalization and lack of emotions are being counted as one among the several traumatic reactions of persons weighed down by fear and vulnerability (25). The abuses Celie had gone through in her life make her meek and obedient and compel her to swallow all humiliations including brutal physical beating from her husband:

He beat me like he beat the children. Cept he don't never hardly beat them. He say, Celie, git the belt. The children be outside the room peeking through the cracks. All I can do is not to cry. I make myself wood. I say to myself, Celie you a tree. That's how come I know trees fear man (22).

The immediate and initial response to sexual abuse among children comes in connection with fear and anxiety. Adult survivors are also at risk to experience anxiety disorders, panic disorders, phobias, and obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). These anxiety-related symptoms are frequently associated with post-traumatic stress disorders responses and cognitive distortions.

Herman writes:

At the moment of trauma, the victim is rendered helpless by overwhelming force...traumatic events are extraordinary, not because they occur rarely, but rather because they overwhelm the ordinary human adaptations to life. Unlike commonplace misfortunes, traumatic events generally involve threats to life or bodily integrity, or a close personal encounter with violence and death. They confront human beings with the extremities of helplessness and terror, and evoke the responses of catastrophe (33).

According to *The Comprehensive Textbook of Psychiatry*, common denominator of trauma is a feeling of "intense fear, helplessness, loss of control and threat of annihilation" (qtd. in Herman 33). Denise Gelinas, states, "There is little

doubt that abuse constitutes a major trauma for the child, one which confuses and profoundly threatens. The most predominant reported affect is fear” (315).

This element of fear, anxiety regarding future victimization and obsessive-compulsive disorder is clearly perceptible in Estha in *The God of Small Things* (1997). Estha becomes the victim of child sexual abuse by a stranger which contributes to the emotional breakdown in him. Ammu and Baby Kochamma take the twins, Estha and Rahel to Abhilash Talkies to watch *The Sound of Music*, before the much-expected arrival of Sophie Mol. Estha feels an urge to sing a song in the theatre. But people in the theatre get irritated, so taking Ammu’s permission to go outside so that he can sing to his heart’s content. His song draws the attention of the Orangedrink Lemondrink Man at the theatre. Offering a free drink to Estha, he takes him behind the counter. He makes Estha hold his penis offering a free drink. Estha is not in an age to understand masturbation. Estha’s hand gets “wet, hot and sticky” (104), as the egg white like sperm spreads on his hand. He feels queasy and sick. He feels repulsion even to his sticky hand and keeps it at distance as if it is not a part of his body. When he wants to vomit, Ammu takes him out for a cool drink again to the Orangedrink Lemondrink Man. Estha does not dare to face him but he fails to communicate that with Ammu. The Orangedrink Lemondrink Man gathers all information from Ammu and promises to Estha to visit him soon at Ayemenem.

Here, what happens to Estha may be a common form of abuse and it is a onetime occurrence and compared to other children whose experiences are worst of its kind, Estha’s experience will not be a shocking incident to a normal refined and sophisticated mind. But the instances of sexual abuse leave graver effects on a child

beyond an adult's imagination. Anxiety and the bouts of depression are the twin accompanying factors to sexual abuse. The victims get anxious about the possibility of further victimization and gets depressed over what had happened already. This post-traumatic stress as pointed out by Herman as hyperarousal is evidently traceable in Estha. All other family members are jubilant over the coming of Sophie Mol from England, but Estha becomes pensive and he escapes to the factory premises to brood over the coming of the Orangedrink Lemondrink man. He philosophically reaches the conclusions that anything can happen to anyone and it is best to be prepared. Estha fears that man will come again to exploit him. So, he plans and makes arrangements to shift to the History House if the need comes, which becomes a detrimental decision. The episode of sexual harassment with the Orangedrink Lemondrink man leaves a guilty feeling in Estha. He gets obsessed with cleanliness, the symptom of post-traumatic stress disorder, earlier exhibited by Lady Macbeth in the constant washing of blood stains of her hands. In *The Kite Runner* (2003), Sohrab too get obsessed with cleanliness after getting raped by military generals. Sohrab spends an hour or more in the bathtub every night 'soaking in the soapy water, scrubbing' (Hosseini 290) which makes Amir exclaim, 'Do you feel clean yet, Sohrab?' (290).

Childhood sexual abuse can be frightening and cause stress long after the experience or experiences have stopped. Many times, survivors experience chronic anxiety, tension, anxiety attacks, and phobias (Ratican 33).

In *A Sketch of the Past*, Woolf writes of a moment that instills indescribable fear in her, "everything suddenly became unreal: I was suspended; I could not step

across the puddle” (Moments 78). The moment of crossing the puddle with widened legs creates horror in her, as she gets reminded of her abuse.

Virginia records the feeling of terror of abuse later,

I wish I could write out my sensations at this moment...A physical feeling as if I were drumming slightly in the veins: very cold: impotent: & terrified. As if I were exposed on a high ledge in full light. Very lonely...Very useless. No atmosphere round me. No words. Very apprehensive. As if something cold & horrible- a roar of laughter at my expense were about to happen. And I am powerless to ward it off: I have no protection. And this anxiety & nothingness surround me with a vacuum. It affects the thighs chiefly. And I want to burst in to tears, but I have nothing to cry for. Then a great restlessness seize me... the exposed moments are terrifying. I looked at my eyes in the glass once & saw them positively terrified (Diary 5).

Virginia describes her later encounter with her brother Gerald Duckworth as “like visiting an alligator in a tank, an obese & obsolete alligator, lying... half in & half out of the water” (Diary 5). In some other occasions, she describes her feeling of helplessness and loneliness in the words like, “left orphaned in the sea of half-brothers,” (Letters 4:2201) and she writes on her disgust towards the perpetrator, George Duckworth as, “an unfortunate minnow shut up in the same tank with an unwieldy and turbulent whale” (Moments 169).

Child sexual abuse can have a more elementary effect on brain functioning, where a child's brain becomes spoiled by the abuse they have undergone (Mizenberg et al 728). Dissociation which upsets individuality, remembrance, perception and self-understanding, often accompanies post-traumatic stress disorder. Lenore Terr writes that in cases of repeated exposure to traumatic events, victims use the defense techniques like complete denial, repression, dissociation, self-anesthesia, self-hypnosis, identification with aggressor, and aggression turned against the self (329).

Dissociation is defined in DSM-111-R as:

a disturbance or alteration in the normally integrative functions of identity, memory, or consciousness. The disturbance or alteration may be sudden or gradual, and transient or chronic. If it occurs primarily in identity, the person's customary identity is temporarily forgotten, and a new identity may be assumed or imposed, or the customary feeling of one's own reality is lost and is replaced by a feeling of unreality, if the disturbance occurs primarily in memory, important personal events cannot be recalled (American Psychiatric Association 289).

Pecola in *The Bluest Eye*, tries to break away from her traumatic experiences and memories but in vain. Her attempts to cope up with trauma, ends in her psychic disintegration and psychological dissociation from the reality. Psychic anguish can be attributed to one devastating event or it can be the consequence of a person's long-time exposure to embarrassment and abuse.

As quoted in Briere, dissociation is defined as, “a defensive disruption in the normally occurring connections among feelings, thoughts, behavior and memories, consciously or unconsciously invoked in order to reduce psychological distress” (36). Briere and Runtz link the process of dissociation with childhood sexual abuse, with the suggestion that sexual molestation may motivate the development of dissociative states as a defense against posttraumatic distress. The process of dissociation helps the victim to overcome the pain originating from the traumatic events by giving up her conscious self (368). As Putnam suggests, dissociation helps the survivor to liberate the self from the restraints of reality, to suppress traumatic memories and sometimes affects detachment so that the troublesome events may seem to have happened in someone else’s life (32).

As Briere notes dissociation can happen in different forms – disengagement, detachment, observation and amnesia. Disengagement is the withdrawal into a state of neutrality, where external events are kept in hold. Detachment or numbness comes as a loss of reactivity to events that may produce psychological stress. In the observation mode of dissociation, the victims consider themselves as mere spectators of the events. Traumatized victims resort to another form of psychological defense too called amnesia or an unconscious repression of painful memories. Another extreme form of dissociation comes in the form of multiple personality disorder i.e. the existence of two or more personality traits within an individual (35-47).

If a child is subjected to a prolonged and severe sexual abuse at a very young age itself, she may dissociate herself from the abuse so that she will be in complete oblivion regarding the abuse. This will result in the development of a separate and an

alternative personality and identity of the child. Even the child may not be aware of the existence of these separate identities till she reaches adulthood.

Trauma, as the root cause of psychological disorders, can be described, in Freudian terms, as a wound inflicted upon the mind (Caruth, *Trauma* 3). In the case of Pecola, family as well as oppressive society inflicts wounds on her. Pecola, as Claudia states, steps “over into madness, a madness which protected her from us” (Morrison 163). Pecola stoops to schizophrenia, unable to suffer more. Exposed to extended and painful rejection and abuse, Pecola finds an alter ego in the novel as a subterfuge to defend her from the possible accusations that might rise against her failure to develop as a strong and secure identity. She seeks asylum in a fantasy world by creating this imaginary friend.

According to Laing, schizophrenia and other mental illnesses should be understood as coping strategies used by people in order to put up with a hostile situation. Identity splitting or dissociation is a common defense mechanism in the face of trauma. As a survival technique of psychotic personalities, Pecola too depends on an imaginary self. As Laing writes, “adaptation and adjustment to changing experiences have to be conducted by the false self” (143).

Pecola Breedlove's rape by her father, Cholly results in the disintegration of her psyche. Pecola is even silenced by the anger of Pauline and the antagonistic society that she later seeks refuge in creating an imaginary friend and in conversing with her. As Madonne Miner puts it, "Men, potential rapists, assume presence, language, and reason as their particular province. Women, potential victims, fall prey

to absence, silence, madness" (181). Her subjectivity is lost and her voice is crushed by the incestuous rape as it is in the myth of Philomela.

Pecola is so distanced from her consciousness that she shares with her imaginary self that Mrs. Breedlove and others do not look at her because they are jealous of her blue eyes. Pecola's mind conveniently represses the reality that Mrs Breedlove and others actually detest her pregnancy resulting from incestuous rape.

Why don't you look at me when you say that? You're looking drop-eyed like Mrs. Breedlove.

Mrs. Breedlove look drop-eyed at you?

Yes. Now she does. Ever since I got my blue eyes, she look away from me all of the time. Do you suppose she's jealous too?

Could be. They are pretty, you know.

I know. He really did a good job. Eveybody's jealous. Every time I look at somebody, they look off (154).

In many instances, the afflicted person may not have access to the memory or knowledge of that dissociation. Their memories are pushed aside and suppressed and are kept in separate boxes. So, victims forget important phases of trauma. It is actually this defense mechanism of the victims that force them to resort to forgetfulness. As Freud observes in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, people suffering from traumatic neurosis prefer to avoid thoughts on the traumatic episode (75). This repressive element is visible in Pecola, when she artfully avoids the questions by her imaginary self-relating to her rape, pregnancy, consequent expulsion from school, repulsion by

others etc while she is eloquent on other things including her bluest eyes. Again, she ascribes her dismissal from school to the jealousy of others for her bluest eyes, thus never mentioning a word on her pregnancy.

But you couldn't be popular anyway. You don't even go to school

You don't either.

I know. But I used to

What did you stop for?

They made me.

Who made you?

I don't know. After that first day at school when I had my blue eyes.

Well, the next day they had Mrs. Breedlove come out. Now I don't go anymore. But I don't care.

You don't?

No, I don't. They're just prejudiced, that's all.

Yes, they sure are prejudiced.

Just because I got blue eyes, bluer than theirs, they're prejudiced (155).

Pecola tries to evade questions on Cholly and his rape of Pecola. She even gets angry when such questions were put to her. Her outburst shows how she wants to drive away even those memories or to suppress those painful memories. She even tries at first to deny the rape:

I guess you're right. And Cholly could make anybody do anything.

He could not.

He made you, didn't he?

Shut up!

I was only teasing.

Shut up!

O.K O.K

He just tried, see? He didn't do anything. You hear me? (157).

This massive denial or emotional shutdown as Lenore Terr (329) calls it is a symptom usually seen in those who are subjected to continuous trauma and reflective psychic freezing comes as an accommodative technique to face traumatic situation.

But Pecola's imaginary self/ friend does not leave things there. She goes on questioning on Pecola and slowly Pecola reveals her helplessness and shame. Even the questions may seem Pecola's conscious attempt to affirm her innocence and an occasion to vent her feelings. While the society was blaming her for the crime done to her and no one including her mother lent her ears, she might be deliberately convincing herself of her innocence.

You said he tried to do it to you when you were sleeping on the couch.

See there! You don't even know what you' re talking about. It was when I was washing dishes.

Oh, yes. Dishes.

By myself. In the kitchen.

Well, I'm glad you didn't let him.

Yes.

Did you?

Did I what?

Let him?

Now who's crazy (158).

Pecola also reveals it was a terrible experience for her. No one asks her what was her feeling then, instead they accuse her, but her pain is visible in the words she shares with her imaginary self:

I wonder what it would be like.

Horrible

Really?

Yes. Horrible (158).

Pecola goes on saying that Cholly left them for her good and forbids more talk on it saying she does not want to speak dirty things. She brings back the talk to her newly acquired bluest eyes so that she can forget the entire episode revolving Cholly.

Koolish points out that Pecola's madness is not the consequence of her breakdown or disintegration but it is a method of resistance and subsistence, thus facing a tribulation too weighty for a poor and crushed soul (173).

As Blake –White and Kline examine, confronted by overpowering anguish, depression and apprehension, the victim of abuse may resort to a total suppression of the memories related to the excruciating event (397). The repressed material, while kept in strong protection, may make a slow way back to memory through the exterior feelings like guilt and shame. The problems never vanish, but the suppressed feelings of fright, dejection, desertion, agony and alienation make their complicated entry in the form of depression, panic attacks and sudden outbursts.

As Claudia describes the state of Pecola:

We saw her sometimes, Frieda and I – after the baby came too soon and died. After the gossip and the slow wagging of heads. She was so sad to see. Grown people looked away; children, those who were not frightened by her, laughed outright.

The damage done was total. She spent her days, her tendril, sap-green days, walking up and down, up and down, her head jerking to the beat of a drummer so distant only she could hear. Elbows bent, hands on shoulders, she flailed her arms like a bird in an eternal, grotesquely futile effort to fly. Beating the air, a winged but grounded bird, intent on the blue void it could not reach- could not even see- but which filled the valleys of the mind (176).

Precious in *Push*, like Pecola in *The Bluest Eye*, go through the same or some more severe and agonizing experience. She also resorts to dissociation process as a coping strategy. Her technique is somehow different from that of Pecola. Precious tries to overcome wounded memories by envisioning herself as a White, attractive, slender sweet heart of a prince on horseback. She also creates an imaginary mother for her to evade the memories of her abusive mother. This dissociative imagination helps Precious to keep the painful memories, arising from abuse and neglect, in abeyance and thus saves her from falling into madness. Precious owes her resilience capacity partly to this imagination also. What makes Precious resilient in her case, becomes the negative impact in Pecola's case, at least in the public perception.

In *A Sketch of the Past* (1939), Woolf tries to recapture the memory she had suppressed for a long time, the memory of sexual abuse in her childhood by her two step brothers. Once the repressed memory brings forth the agonizing episodes in her life, she starts correlating her depression to these incidents lasted from 1888 to 1904. She understands that it was the seminal affair of her life.

The dissociative episodes in her life are depicted in *A Sketch of the Past* as “a great part of every day is not lived consciously” (*Moments* 70) and she adds that “non being” alternates with “separate moments of being” (70). In one of her letters written to Ethel Smyth, she describes these moments of dissociation as “disembodied trance-like intense rapture that used to seize me as a girl and comes back now and again down here, with a violence that lays me low” (*Letters* 5:2915). These debilitating moments when she loses link with the world, throws her into fugue like states i.e. a state of dissociative amnesia. These words of Virginia Woolf show her memories are discontinuous in nature and she experiences continuous disintegration, disengagement and impassiveness in her connectivity with the world. She describes her feelings on child life as “of lying in a grape and seeing through a film of semi-transparent yellow” (*Moments* 65).

Clinical research findings have proved that sexual dysfunction, depression and low self-esteem are some of the problems associated with the sexual abuse. Sexual abuse affects the children’s cognitive and emotional outlook to the world, disfigures the children’s self-confidence, world view and sense of identity. It questions their sense of worthiness and ability to control their lives and causes behavioral problems. Among them, depression has been found to be the most common long-term symptom

among survivors. Survivors may have difficulty in externalizing the abuse, thus thinking negatively about themselves (Hartman et al., 156). Harboring negative thoughts for a long time, survivors develop feelings of insignificance and shun others because they suppose they do not have anything to provide. Ratican describes the symptoms of child sexual abuse survivors' depression to be feeling down much of the time, having suicidal ideation, having disturbed sleeping patterns, and having disturbed eating patterns (34). Browne and Finkelhor observe that "in the clinical literature, depression is the symptom most commonly reported among adults molested as children" (152). Bagley and Ramsay figured considerably high rates of clinical depression in adult women sexually abused as children, relative to their non-molested counterparts (34). Lanktree et al report that a sample of child and juvenile psychiatric patients with a background of sexual abuse, are likely to have sought a diagnosis of major depression more than four times than patients with no abusive history (448).

Virginia Woolf, was famously known for her bouts of depression and she was aware of her depressive state too. As she wrote, "I'm interested in depression & make myself play a game of assembling the fractured pieces" (Diary 5). Always called teasingly the 'poor goat' of her family, or considered mad even by family members, she dissects her history of depression, tries to find reasons for the attacks of dejection and despondency, for her attempts of suicide, she realizes painfully that those moments of depression were triggered by her traumatic experiences in her childhood and laments her life would have been different without that experiences.

DeSalvo writes,

Children who have spent their lives in a state of chronic depression report precisely what Woolf describes in “A Sketch of the Past”- a sense of not being connected to the experiences of childhood, a feeling that has been lived behind a screen, within an envelope which protects the child from trauma or from neglect. This deadening, a state of suspended animation, is what Woolf describes as her nearly constant state as a child. When she describes memories of intense feeling- the recollection of her mother’s dress, of waves breaking, of ecstasy- she reminds herself that these memories are so intense precisely because they are moments that pierced her usual sleepwalker state, moments in a childhood that was otherwise experienced through “a film of semi-transparent yellow”. No more accurate, articulate, or convincing portrait of the state of childhood depression has perhaps been drawn (104).

Alluding to her sense of powerlessness arising from the incestuous experience and consequent depression, Virginia Woolf writes, “a feeling of hopeless sadness...I became aware of something terrible; and of my own powerlessness. I slunk off alone, feeling horribly depressed.” (Moments,71). On another occasion, hearing someone’s news of suicide, Woolf writes, “dragged down, hopelessly, into some pit of absolute despair from which I could not escape. My body seemed paralyzed (71). The fact is that Virginia was aware of her depression and could trace its origin to her events in childhood.

As DeSalvo diagnoses, “Sexual violence. Hopeless sadness. Powerlessness. Horrible depression. The face in the mirror. Being dragged down into a pit of absolute despair, from which there was no escape. Paralysis. This was the shape of Virginia Woolf’s early childhood as she saw it” (107).

One of the major affected areas of child sexual victims was the cognitive capacity of children. Herman writes that the trauma experiences will “interfere with the child’s ability to concentrate, learn, and perform daily activities at home and in school, their sense of identity, self-esteem, and their view of the world as a safe place is often altered” (25). This failure to concentrate is visible in Precious’ case:

First grade boy say, Pick up your lips Claireece ’fore you trip over them. Call me shoe shine shinola. Second grade I is fat. Thas when fart sounds and pig grunt sounds start. No boyfriend no girlfriends. I stare at the blackboard pretending. I don’t know what I’m pretending- that trains ain’ riding through my head sometime and that yes, I’m reading along with the class on page 55 of the reader. Early on I realize no one hear the TV set voices growing out blackboard but me, so I try not to answer them. Over in deepest end of the pool (where you could drown if not for fine lifeguard look like Bobby Brown) is me sitting in my chair at my desk and the world turn to whirring sound, everything is noise, teacher’s voice white static. My pee pee open hot stinky down my thighs ssssss splatter splatter. I wanna die I hate myself HATE myself. Giggles giggles but I don’t move I barely breathe I just sit.

They giggle. I stare straight ahead. They talk me. I don't say nuffin'
(Sapphire 38,39).

Susan A Clancy explains the effects of trauma on neurobiological function:

The exact manner in which professionals believe that trauma results in long-lasting harm is complicated. Basically, the experience of psychological trauma causes extreme, unnaturally high levels of neurobiological arousal in the victim, arousal so extreme that it becomes toxic; it destabilizes the victim's neurobiology, leading to long-term emotional, behavioral and cognitive dysfunction and in some cases, even to brain damage. In other words, trauma can set off a chain of reaction in the nervous system that influences level of hormones and neurotransmitters and can impact the brain. Traumatized brains may have dysregulated systems poorly equipped to handle subsequent psychosocial stressors. In short, traumatic events produce profound and lasting changes in physiological arousal, emotion, cognition and memory (25-26).

Finkelhor and Browne presents a theory of 'traumagenic dynamics' explaining that four factors cause trauma namely traumatic sexualization, stigmatization, betrayal and powerlessness. Any of these factors can be perceived in other types of traumas too but a combination of all these factors are said to be unique to sexual abuse trauma (180).

Effects of child sexual abuse leave short term as well as long term impact on the sexuality of the victims. Open masturbation, sexual inquisitiveness unnatural to the age of the victim and frequent exposure of the genitals are said to be the short effects of sexual abuse perpetrated on the children (Finkelhor and Browne 143). Survivors of child sexual abuse, especially those of incestuous abuse continue to experience sexual difficulties in their later life. The long-term effects of the abuse that the survivor experiences, such as, depression and dissociative patterns, affect the survivor's sexual functioning.

Maltz gives a list of the top ten sexual symptoms that often result from experiences of sexual abuse in childhood or adolescence:

avoiding, fearing, or lacking interest in sex; approaching sex as an obligation; experiencing negative feelings such as anger, disgust, or guilt with touch; having difficulty becoming aroused or feeling sensation; feeling emotionally distant or not present during sex; experiencing intrusive or disturbing sexual thoughts and images; engaging in compulsive or inappropriate sexual behaviors; experiencing difficulty establishing or maintaining an intimate relationship; experiencing vaginal pain or orgasmic difficulties (women); and experiencing erectile, ejaculatory, or orgasmic difficulties (men) (323).

Research done on the incidence of sexual dysfunction in the United States found out that victim of child sexual abuse experiences sexual problems more than those who have not experienced any kind of child sexual abuse. They found that male

victims of childhood sexual abuse were more likely to experience erectile dysfunction, premature ejaculation, and low sexual desire, and they found that women were more likely to have arousal disorders (Laumann et al 538).

The problems related to sexual abuse are manifested in different forms as sexual dysfunction arising from fears of susceptibility and re-victimization, general distrust of sex partners though keeping terror and disbelief, inclination to be reliant upon or to over-idealize those with whom the victim keeps romantic relationship, obsession with sexual thoughts and a predilection to sexualize what otherwise might have been nonsexual relationship, history of numerous, shallow, often short sexual relationships that swiftly ends as closeness grows (Briere 51-52). One of the long-term impacts of early sexual abuse comes in the form of later sexual malfunctioning. Finkelhor and Browne found that child sexual abuse victims reported significantly lower levels of sexual self-esteem. In some cases, the victims of child sexual abuse show the signs of aversion to sex, flashbacks and nightmares to the molestation experience, vaginismus or sexual dysfunction, complicatedness with arousal and orgasm as well as negative and bleak attitudes towards their bodies and sexuality (194). They keep only negative connotations to sex and their pessimistic attitude and emotions on sex, including fear, disgust, anger and a feeling of insecurity taint their later sexual life, often leading to aversion towards sex.

Research studies report that adults who were sexually exploited as children exhibit contradictory characteristics sometimes, i.e., both evasion and aversion of sex and intense interest and obsession with it. On the one hand they spurn the very contemplation of it because of its fearful and excruciating associations and the shock

it wreaked. On the other hand, the survivor has learned at an early age that an authoritative way of gaining warmth and attention was using sexual charm. Accordingly, some victims who were sexually abused as children report extensive sexual relationships with many different partners.

Among the victims of child sexual abuse, clinicians have observed sexual preoccupations and repetitive sexual behaviors like masturbation and compelling sex play. Often the children exhibit interest and knowledge, those are deemed inappropriate to their age, such as engaging in sexual activity or oral- genital contact with school playmates (Adams-Tucker 362). Data shows that sexually molested children are likely than their peers to show sexual responsiveness and behavior which might be improper for their age (Friedrich et al 48). Recent study shows that sexual abuse survivors are prone to sexual fantasy compared to those who are not abused. Smiljanich et al found that, compared to non-abused people, adults abused as children reported more sexual fantasies of consensual sex, forcing others into sex, being forced into sex, involvement in an orgy and sex with strangers (Briere 185). Briere observes that, the traumatic sex associated with childhood sexual abuse, increases abuse survivor's fixation with sexual thoughts and weird fantasy (52).

Bone, in *Bastard Out of Carolina* (1992) develops sexual fantasies to overcome the trauma of sexual abuse at the hands of Daddy Glen, her stepfather, "My fantasies got more violent and more complicated as Daddy Glen continued to beat me with the same two or three belts he'd set aside for me" (112).

Bone's fantasies at the time of masturbation are terrible but, in this act, she finds a deliverance from the feeling of being oppressed by her stepfather:

I would imagine being tied up and put in a haystack while someone set the dry stale straw ablaze. I would picture it perfectly while rocking on my hand. The day dream was about struggling to get free while the fire burned hotter and closer. I am not sure if I came when the fire reached me or after I imagined escaping it. But I came. I orgasmed on my hand to the dream of fire (63).

Though Bone is ashamed of her violent and weird fantasy, and the pleasure she receives from masturbation, she finds a sense of power in that. As J. Bouson writes in her essay “Family Violence, Incest and White- Trash Shame in Dorothy Allison’s *Bastard Out of Carolina*,”

If in this replay of her stepfather’s physical and sexual abuse, Bone attempts to gain active mastery over passive suffering, she also defies her stepfather through her autoerotic pleasures and thus achieves a secret sense of ‘pride.’ Even though her masochistic fantasies are ‘terrible, she still loves them” (44).

Bone’s fantasy grows wilder as days pass by. During her stay with her Aunt Raylene, Bone takes a hook from a trawling chain and conceals it:

I snuck out to get the hook. I took it back to my room, pried the chain off, and cleaned and polished it. When it was shiny and smooth, I got in bed and put it between my legs, pulling it back and forth. It made me shiver and go hot at the same time. I had read in one of the paperbacks Daddy Glen hid in the garage about women who pushed

stuff up inside them. I held the chain and thought about that, rubbed it against my skin and hummed to myself. I wasn't like the women in those books, but it felt good to hold that metal, to let those links slip back and forth until they were slippery. I used the lock I had found on the river bank to fasten the chain around my hips. It felt sun-warmed and tingly against my skin, as shiny as the sweat on Uncle Earle's freckled shoulders, as exciting as the burning light behind my eyes. It was mine. It was safe. Every link on that chain was magic in my hand. I put my head back and smiled. The chain moved under the sheet. I was locked away and safe. What I really was could not be touched. What I really wanted was not yet imagined. Somewhere far away a child was screaming, but right then, it was not me. (Allison 193)

Bone actually fails to understand what is meant by sex and she starts bothering and gets confused about it in a too young age, "Sex. Was that what Daddy Glen had been doing to me in the parking lot? Was it what I had started doing to myself whenever I was alone in the afternoons?" (63)

This strange fantasy of Bones comes as a coping strategy or defensive act to the violent act of Daddy Glen. Thus, she wins over the powerful and abusive patriarch. For Bone, masturbation actually becomes a curative process. It is a process of repossessing or recovering her body, over which she had lost autonomy and which had been put to many wounds by others. But even the process of masturbation creates conflicts in her mind as she is ashamed of doing it, at the same time she is hilarious over her attempt to defy Daddy Glen.

Yet it was only in my fantasies with people watching me that I was able to defy Daddy Glen. Only there that I had any pride. I loved those fantasies, even though I was sure they were a terrible thing. They had to be; they were self-centered and they made me have shuddering orgasms. In them I was very special. I was triumphant, important. I was not ashamed. There was no heroism possible in the real beatings. There was just being beaten until I was covered with snot and misery (113).

The commonly held notion on the consequences of sexual abuse is that adults who were sexually abused in their childhood will show aversion to sex and they will resort to avoidance of sex in their later life as they might be afraid of the elements of exploitation, betrayal and trauma involved in it. The victim becomes insensitive to the sexual feelings to some extent with the unconscious belief that the numbness will defend her from further attacks, and partially because sex become nauseating to her. Briere's study also pointed out that sexual molestation causes higher rates of sexual dysfunctional behavior in adulthood. (127)

In *Color Purple*, Celie suffers of sexual frigidity. She does not feel any kind of pleasure in her sexual life with her husband, Mr--. He is also not bothered about her feelings or sexual satisfaction and is always concerned with his own pleasure. Celie thinks about her sister's safety while "he on top of" her (14). Her sexual coldness is an after effect of her traumatic rape. Forceful sexual intercourse, unwanted pregnancies and emotional trauma accompanied with it makes her sexually unresponsive. As she contemplates on her sexual life,

Mr---clam on top of me, do his business, in ten minutes us both sleep. Only time I feel something stirring down there is when I think bout Shug. And that like running to the end of the road and it turn back on itself.

You know the worst part? She say. The worst part is I don't think he notice. He git up there and enjoy himself just the same. No matter what I'm thinking. No matter what I feel. It just him. Heart feeling don't even seem to enter into it. She snort. The fact he can do it like that make me want to kill him (63).

Celie's letters repetitively underline that her sex life with her husband was devoid of any passion. As she shares her experience with Shug Avery,

You like to sleep with him, I ast.

Yeah, Celie she say, I have to confess, I just love it. Don't you?

Naw, I say. Mr... can tell you, I don't like it at all.

What is it like? He git up on you, heist your night gown round your waist plunge in. Most times I pretend I ain't there. He never know the difference. Never ast me how I feel, nothing. Just do his business, get off, go to sleep.

She start to laugh. Do his business, she say. Do his business. Why, Miss Celie. You make it sound like he going to the toilet on you.

That what it feel like, I say.

She stop laughing.

You never enjoy it at all? She ast, puzzle. Not even with your children daddy?

Never, I say.

Why Miss Celie, she say, you still a virgin.

What? I ast (74).

Some clinicians have pointed another side of this issue. The prejudiced concept over virginity and the unnecessary weight attached to the ideals of virginity and sexual purity lead girls to think that they are impure and therefore undesirable. Virginia Woolf also shows her problems in sexual life in letters and diary notes. She feels that she was robbed of her virginity by her brother, so she kept a lifelong fright or abhorrence towards sex especially to heterosexuality. As she writes in a letter to Ethel Smyth shows, "I was always sexually cowardly...My terror of real life has always kept me in a nunnery" (4:2194). This fear of sex with men leads her to lesbian relations with her female friends like Violet Dickinson and Vita Sackville-West.

In *Thirty Days in September*, the characters of mother and daughter, Shanta and Mala, who were abused by the same person, also show this contrastive tendency. The play focuses on the sexual life of the daughter, Mala, but a passing comment by Mala throws light on the sexual life of Shanta too. Mala accuses Shanta that her father left them not because of Mala but because of Shanta:

MALA: He left you not me. I know he didn't care about me, but he didn't leave because of me. He left because of you. You didn't love him. The only reason you shared my room was because you didn't want to sleep with him. All night long I had to listen to your mumbling

saying you didn't want him near you. You didn't want him touching you. You even moved that horrible picture of your god into my room saying he will protect us... I remember daddy's last words to me. You know what he said. He said to me 'I married a frozen woman.' A frozen woman. So don't try to tell me that you were concerned about me by hiding the truth. The only truth you want to hide is your failure as a wife and a mother (36).

The expression 'a frozen woman' indicates the scar, the sexual abuse at the hands of her own brother, had made on her. It is clear from Mala's revealing that Shanta's failure in sexual life made her husband leave her.

But Mala's case is the other extreme, showing contrastive study of this impact. The survivor of sexual abuse at very young age itself learns that the easiest way to gain frantically looked-for interpersonal intimacy and closeness is sexual accessibility. There is another chance of these victims developing increased interest and obsession with sex in their later life. Clinicians have also pointed out licentious and uncontrollable sexual urges in these victims, when they reach the adolescent stage (Brown 665). Courtois, DeYoung, Herman and Meiselman analyzed that one of the long-term effects of child sexual abuse was the increased level of sexual behavior among victims, usually called promiscuity (Briere 77).

Thus, one of the most frequent behavior pattern observable in abuse survivors is recurrent short-term sexual behaviors, often with different sexual partners. Briere points out that:

The choice of multiple sexual partners by some sexual abuse survivors appears to represent powerful needs for closeness and intimacy, as a result of deprivation in these areas in the past, and, yet, fearfulness regarding the vulnerability inherent in sustained intimacy (67).

The abuse victims, in order to reduce tension, may scoop into frequent or rapidly initiated sexual behavior i.e. the use of sex for distraction, stimulation and evading of blankness. Sexual activity provides them a provisional capacity to pacify, disguise or dismiss chronic abuse-related dilemma. To be precise, many abuse survivors resort to frequent one- night stands or repetitive masturbation during times of melancholy, lonesomeness, or impending abandonment by others or during the time of unmanageable pondering and recollection of abuse related painful events. For these people, excessive obsession with sex serves as a premeditated or involuntarily chosen coping mechanism called upon to modulate hurting memories.

Sexual abuse victims show an increased tendency to get involved in destructive relationships, where they might be re-victimized. They crave for care and intimacy, even while they are afraid of damage, denunciation, or desertion. They keep contradictory feelings, of dependency as well as rage over control, which are the end products of child abuse which ruin the primary and basic relationship and where protection and nurturance should have been the prevailing feeling instead of the feelings of pain and betrayal.

In the case of Mala, this sexual promiscuous nature is visible. Sexually used in childhood, Mala becomes physically and sexually susceptible to men and indulges in constant search of men for sexual gratification, which is actually the need for

feeling loved. In the coffee shop scene, Mala points her finger at the man sitting at the table next to theirs and complains to Deepak that the man was staring at her breast. This infuriates Deepak and he starts beating the man. In the meantime, Mala calls Deepak back to their table and reveals that what she alleged was not true. She confesses that she cooked up the story to attract his attention so that it may enliven her, “No. He wasn’t staring at me . . . I wanted him to . . . You want to know what I feel most? . . . if he had looked at me, I would have felt—I would have felt—truly alive” (31).

Herman too notes that some adults, who were molested as children, report periods of wide-ranging sexual behavior, often with different partners (111).

As Mala reveals painfully her promiscuous nature,

MALA. I cannot stop them! I attract them.

DEEPAK. This is all in your mind.

MALA. You don’t understand! I am doing something that attracts them to me.

MALA. I want to. I want them to come to me.

DEEPAK. No, No you don’t.

MALA. It is true. If I were to let that man into my house, I will allow him to do anything (40).

Herman noted that 35% of incest victims reported promiscuity and some victims had a repertoire of sexually stylized behavior which they manipulated for gaining attention or to triumph over the feeling of powerlessness that they experienced

as the child victims. The child victims also get puzzled over the behavior precincts that define and differentiate fondness, sex and abuse (112).

Precious in *Push* always shows ambivalent nature regarding sex and love. At times she wants to experience both sex and love. From her abusive experience with her daddy, she is bewildered whether sex and love can go together. She is sexually abused by a person who is supposed to love and protect her. Precious knows it is wrong to enjoy sex with her father and she detests it. But at times, she enjoys that too and her body reacts. She starts longing for the presence of boys and to date with them, but she is not sure whether she looks for sex or for love.

Breslin finds a logical explanation for the child sexual abuse victim's unnatural interest towards sex and the tendency to utilize it for personal gains. Usually children get socialized and learn about sex from their peer group and it is a natural and healthy learning process. But in the case of adult-child sexual experience, child gets acquainted with the adult world of sex, which may prove disastrous to the child. So, child perceives sex as the basis for any relationship.

Mala's character shows this behavior. Mala's desperate yearning for attention from men is evident in the scene in which she implores to a man to take her to the hotel room at the very moment. She tries all seductive ways to get the man as per her wish, but he shows reluctance because of the presence of her fiancée. He promises to meet Mala the very next day but Mala is not ready to leave as her rejected state will affect her self-esteem. When he goes with his girlfriend, Maya fights her tears:

MAN. Look why don't I take Radhika home and you could- you know- come over to my hotel tomorrow? For a drink. Hmmm?

MALA. Take me to your room with you now.

MAN. No.No...I-I can't.i am with her tonight.

MALA (*Pleading, looking up at him to be kissed.*) Do whatever you want with me, but take me with you now (Dattani 21)

Briere notes that,

The frequent yet short- lived nature of these sexual encounters can thus be understood in terms of the survivor's need for nurturance and love, which she or he has learned can best be gained through sex, and yet, simultaneously, the survivor's historically valid fears of injury, exploitation and/ or abandonment in similar intimate situations (53).

As Mala herself reveals what she was seeking in such relations was approval and recognition, yet she did not get it as men were seeking sexual gratification from this easily available victim. Mala comes to realize that what she gets from Deepak is the real love and she starts enjoying sex only after the counseling process and the death of her uncle.

MALA: And for the first time I enjoyed sex. Truly enjoyed it for its tactile pleasure. Not as a craving for some kind of approval. I came alive and experienced what it means to be really loved. And for once I

could look at Deepak in the eyes and say 'I love you' to him and believe it when he says the same to me (34).

A child's sexuality develops in an improper and dysfunctional manner as a result of trauma it suffers in connection with sexual abuse. A child may be enticed by an adult to sexual activity through the exchange of attention, love, kindness, gifts and some privileges. The child internalizes this behavioral pattern as the easy stratagem to maneuver others into his way. The child develops some misconstructions and bewilderments about sexual ethics and behavior and grows interested in giving undue importance to certain organs. The child abuse victims, early in their life learn that, sexual availability is the powerful or manipulative tool to deal with powerful adults, which later drive them to take prostitution as a safe and profitable profession. As Sandra Butler notes:

Even before puberty a girl often learns to use her sexuality to please her father. After several years she may see prostitution as a logical extension of selling sex at home. Many abused women decide that if they have to sex with a man, they might as well get paid for it (41).

Sexual abuse victims might not take the profession of prostitution, but they tend to use sex as a potent weapon in their immediate circle, as they perceive sex is the best way to begin or keep a close personal relationship, to receive attention and to have interpersonal power.

Taking the case of Lolita in *Lolita* (1955), once she feels trapped, she accepts even monetary benefit from Humbert for the sexual favors she gives him. He starts

paying her three cents a day so that she may meet his primary needs. Now and then, she asks for increased allowances, even in exchange of a casual hug:

Her weekly allowance, paid to her under condition she fulfill her basic obligations, was twenty-one cents at the start of the Beardsley era-and went up to one dollar five before its end. This was a more than generous arrangement seeing she constantly received from me all kinds of small presents and had for the asking any sweetmeat or movie under the moon – although, of course, I might fondly demand an additional kiss, or even a whole collection of assorted caresses, when I knew she coveted very badly some item of juvenile amusement. She was, however, not easy to deal with. Only very listlessly did she earn her three pennies-or three nickels-per day; and she proved to be a cruel negotiator whenever it was in her power to deny me certain life – wrecking, strange, slow paradisaal philters without which I could not live more than a few days in a row, and which, because of the very nature of love's languor, I could not obtain by force. Knowing the magic and might of her own soft mouth, she managed-during one school year! – to raise the bonus price of a fancy embrace to three, and even four bucks. (Nabokov 208)

On the other way round, Briere explains the passive nature of the abuse victims:

Child abuse may teach the victim about not only his or her ultimate sexual value to others, but also the value of being good, acquiescent,

passive, selfless, and so on in interactions with powerful others. For example, the child who discovers that servile attention to his or her abuser's various needs can forestall impending violence or elicit rare praise or affection is likely to conclude that powerful ones should be groomed and catered to, in exchange for love or forestalled abandonment. This perspective may, in part, further explain the behavior of the 'passive' battered woman, who may tolerate violent or abusive behavior from her spouse or partner in order to retain a sense of being loved or feeling needed (56).

Some studies proved that child sexual abuse victims have impaired concept on the nature of sexual relation, as imbibed from their relation with their offenders. Some children confuse sex with affection as they might have traded sex for the caring and affection they got from the abuser, and they tend to expect the same exchange from all adults and in later relations too they expect the same from their partners (Herman 99).

Studies conducted among prostitutes showed a connection between child sexual abuse and later prostitution. Silbert and Pines concluded from their studies that there was a surprising link between juvenile sexual abuse and prostitution (411). Studies show very high rates of child sexual abuse in the backgrounds of female prison populations, prostitutes, and psychiatric outpatients, especially those treated for depression and anxiety and phobic disorders. Childhood sexual molestation is shown to be an antecedent to prostitution (Bagley and Young 7). Studies by Mary E. Gilfus

indicate that a great number of prostitutes and performers in pornography were sexually abused when they were girls (63).

In Sapphire's *Push*, Precious' friends at Each One/ Teach one alternative school also keep diaries according to Ms. Rain's instruction and their writings on their lives are added at the end of the text. One of her friends, Rhonda Patrice Johnson writes how she was frequently abused by her younger brother. She tells her mother who gets furious not on her son but on her daughter, "She say get out of my house now. I say but Ma! Leave now she start screaming 'bout what I done to her son. Filthy haint, night devil walker she call me. I am shocked. I think I am still in that shock sometimes" (My Younger Years).

Once out of the house and not getting any job, she resorts to prostitution:

I really did not know how to get a job, talk to social service-what's that! So I was just out there! I would go with men to bars, drink, go home with them, hope I get to stay the night- that they don't tell me go after they come. After I do this with, oh, is it five or fifty or a hundred guys, I start dissolve (My Grown-up Years).

Diana Russell points out that, incest victims are twice as likely as non-incest victims to be asked to pose for pornography, as well as to have been upset by being requested to enact behavior seen in pornographic pictures, movies, or books (161). This argument seems to be true in the case of *Lolita*. In order to escape from Humbert, Lolita depends Clare Quilty, a playwright. Pretending to be in love with her, Quilty forces Lolita to leave Humbert. But actually, Quilty knows the true nature of the

relationship between Humbert and Lolita and he wants Lolita to participate in a child pornography orgy for which he helps Lolita to leave Humbert.

Sexually abused young girls, time and again manifest a loathing and repugnance to close relationships; they develop a kind of phobia towards men in general that they fail miserably in heterosexual relations and marriages (Peters 395-421). It is also possible that a woman perceives all men as incest perpetrators, thus feeling disgusting towards men, try to seek out a sexual partner in another woman (Russell 199). Same sex love need not be a compulsory aftermath of childhood sexual abuse, but in *The Color Purple* Celie's admission that, she doesn't look at men but women, shows her feeling of oneness with women. Celie's perception of men changes as a result of the traumatic abuse, "I don't even look at mens. That's the truth. I look at women, tho, cause I'm not scared of them" (7). Celie considers a man as a person who violates women sexually because all the men she had confronted invoked fear and physical harm to her when engaging in sex with her.

Bone in *Bastard out of Carolina* too shows, though not explicit, same sex orientation especially in relation with her Aunt Raylene. Ann Cvetkovich relates Bone's incest experience with her growing homosexual orientation and argues that her feelings of shame and anger fires her queer tendencies (389).

The child victims of sexual abuse also get befuddled regarding their sexual identity and sexual orientation. Victimized boys, being subjected to homosexuality, often misled to think that they are inclined towards homosexuality. In *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969) Maya feels perplexed thinking she is a lesbian as she feels her body is underdeveloped and her apprehension regarding her sexual orientation

leads her to offer sex to a boy in neighborhood, which ends in her illegitimate pregnancy.

In case of some children, the abuse had resulted in inappropriate assuming of sexualized behavior and this out of place taking of adult responsibilities, especially mother's responsibilities in family, can be taken as the end product of father-daughter incest. While some accused girls of promiscuity and of tempting fathers with their seductive nature, it is recognized today that such sexualized behavior is the result of abuse, rather than the cause of abuse. Celie in *The Color Purple* looks after every duties of her mother and after her mother's once she even dresses like her younger stepmother in order to entice her stepfather so that he will not harm her younger sister:

I ast him to take me instead of Nettie while our new mammy sick. But he just ast me what I'm talking bout. I tell him I can fix myself up for him. I duck into my room and come out wearing horsehair, feathers, and a pair of our new mammy high heel shoes. He beat me for dressing trampy but he do it to me anyway (9).

Some victimized children, especially the young boys show violent sexual nature and resort to the victimization of their peers and younger children. Some abused victims turn in their later life from the position of sexual victims to the sexual aggressors (Russell 133). Cholly in *The Bluest Eye* considers sex as a means to express hatred and aggression and the same feelings are directed towards Pecola too. These feelings originate from his bitter experience of being forced to do sex with his girlfriend in the presence of two white men. Surprisingly, he gets angry and spiteful towards the victim not towards the whites.

Research studies have found that victimized children are at great risk of repeated victimization in adult life too. Risk of sexual molestation, harassment or mauling is double for the survivors of child sexual abuse victims compared to those who are not victims of abuse. Diana Russell's study shows that of women, who were incestuously victimized in childhood, two-thirds were subsequently raped. Revictimization of abused children is a common phenomenon. As Bagley and Ramsay analyze continuous and further victimization of sexually abused children is possible as the adults or persons in power knowing that she is a victim, exploits the opportunity to take advantage of her.

In *Thirty Days in December*, Shanta accuses Mala for entertaining her cousin sexually but Mala reveals her helplessness painfully that she was trapped into that affair once her cousin came with reference from her uncle who sexually abused her,

SHANTA. I remember other things also. When your cousin, your father's nephew came for his holidays.

MALA. He made the advances. He found out from uncle...

SHANTA. No Mala!

MALA. Why don't you believe me? He told me that I was uncle's reference! Those were his words! 'your uncle Vinay has given me your reference!' uncle told him, Ma! I didn't do or say anything to him. He came to my room! Once he said uncle's name, I just couldn't stop him!

SHANTA. Why should you stop him? You were enjoying it. Your cousin told me in private that he was concerned about you, that I should not send you out of the house.

MALA. That was after! He told you that after he molested me! (28)

Mala's temporary relations also earn for her the name of a promiscuous lady that the man whom she meets at the function, tells her that her name had been referred to him by one of his friends,

MAN. ...So I hear a lot of things about you.

MALA. Oh.

MAN. From the office. Rahul was telling me...You have been with him for some time I think (20).

Survivors of child sexual abuse often experience guilt, shame, and self-blame. It has been shown that survivors habitually take personal accountability for the abuse. When the sexual abuse is done by an esteemed trusted adult it may be hard for the children to view the perpetrator in a negative light, thus leaving them incapable of seeing what happened as not their fault. Then survivors often blame themselves and internalize negative messages about themselves. Children who are sexually ill-treated can be maneuvered by their abuser to believe that the abuse is their fault and so the feelings of shame and guilt that arise out of the memories of abuse may prevent them from disclosing the traumatic experience (Allnock 13). The child feels shame and guilt for these nefarious activities with the abuser, who urges the child to keep the secrecy

(Finkelhor 184). Sometimes, the offender blames the child for this perverted behavior and belittles him suggesting that she lured the offender in to this abusive relation.

Judith Herman notes:

The child entrapped in this kind of horror develops the belief that she is somehow responsible for the crimes of her abusers. Simply by virtue of her existence on earth, she believes that she has driven the most powerful people in her world to do terrible things. Surely, then, her nature must be thoroughly evil. The language of the self becomes a language of abomination. (105)

Bone in *Bastard out of Carolina* does not tell Anney about the sexual abuse as she feels she will be blamed for enticing her stepfather as she was accused by Anney, of provoking Daddy Glen's wrath when he physically maltreated her. She gets tensed that Anney will indict her for not resisting the abuse. As in other incestuous narratives, the abuser blames the victim for demanding and enjoying the sex, "You've always wanted it. Don't tell me you don't.... I'll give you what you really want" (285).

David Spiegel observes, most victims "blame themselves inappropriately for situations over which they had no control. Oddly, it is less painful to think you brought a tragedy upon yourself than to face your vulnerability to mistreatment" (18). Charles L. Proudfit writes that, woman and child victims of rape often blame themselves for those experiences or even are certain that they deserve for it because they were not good enough (23).

In *The Kite Runner*, Sohrab is used as a child prostitute by Assef and his friends. Sohrab feels he is impure and sinful now. Sohrab is also afraid that God may punish him for what he did:

Now he was crying, softly, silently. “Can I ask you something, Amir agha?”

“Of course.”

“Will God...” he began, and choked a little. “Will God put me in hell for what I did to that man?” (Hosseini 277).

Sohrab is ashamed of what had happened to him and he thinks he keeps a dirty secret now which will devalue him in other’s eyes,

He buried his face in his hands and wept a long time before he spoke again. “I miss Father, and Mother too,” he croaked. “And I miss Sasa and Rahim Khan sahib. But sometimes I’m glad they’re not...they’re not here anymore.”

“Why?” I touched his arm. He drew back.

“Because—” he said, gasping and hitching between sobs, “because I don’t want them to see me...I’m so dirty.” He sucked in his breath and let it out in a long, wheezy cry. “I’m so dirty and full of sin.”

“You’re not dirty, Sohrab,” I said.

“Those men—”

You're no dirty at all."

"—they did things...the bad man and the other two...they did things...did things to me." (278)

Herman puts forward the explanation for this guilt feeling as a symptom of posttraumatic stress disorder, caused by prolonged exposure to interpersonal trauma. Instead of abusers, victims are filled with a sense of guilt as those around these victims make them believe. Even the abusers accuse the victims of seducing them thus holding them responsible. Naturally the victims harbor a thought that they need to be punished which ends in self –mutilation, alcoholism, drug abuse or suicide attempts. But there are victims who say they feel guilty because the abuse was not done against their will. From their perspective, they feel that they allowed it to happen (192). The feeling that they enjoyed the sexual pleasure or their bodies reacted and responded to the sexual act done by the abuser make the victims ashamed and guilty.

In the novel *Push*, however, Precious's frequent efforts to overcome the traumatic memories of her rapes with her flight to the fantasy world constantly fail because she derives sexual pleasure. As she says, "Then I change stations, change bodies, I be dancing in videos!" (24), but her daydream often gets interrupted as she feels painfully that she enjoys the pleasures of body, "I start to feel good; stop being a video dancer and start coming. I try to go back to video but coming now, rocking under Carl now, my twat jumping juicy" (24)

Similarly, in another memory, she recalls:

I wait for him get off me. Lay there stare at wall till wall is a movie, *Wizard of Oz*, I can make that one play anytime. Michael Jackson, scarecrow. Then my body take me over again, like shocks after earthquake, shiver me, I come again. My body not mine, I hate it coming (111).

The irrepressible sexual stir and pleasure causes shame and guilt in Precious's mind. She feels bewildered at the contrastive feelings of loathing and gratification, "But then I feel the hot sauce hot cha cha feeling when he be fucking me. I get so confuse. I HATE him. But my pussy be popping. He say that, 'Big Mama your pussy is popping!' I HATE myself when I feel good" (58). Throughout her narrative, any memory related to her father leads to the memories of rape too and she feels disgusted over the orgasm she enjoyed. She shrinks in the mere thought, "I hate myself when I think Carl Kenwood Jones. Hate wif a capital letter" (112).

Again, in different context, Precious shows the same feeling, which means that shame arising from her feeling of having enjoyed the sex from her incestuous relation with her father,

My clit swell up I think Daddy. Daddy sick me, disgust me, but still he sex me up. I nawshus in my stomach but hot tight in my twat and I think I want it back, the smell of the bedroom, the hurt- he slap my face till it sting and my ears sing separate songs from each other, call me names, pump my pussy in out in out in out awww I come. He bite me hard. A hump! He slam his hips into me HARD. I scream pain he come. He slap my thighs like cowboys do horses on TV. Shiver. Orgasm in

me, his body shaking, grab me, call me Fat Mama, Big Hole! You LOVE it! Say you love it! I wanna say I DON'T. I wanna say I'm a chile. But my pussy popping like grease in frying pan. He slam in me again. His dick soft. He start sucking my tittie (111)

Precious' guilt for enjoying this incestuous pleasure makes her depressed and she resorts to unnatural and self-mutilating activities,

Afterward I go bafroom. I smear shit on my face. Feel good. Don't know why but it do. I never tell nobody about that before. But I would do that. If I go to insect support group what will I hear from other girls. I bite my fingernails till they look like disease, pull strips of my skin away. Get Daddy's razor out cabinet. Cut cut cut arm wrist, not trying to die, trying to plug myself back in. I am a TV set wif no picture. I am broke wif no mind. No past or present time. Only the movies of being someone else. Someone not fat, dark skin, short hair, someone not fucked. A pink virgin girl. A girl like Janet Jackson, a sexy girl don't know one get to fuck. A girl for value. A girl wif little titty whose self is luvlee just Luv-Vell- LEE! (114)

In some cases, stigmatization reaches extreme level that the victims exhibit self-destructive behavior and suicide tendency (Briere 126). As Bone in *Bastard Out of Carolina* wails, "I knew, I knew I was the most disgusting person on earth. I didn't deserve to live another day," (135-136).

In *Thirty Days in September*, Mala's anguish and guilt over her promiscuous ways is expressed,

I don't know why. I just don't understand...please don't ask me why I do it. It's just a game...not a game. No...it's ...I know it's wrong. What I am doing is terribly wrong! But it means a lot to me. I like it. That is why I am a bad person. I have no character... I suppose it's these Western values, I wish I were more traditional then I wouldn't behave like this...no, no, that's stupid, I know, that's very easy to put the blame elsewhere... (*Listening to the counselor.*) It has to end in a month's time. In fact, I like it best when I can time it so it lasts for thirty days. I even mark it on my calendar. After that, I have to -move on, if you know what I mean...Well it means that it is no longer satisfying to me, and I don't mean the physical part of it, although that is usually the main attraction for me...not that I actually enjoy it when they are doing it to me...sometimes I do, with the right kind of people...the right kind of people are, let me see...usually older men thought not necessarily so, Deepak my fiancé, is only a few years older to me... I think I like it- I don't know how to put it...when they-sort of -you know-use me (18).

Virginia Woolf also expresses strong sense of guilt over what had happened to her. Though she knows she hated it, she feels it was her fault that she allowed people to touch on her private parts.

As DeSalvo points out,

What she no doubt carried around with her throughout her life was a deep seated feeling of guilt, a feeling that somehow she should have been able to prevent what happened to her, that she was responsible, that she was bad, that there was something about her that invented this abuse. In the Stephen family, by the age of six or seven, she had already been taught that if something bad happens to you if you are a girl, it is your own fault; indeed, Victorian ideology held girls responsible for the morality of their brothers (108).

Shame is a repeatedly manifested traumatic consequence in sexually abused people, and the victims feel that they are useless and hopeless. They behave as though they deserve all these derision, slur and humiliation as they are already spoilt and damaged.

Virginia Woolf shares her shame about her body in her famous phrase, “looking-glass shame”,

There was a small looking glass in the hall at Talland House. It had, I remember, a ledge with a brush on it. By standing on tiptoe I could see my face in the glass. When I was six or seven perhaps, I got into the habit of looking at my face in the glass. But I only did this if I was sure that I was alone. I was ashamed of it. A strong feeling of guilt seemed naturally attached to it. But why was this so? (Moments 68)

She wonders the reason behind this shame. She remembers how Gerald Duckworth sexually molested her on a ledge, used for stacking dishes. She was watching in the mirror the crime perpetrated on her young body.

My natural love for beauty was checked by some ancestral dread. Yet this did not prevent me from feeling ecstasies and raptures spontaneously and intensely without any shame or the least sense of guilt, so long as they were disconnected with my own body. I thus detect another element in the shame which I had in being caught looking at myself in the glass in the hall. I must have been ashamed or afraid of my own body. Another memory, also of the hall, may help to explain this. There was a slab outside the dining room door. Once when I was very small Gerald Duckworth lifted me onto [a ledge], and as I sat there, he began to explore my body. I can remember the feel of his hand going under my clothes; going firmly and steadily lower and lower. I remember how I hoped that he would stop; how stiffened and wriggled as his hand approached my private parts. But it did not stop. His hand explored my private parts too. I remember resenting, disliking it – what is the word for so dumb and mixed feeling? It must have been strong, since I still recall it. This seems to show that a feeling about certain parts of the body; how they must not be touched; how it is wrong to allow them to be touched; must be instinctive. It proves that Virginia Stephen was not born on the 25th January 1882, but was born many thousands of years ago; and had from the very first

to encounter instincts already acquired by thousands of ancestresses in the past (69)

In her letter to Ethel Smyth, Virginia Woolf discloses the shame regarding the disclosure of sexual abuse, “Like breaking the hymen-if that’s the membrane’s name-a painful operation... I still shiver with shame at the memory of my half-brother, standing me on a lodge, aged about 6, and so exploring my private parts. Why should I have felt shame then? (6:3678)”.

The fear of reaction from the other family members, especially the mother, keeps the children from revealing the abuse to them. Bone in *Bastard out of Carolina*, does not dare to tell her mother this dark secret as she feels she will have to confront the question regarding her non-resistance to abuse,

He never said “Don’t tell your mama.” He never had to say it. I did not know how to tell anyone what I felt, what scared me and shamed me and still made me stand, unmoving and desperate, which he rubbed against me and ground his face into my neck. I could not tell Mama. I would not have known how to explain why I stood there and let him touch me. It wasn’t sex, not like a man woman pushing their naked bodies into each other, but then, it was something like sex, something powerful and frightening that he wanted badly and I did not understand at all (109).

In *Color Purple* Celie does not have anyone to confide her trauma so she starts writing letters to God, which shows her shame in losing the innocence. The feelings

of guilt and shame, and the sense of identity loss, Celie harbor are apparent in the beginning lines of the novel. "I am fourteen years old. I ~~am~~ I have always been a good girl" (11). Nettie too knows Celie's feeling of shame from her letters, "I remember one time you said your life made you feel so ashamed you couldn't even talk about it to God, you had to write it, bad as you thought your writing was" (122). Celie writes at first that she is a good girl, but as an afterthought she corrects that.

Sexual abuse badly affects the child's feelings of self-worth and self-esteem. As a result of child sexual abuse, the child starts imbibing the notion that she is bad and worthless and these feelings make inroads into her consciousness. Any sexual activity or even slightest participation from the side of children, make them guilty, as it is against the inculcated values and social conditioning and leaves in them a feeling of self-degradation (Summit 177). Part of the loss of self-esteem that goes along with sexual abuse is loss of good feelings about one's body (Putnam 113).

An individual's assumptions about himself/ herself, about others and about world are formed and influenced by childhood experiences. The self-perception of child abuse victims will be negative and often distorted that they will underrate their own potential that they will approach every trouble in the world with heightened anxiety. The impact of sexual violence on a person's cognitive abilities frequently comes in the form of acute guilt, low self-esteem and self-accusation. A woman with a history of child sexual abuse may attribute negative events in her life to internal and external factors along with finding fault with them while all good events in their lives are credited to outside factors. Such cognitive disturbances are more visible in the victims of psychological maltreatment. Even in the cases of physical or sexual abuse;

the cognitive issues are aggravated if psychological abuse coexists there. Navarre notes that the cognitive impacts of physical abuse are the products of psychological abuse too:

The assault is not (or not only) upon the physical body but upon ... the individual's perception of the self as valuable...the individual's perception of the self as competent... (and, among other things) the individual's perception that the world is beneficent or neutral rather than innately hostile (qtd. in Briere 24).

When abuse occurs in childhood, i.e. at a time when the child is incapable of resisting the abuser physically or psychologically, they tend to develop a feeling of vulnerability and persistent danger. Even their hopes regarding future are blighted. Briere notes the consequences of negative cognitive issues:

A common impact of childhood victimization is hyper vigilance to danger- not only for potential physical injury, but also for psychological trauma such as betrayal, abandonment, or injustice. This expectation of injury may lead to hyper- reactivity in the presence of real, potential, or imagined threats. Not only do many former victims of emotional neglect identify potential abandonment in the everyday actions of significant others, they tend to respond to such perceptions with greater emotional or behavioral intensity than others might deem appropriate. Similarly, survivors of psychological maltreatment may especially read criticism into the comments of others, and "overreact" with anger or fear. Sexual abuse survivors, on the other hand, may

perceive sexual or exploitive motives in the behavior of authority figures, and respond with fearful avoidance or with compliance in the form of sexualized or passive behavior (25, 26).

Poor self-esteem arising from the abuse in childhood may lead to stigmatization and direct and indirect blame from the abuser as well as from those around him. Courtois observes that, abuser's allegation that the child deserved the punishment and the society's blame that the victim was passive receiver with his or her silent consent, lead to negative internalization of things that it naturally lead to culpability, embarrassment and self-accusation (12).

Jehu observes that, childhood sexual abuse is associated with a variety of abuse-related negative thoughts and beliefs (e.g., "I am worthless and bad," "I am inferior to others because I did not have normal experiences) that, in turn, are associated with later depressive symptoms (352). One of the adverse effects of child abuse is the victim's general defenselessness and inclination to fall to destruction. Child's abusive experience fills him with a fear of danger and even of imminent death. Abused child's developing sense of security and faith in outside world may be in peril as he or she loses belief in the righteousness of the world. Early parental support, nurturance and responsiveness create a secure attachment between parent and infant and this bond is essential in the emotional and interpersonal development of child. This healthy bond enables the child to "approach the world with confidence and, when faced, with potentially alarming situations, is likely to tackle them effectively or to seek help in doing so" (Bowlby 208). On the other hand, neglect and deliberate mistreatment from parents in early years destroys the best possible parent-child

connection and leads the child to lose faith in the safety and support, naturally expected from parents. Separation from parents causes insecurity and anxiety in the children. Research studies on abused children show that early maltreatment by parents produces anxiety problem, apprehension and dissatisfaction in the children (Egeland and Erickson 112).

It is often observed that adults who were abused or neglected as children have difficulties with understanding, confidence and authority. As Briere observes: -

Interpersonal sequelae of child abuse may be understood as arising from two sources: immediate cognitive and conditioned responses to victimization that extend into long term (e.g., distrust of others, anger/or fear of those with greater power, concerns about abandonment, perceptions of injustice, low self-esteem) and accommodation responses to ongoing maltreatment (e.g., avoidance, passivity, sexualization, adversariality and ingratiation) or abuse-related distress. These various reactions and responses, although understandable given the survivor's early life history, nevertheless interfere with daily interpersonal functioning and, thus access to critical social resources such as relationships, acceptance and support (50).

In the foreword to the novel, *The Bluest Eye*, Toni Morrison says:

The death of self-esteem can occur quickly, easily in children, before their ego has 'legs' so to speak. Couple the vulnerability of youth with

indifferent parents, dismissive adults, and a world, which, in its language, laws and images, re-enforces despair, and the journey to destruction is sealed.

In *The Bluest Eye*, incestuous rape by her father destroys Pecola's self-esteem which was already very low because of the psychological abuse inflicted by the racist society. To some extent Precious in *Push* too feels the same, "Mongo sound Spanish don't it? Yeah, that's why I chose it, but what it is short for Mongoloid Down Sinder, which is what she is; sometimes what I feel I is. I feel so stupid sometimes. So ugly, worth nuffin'. (34).

This sense of stigmatization is augmented if the child's family members take it as an immense guilt from the side of the victim and react hysterically and shockingly to the revealing thus driving the child to the belief that she has transgressed the boundaries of civility and has done tabooed activity. The victims start to believe that they are viewed as spoiled merchandise by the society and the disgrace, associated with the abuse victims, causes low self-esteem in them. Children who grow up in strict religious and cultural environments find themselves in a very shameful and dishonorable situation and they keep an alienated feeling in such a hostile and intimidating world. They keep a feeling that they have lost their innocence; they are different from the other children of their age and they will be rejected by the world while all other children will not be as they do not have such an abusive experience. Many of them get involved in drug or alcohol abuse, in criminal activity or in prostitution.

Herman writes:

Participation in forbidden sexual activity also confirms the abused child's sense of badness. Any gratification that the child is able to glean from the exploitative situation becomes proof in her mind that she instigated and bears full responsibility for the abuse. If she ever experienced sexual pleasure, enjoyed the abuser's special attention, bargained for favors, or used the sexual relationship to gain privileges, these sins are adduced as evidence of her innate wickedness (105).

Though Bone in *Bastard out of Carolina* does not feel any kind of sexual satisfaction from her private moments with Glen, she over and over again talks of the shame she endures for her powerlessness to oppose Glen:

I would stand rigid, ashamed but unable to pull away, afraid of making him angry, afraid of what he might tell Mama, and at the same time, afraid of hurting his feelings. "Daddy," I would start to whisper, and he would whisper back, "Don't you know how I love you?" And I would recoil. No I did not know. (112)

Though Bone masturbates to pull through from her helpless situation and to maintain her mental stability and autonomous feeling, she is ashamed of her activity as she inwardly feels it is a reprehensible activity, "I was ashamed of myself for the things I thought about when I put my hands between my legs, more ashamed for masturbating to the fantasy of being beaten than for being beaten in the first place. I lived in a world of shame" (112-113). In another occasion, she describes herself with

a sense of abhorrence because of her sense of failure to oppose her stepfather and for indulging in masturbation “I was a sick disgusting person. I couldn’t stop my stepfather from beating me, but *I* was the one who masturbated. *I* did that, and how could I explain to anyone that I hated being beaten but still masturbated to the story I told myself about it?” (113).

As Herman writes,

Self-blame is congruent with the normal forms of thought of early childhood, in which the self is taken as the reference point for all events. It is congruent with the thought processes of traumatized people of all ages, who search for faults in their own behavior in an effort to make sense out of what has happened to them. In the environment of chronic abuse, however, neither time nor experience provide any corrective for this tendency toward self-blame; rather, it is continually reinforced. The abused child’s sense of inner badness may be directly confirmed by parental scapegoating. Survivor’s frequently describe being blamed, not only for their parents’ violence or sexual misconduct, but also for numerous other family misfortunes (104).

In *Bastard Out of Carolina*, as Glen blames Bone for enticing him and provoking him for the rape, Bone feels it is true and takes the blame on herself. “I could not say anything. I only knew that there was something I was doing wrong, something terrible. He said, “you drive me crazy,” in a strange distracted voice, and I shuddered but I believed him (109).

Daddy Glen often calls Bone names like ‘a litde bitch’, ‘a cold- hearted bitch’, ‘a litde cunt’ (106, 130, 284) which fills Bone with guilt and lowers her self-esteem. Bone desperately asks, “What was it I had done? Why had he always hated me? Maybe I was a bad girl, evil, nasty, willful, stupid, ugly? Everything he said” (252).

As a consequence of sexual abuse, child develops a sense of betrayal as it starts recognizing that someone close to it or on whom he was dependent caused physical and emotional harm to him. The child feels depressed over the loss of a trusted figure (Browning and Boatman 69). As Sandra Butler writes, “The most devastating result of the imposition of adult sexuality upon a child unable to determine the appropriateness of his or her response is the irretrievable loss of the child’s inviolability and trust in the adults in his or her life” (67).

The child feels an acute sense of betrayal not only at the hands of offenders, but also from the family members who are reluctant to believe the incident of abuse revealed by the child and fail to protect the child from the abuses. Studies have found that the children who are not believed by the adults and held responsible and alienated by the family for the abuse they suffered, undergo a greater sense of betrayal than those who are supported after abuse. The sense of betrayal is aggravated when the child perceives a change in the attitude of the family member after the disclosure of abuse. The degree of betrayal intensifies if the child is sexually abused by the family member or other trusted persons than by the stranger. In some cases, child sex abuse victims, who are cynical because of the betrayed feeling, show unnecessary anger, aggressive nature anti-social behavior, criminal behavior and a vengeful nature to others. As Erik Erikson points out, the abilities for self-sufficiency, inventiveness,

diligence, individuality and closeness open up in succession, along with basic trust, are formed in the first years of life. So, if basic trust is broken, all successive developmental stages will be affected.

The most troublesome and agonizing part of child abuse, is the adverse impact it has on the survivor's ability to trust. As Briere observes, "Just as most soldiers would find it foolhardy to expose themselves willingly to the enemy during battle, so survivors often find it exceedingly hard to trust important individuals in their lives, regardless of those person's status as friends, lovers or colleagues" (51). The survivor of abuse, if not treated properly will be in constant fear of continued victimization, will have trust difficulties and will show propensity to over react in cases of rejection and devaluation which may lead later to complete detachment and alienation in the society.

Diana Russell's study proposes that incest and sexual abuse can have enduring effects on women's lives, including an augmented possibility of divorce, lower socio-economic status, ensuing sexual assaults, rape, and violence. Study done by Zaidi et al. postulates that male abuse survivor's expectation of abuse or aggression in relationships may be converted into greater eagerness to abuse or aggress against their partners, spouses, peers or children (132). As Briere notes:

On a clinical level, it appears that such males may use aggression as a way to accomplish interpersonal goals (e.g., to engender respect, establish dominance, or enforce servitude), as well as to discourage historically dangerous intimacy and maintain interpersonal distance. This conversion of childhood victimization into adult perpetration is

thought to arise from (a) the likelihood that the abuser's childhood perpetrator was also male, and thus may have served as a role model for aggressive behavior in relationships, as well as (b) the susceptibility of such individuals to social messages supporting the use of violence, or at least dominance, by males in relationships with less powerful others (54).

The studies done by Stordeur and Stille, on the behavior of wife batterers, staunchly judge the role of childhood victimization in men's destructive behavior in personal relationships, as well as their sex role training to use violence to establish interpersonal control. The aggressive nature of Cholly in *The Bluest Eye* is an example for that.

Another tendency seen in child sex abuse victims, thirsting for care and love is the psychological coercion they use with people in their circle. Often, they resort to parasuicidal behavior i.e. they show potentially life-threatening behavior as a way to compel personally important individuals to bestow caring, concentration, validation or admiration. Survivors tend to display more self-destructive behaviors and experience more suicidal ideation than those who have not been abused (Browne and Finkelhor 184).

Schneidman observes that the child sexual abuse victims, seeking an escape from extreme psychic pain, acute depression, crippling fretfulness, devastatingly painful memories and intense despair, end up with suicide (24). Virginia Woolf's many attempts for suicide and later suicide by drowning validates this. Bagley and Ramsay, observes that many studies of adolescents or adults who were sexually

abused as children exhibit more frequent suicidal behavior or larger suicidal ideation among survivors in comparison with their non-abused peers (44). Many of them frequently express death wish not because they desire for it intensely, but because they want to put an end to a pain ridden life. Briere writes that:

Many such suicidal individuals do not actually desire death per se, but rather seek an end to a pain- ridden life. Because other, less final, coping strategies have repeatedly failed to provide enduring symptom relief, the escape- motivated suicidal person's experience of hopelessness leads him or her to, in the words of one sexual abuse survivor, "the last out." (61)

In *The Kite Runner*, Sohrab attempts to take his life by cutting his vein with razor, once he understands he might have to go back to an orphanage. It reminds of him his horrible memories regarding another orphanage where he was sexually abused. He pleads with Amir, his father's half-brother, to take him along with Amir to America and not to send him back to the orphanage:

"You promised you'd never put me in one of those places, Amir agha," he said. His voice was breaking, tears pooling in his eyes. I felt like a prick.

"This is different. It would be here, in Islamabad, not in Kabul. And I'd visit you all the time until we can get you out and take you to America."

“Please! Please, no!” he croaked. “I’m scared of that place. They’ll hurt me! I don’t want to go.”

“No one is going to hurt you. Not ever again.”

“Yes, they will! They always say they won’t but they lie. They lie! Please, God!” (297).

Bone in *Bastard out of Carolina* also expresses her shame and consequent death wish, “When I saw myself in Daddy Glen’s eyes, I wanted to die. No, I wanted to be already dead, cold and gone. Everything felt hopeless. He looked at me and I was ashamed of myself. It was like sliding down an endless hole, seeing myself at the bottom, dirty, ragged, poor, stupid.” (209)

Self-injury is not intended to kill or destroy someone but rather to relieve excruciating mental pain (Herman 108). Survivors of child abuse show increased tendency towards self-mutilation i.e., intentional, self-inflicted bodily harm often in the form of repetitious cutting on the bodies, burning of the skin with cigarettes, hitting of the head, wounding of the eyes, self-inflicted injury on the nose, mouth or tongue and genital mutilation. Thus, abused children often try to overcome the abandoned feeling, by inflicting deliberate attack on their body. Gardner and Gardner, hypothesizes that self-harming behavior serve for the time being to lessen the psychic tension associated with exceedingly negative effect, self-aborrence and guilt, intense depersonalization, helpless feeling and fragmented thought process (128).

Body issues and eating disorders have also been cited as a long-term effect of childhood sexual abuse. Ratican describes the symptoms of child sexual abuse

survivors' body image problems to be related to feeling dirty or ugly, dissatisfaction with body or appearance, eating disorders, and obesity. Root and Fallon also find that different aspects of disturbed eating behavior have been empirically related to sexual abuse (192). It is pointed out that one of the common long-term effect of childhood sexual abuse is the eating disorders as a reaction to coping with stress in adolescent and adult sexual life. Virginia Woolf's revulsion towards food might have had its origin from her being molested by her brother on the ledge where plates are arranged before serving food.

As most of the child abuse occurs within the context of immediate relationship or intimacy, the victimized children tend to fear, distrust or experience ambivalence about interpersonal closeness. Adults with histories of child abuse, especially sexual abuse survivors, report difficulties in forming and maintaining intimate relationships (Courtois 198).

As Judith Herman observes, a secure attachment with caring and protective people is the basis for a strong and well-structured personality development and traumatic events can erode in to the basic human relationships thus ruining the creation of self which is formed and developed in relation to others (51). The victims of child sexual abuse are in constant search of protection and care that they form intimate relationships, though they are ambivalent because of the dread of desertion and exploitation. In their frantic attempts to find an asylum, they may fall for powerful authorities who seem to promise them caretaking relationships. They may idolize the person, but once they fail to meet their expectations, they may scorn them. They get enraged at the slightest provocation and reminded of their past, and stoop to

depression, anxiety and hatred. So, they fluctuate from one relation to another and repetitively enact the play of salvage, injustice and infidelity. Herman writes:

Almost inevitably, the survivor has great difficulty protecting herself in the context of intimate relationships. Her desperate longing for nurturance and care makes it difficult to establish safe and appropriate boundaries with others. Her tendency to denigrate herself and to idealize those to whom she becomes attached further clouds her judgment. Her empathic attunement to the wishes of others and her automatic, often unconscious habits of obedience also make her vulnerable to anyone in a position of power or authority. Her dissociative defensive style makes it difficult for her to form conscious and accurate assessment of danger. And her wish to relive the dangerous situation and make it come out right may lead her into reenactments of the abuse (111).

Children who had been neglected by parents or suffered emotional abandonment and seclusion at home tend to show anxiety in the face of increasing interpersonal intimacy. In *Thirty Days in September*, Mala had always yearned for attention from her parents, but she was neglected by both her father and mother. Mother even knew the abuse of Mala but remained silent. This drives Mala to sexual relations even with strangers. But Mala cannot keep any intimate relationship that every relation ends by one month. She even plans her relations limited to such a framework, as her subconscious mind still remembers the nursery rhyme that she was forced to sing at the time of abuse –thirty days has September, April and November.

Even when Deepak shows the desire to marry Mala, she flees from him as she cannot enter into intimate relations.

The victims expect abuse in their future life too and their inability to trust anyone and fears of rejection prevents them from making lasting romantic relationships. Though focus in incest narratives is definitely on the trauma of girls, the severity and effects of child abuse trauma on boys is not negligible. Sohrab in the *The Kite Runner* is subjected to homosexual rape that he gets recoiled even at the mere touch of a man, even if he knows for sure that, that man is his savior, “I reached for him and he flinched. I pulled back (277), “I touched his arm again and he drew away. I reached again, gently, and pulled him to me. “I won’t hurt you,” I whispered. “I promise.” He resisted a little. Slackened. He let me draw him to me and rested his head on my chest. His little body convulsed in my arms with each sob” (279). “I chanced something. Reached down and took his hand. He tightened up a little but let me hold it” (282). “I touched his shoulder and he flinched. Drew away. I dropped my hand, remembering ruefully how in the last days before I’d broken my promise to him, he had finally become at ease with my touch (309).

Another important consequence of child abuse is the Borderline personality disorder. It is defined as, “a pervasive pattern of instability of self –image, interpersonal relationship, and mood, beginning by early adulthood and present in a variety of contexts” (American Psychiatric Association 346). The main behavior patterns perceptible in victims with borderline personality disorder are impulsiveness often leading to potential damage, intense yet unstable personal relationships, intense anger shown in inappropriate situations, importunate identity problems, conspicuous

shift of moods, like fall from intense happy mood to dejection, bad temper or angst, repetitive suicidal tendency, attempts and self-mutilating activities, chronic feelings of blankness and monotony, hysterical attempts to avoid real or imagined desertion. Gunderson observes that borderline pathology arises from the developmental obstacle occurred during the first three years of life, and so they miss the process of needed separation and individuation from the primary caretakers. Consequently, child lacks self-awareness and tends to form inadequate internal representation of good caregivers, which might have soothed him or her at times of separation.

As Groves notes,

Whereas in normal development the child learns to separate from important objects with sadness and anger rather than with despair and rage, the borderline cannot tolerate negative effects associated with separation and continues into adulthood the pre-Oedipal child's clinging, as if others were desperately – needed parts rather than separate persons (338).

Applying the main characteristics of border line personality to Mala, shows the impact, child abuse has wrought on the character of Mala. As seen in the scene with the man and his fiancée in the hotel, Mala forces him impulsively to take her to his room and do whatever he wants. It is quite a self-damaging situation as Mala is not bothered about the reaction of the people in the party. Mala also makes unstable and temporary sexual relationships indiscriminately, and the man in the hotel

comments that one of her friends had given her reference to him. Even then Mala is indifferent. Mala shows intense emotional variation often shifting from intense depression to anxiety and anger. Though outwardly, a successful personality with strong feminist ideology, Mala succumbs to the instant emotion, lowering herself to the status of beggar in love. She often falls into bouts of depression and rages at her mother. Mala experiences an emotional vacuum which drives her to temporary sexual relations indiscriminately. She wants to regain from outside the caring and attention she lost at home for which she desperately offers sex in return, as her uncle Vinay had done once. Her uncle made her believe that what he was doing to her was an expression of love.

Dori Laub emphasizes the need of telling their stories, “survivors did not only need to survive so that they could tell their stories; they also needed to tell their stories in order to survive. There is, in each survivor, an imperative need to tell and thus come to know one's story” (63). Dori Laub thus points out that language is an effective tool to cure trauma and its memory. The telling of trauma serves as a medium to heal trauma. Thus, Language possesses a potential curative quality by giving voice to the victims of the trauma. He further accentuates his point that silence will not bring peace to anyone, “The 'not-telling' of the story serves as a perpetuation of its tyranny. The events become more and more distorted in their silent retention and pervasively invade and contaminate the survivor's daily life” (64). Some victims, not able to figure out a way to express their feelings, resort to silence, ultimately suffering from the all-encompassing, inner effects. Unless and until the victim find a way to express his suffering and agony in language, the victims’ internal trauma will persist. Language

only can provide a window from the hurting memories of the victims, whom silence will kill otherwise slowly. Kristiaan Versluys observes that if trauma is the collapse of the network of significations, a narrative is needed to restore the broken link and to ease the trauma. He opines that,

there is an overwhelming need on the part of the traumatized to relieve their stress through telling, a feeling on the part of the victims that they have the duty to testify and the desire on the part of the listener to learn more about trauma in order to reintroduce it into a network of signification. (4)

Victims of abuse often go to self-imposed silence. The internalized feelings of shame and guilt prompt the victim to find a safe zone, till they find it comfortable and safe to speak. This deliberate wooing of silence is something particularly found in at least four characters from the selected works in the study - Sohrab in *The Kite Runner*, Maya in *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Estha in *The God of Small Things* and Virginia Woolf.

Sohrab after learning that it is not easy for Amir to take him to America along with him, falls into deep anguish and depression and tries to take his life. Amir tries to convince him of the procedural difficulties to take him to America from the war-torn Afghanistan as Amir does not have official papers to prove that he is Sohrab's half uncle. Sohrab dreads the possibility of returning to orphanage where he was subjected to homosexuality. In spite of Amir's repeated attempts to ensure him that Amir will tackle the difficulties somehow, he fails to ensure him,

Something was lost between Sohrab and me. Until my meeting with the lawyer, Omar Faisal, a light of hope had begun to enter Sohrab's eyes like a timid guest. Now the light was gone, the guest had fled, and I wondered when it would dare return. I wondered how long before Sohrab smiled again. How long before he trusted me. If ever. So, I left the room and went looking for another hotel, unaware that almost a year would pass before I would hear Sohrab speak another word (Hosseini 310).

Sohrab's silence originates from the trauma, he faces because of his sudden loss of family in the civil war in Afghanistan, his miserable life in the orphanage, life as a sexual slave, his anxiety and dread over the possibility of going back to there, and his apprehensions on future life with Amir and his wife as there a possibility of being thrown away to the streets always, "what if you get tired of me? What if your wife doesn't like me?" (283), "I don't want to go to another orphanage" (283).

Sohrab repeatedly says, "Tired of everything" (308, 309). He misses his good old time with his family and longs for the security and comfort it provides though he is sure that it is unattainable, "I want Father and Mother jan. I want Sasa. I want to play with Rahim Khan sahib in the garden. I want to live in our house again...I want my old life back" (309).

Even after reaching America, Sohrab remains mute, never speaking to anyone, never making friends and never playing with other kids,

It would be erroneous to say Sohrab was quiet. Quiet is peace. Tranquility. Quiet is turning down the VOLUME knob on life.

Silence is pushing the OFF button. Shutting it down. All of it.

Sohrab's silence wasn't the self-imposed silence of those with convictions, of protestors who seek to speak their cause by not speaking at all. It was the silence of one who has taken cover in a dark place, curled up all the edges and tucked them under.

He didn't so much live with us as occupy space. And precious little of it. Sometimes at the market, or in the park, I'd notice how other people hardly seemed to even see him, like he wasn't there at all. I'd look up from a book and realize Sohrab had entered the room, had sat across from me, and I hadn't noticed. He walked like he was afraid to leave behind footprints. He moved as if not to stir the air around him. Mostly, he slept (315).

In *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Maya resorts to silence deliberately. In the court, when the trial of Mr. Freeman, her stepfather, had started, the lawyer asks Maya whether he had touched her before the actual rape. Maya feels confused as he had masturbated against her earlier and she loved his closeness for the feeling of intimacy it provided for her. But she was not ready to give an affirmative answer as it would invite the displeasure of her family for keeping the dirty secret:

I couldn't say yes and tell them how he had loved me once for a few minutes and how he had held me close before he thought I had peed in

the bed. My uncles would kill me and Grandmother Baxter would stop speaking, as she often did when she was angry. And all those people in the court would stone me as they had stoned the harlot in the Bible. And Mother, who thought I was such a good girl, would be so disappointed. But most important, there was Bailey. I had kept a big secret from him (91).

The same day Mr. Freeman was kicked to death and the news shocks Maya. She feels if she had not lied in the court, he would not have been that day itself. She is filled with guilt and remorse:

And the recording angel was gone. He was gone, and a man was dead because I lied. Where was the balance in that? One lie surely wouldn't be worth a man's life. Bailey could have explained it all to me, but I didn't dare ask him. Obviously, I had forfeited my place in heaven forever, and I was as gutless as the doll I had ripped to pieces ages ago. Even Christ himself turned His back on Satan. Wouldn't He turn His back on me? I could feel the evilness flowing through my body and awaiting, pent up, to rush off my tongue if I tried to open my mouth. I clamped my teeth shut, I'd hold it in. if it escaped, wouldn't it flood the world and all the innocent people? (93).

Maya stops talking to all except Bailey. She loves Bailey so much so that she cannot remain mute to him but she is afraid that if she speaks to someone else he may die, "just my breath, carrying my words out, might poison people and they'd curl up and die like the black fat slugs that only pretended. I had to stop talking" (93).

Her muteness becomes offensive to others who had taken her silence as the post rape syndrome. But her silence was more connected to her guilt feeling over Mr. Freeman's death than to her rape. So, she pursues the silence, (not the silence pursues her), as a punishment for her role in bringing about his murder:

I discovered that to achieve perfect personal silence all I had to do was to attach myself leechlike to sound. I began to listen to everything. I probably hoped that after I had heard all the sounds, really heard them and packed them down, deep in my ears, the world would be quiet around me. I walked into rooms where people were laughing, their voices hitting the wall like stones, and I simply stood still- in the midst of the riot of sound. After a minute or two, silence would rush into the room from its hiding place because I had eaten up all the sounds (94).

In *The God of Small Things*, the sexual harassment trauma, the death of Sophie Mol and the mental agony over giving false evidence against Velutha at police station, beatings, threatening and accusations at home leaves Estha affected for the whole life. "Childhood tiptoed out; Silence slid in like a bolt" (320). He was sent back to his father and stepmother, thus separated from his twin sister and mother for a long time. Distress and nervous tension from the strange happenings in his life cumulate to an extent that Estha finds unacceptable and unbearable. Gradually he stops talking.

Virginia Woolf became silent for two years after her mother's death as she didn't attempt to write anything at this period. She writes about the experience, "a dark cloud settled over us, we seemed to sit all together cooped up, sad, solemn, unreal, under a haze of heavy emotion. It seemed impossible to break through." (Moments 93). Later, in *A Sketch of the Past*, she writes why she suffered the mental

breakdown immediately after her mother's death and why she became silent for such a long period. She ascribed her silence to the sexual molestation she suffered at the hands of George Duckworth, her half-brother.

As per Debi Laub's observation on silence and need to tell story, Maya and Virginia become able to fight trauma or show signs of recovery once they break silence. In Sohrab's case, story ends on a positive note giving a hint that he may break his silence. But in the case of Estha, his silence is never broken, so his trauma never gets an outlet.

The effects of sexual abuse on the victim are numerous and diverse, some of which ranges from reproductive health consequences, including sex-related diseases, such as HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. In *Push*, Precious starts living happily with her friends, pursuing education, receiving praise from her teachers and friends, loving her children and dreaming of bright future for her children, then her mother comes with the ominous news of her father dying of HIV and asks her to take a test to know whether she had got it from her father. And when Precious comes to know she has caught AIDS from her father, while her mother was spared, she plunges in to utter despair,

I don't have nothing to write today- may be never. Hammer in my heart now, beating me, I feel like my blood a giant river swell up inside me and I'm drowning. My head all dark inside. Feel like giant river I never cross in front me now. Ms Rain say, You not writing Precious. I say I drownin' in river. She don't look me like I'm crazy but say, If you just sit there the river gonna rise up drown you! Writing could be the

boat carry you to the other side. One time in your journal you told me you had never really told your story. I think telling your story git you over that river Precious (97).

Abusive incidents from childhood and the trauma it produces, disrupt the autonomy of the person over her basic bodily functions. The victim feels that her body is overran, wounded and despoiled. As Herman writes, “control over bodily function is often lost; in the folklore of combat and rape, this loss of control is often recounted as the most humiliating aspect of the trauma” (53). This is exemplified by Precious’ involuntary urinating in the classroom at the moment she feels anxious and panic, “my head is big ’lympic size pool, all the years, all the me’s floating around glued shamed to desks while pee puddles get big near their feet” (40).

A study released by North American Menopause Society (NAMS) in 2015 found relation between child sexual abuse experiences and menopause symptoms from the survey conducted among 3740 women. This well explains the reason for early menopause in Celie in *The Color Purple*:

I say marry him, Nettie, an try to have one good year out your life.

After that I know she be big.

But me, never again. A girl at church say you git big if you bleed every month. I don’t bleed no more (7)

Most of the short term and long-term symptoms of child sexual abuse explained in this chapter is based on those impacts visible in the characters selected for study. The problems arising from abusive childhood vary from psychological,

physiological problems to sociological behavior as seen already. Once robbed of their childhood innocence it is not easy for the victims to recover. As Lenore Terr observes, "...the specific fears, the repeated play, the behavioral and physiologic reenactments, the tendencies towards visualizations, and the revised ideas about life, people, and the future seem to persist in so many of these children for years after the last abuse stops" (329). The recovery of the victims depends not only on their resilience capacity but also on the care and protection given by the immediate care givers. The role of mothers and families in aggravating the emotional turmoil as well as in helping the children to recover from trauma will be evaluated in next chapter. The recovery possibilities for the victims included in the study will be evaluated in the concluding chapter.

“Without the inner picture of caring parents, how can one survive...Every soul – murder victim will be wracked by the question ‘Is there life without father and mother?’”

-Leonard Shengold

Chapter 4

From Betrayal to Fealty: Fostering Resilience in Trauma Victim

Can you blame me if I've learned to think
Your hate of vice a sham
When you so coldly crushed me down
And then excused the man? ("Double Standard", Harper)

Child sexual abuse continues to be an extensive and substantial problem. As discussed in the earlier chapters, child sexual abuse produces negative outcomes quite often and leaves harmful psychosomatic and behavioral problems associated with it.

A number of factors that make individual children vulnerable to sexual abuse have been identified like female sex, lone children, children in foster care, adopted children, stepchildren, physically or mentally handicapped children, history of past abuse, poverty, children orphaned during war or armed conflict, psychological or cognitive vulnerability, children from single parent homes or broken homes, social isolation, parent with mental illness, or parents having alcohol or drug dependency and a mother with a history of sexual victimization. In the case of families in which sexual abuse takes place, the sexual abuse is unlikely to exist in isolation from other forms of abuse, and definitely, emotional, psychological and physical abuse can make the effects intricate.

This chapter analyses the other crucial factors which lead to the abuse and play an additional role in aggravating the sufferings of the child, the roles of mother in particular and family in general. As seen in the earlier chapter, in the 1930s, girls were

held responsible for their seductive approach towards their fathers. In the decades of 1950s and 1960s, theories on dysfunctional families came, attributing central role to mothers in perpetrating father –daughter incest (Lustig et al. 32). Feminist studies counteracted such designation of sole responsibilities to women, placing the issue of child sexual abuse within the broader framework of patriarchy, thus viewing the abuse as violence orchestrated by men against women and children.

Clinical literature has seriously examined the part of mother in child sexual abuse, especially in intra familial abuse. It analyzes the role of mother in two ways, firstly, as the one who causes and helps to continue the abusive act and secondly, as the one who protects her child at any cost, if in father –daughter incestuous abuse, goes even to the extent of leaving the father. Research analysis on child sexual abuse over and over again underlines the role of mother in helping the child to divulge the abuse, to face the risk and to get a long-term recovery from the memories of abuse and discusses her failures too in fulfilling the expected duties. So based on selected works, the first part of this chapter tries to analyze the nature of mothers' response to their abused children and how those responses affected the children. Before going to the selected works for study and analyzing the mother-child relation in those works, the victimized daughters' responses to their mothers and the portrayal of mothers in incest narratives and in other studies on child sexual abuse will be evaluated in order to throw light on the expectations of society regarding mothers.

A child victim's response to her relationship with her mother may be different from non-victim as the victimized child thinks her mother as less protective, even if she is as protective as the mother of non-victimized child. As Herman and Hirschman

notes, “many daughters believed that their mothers knew, or should have known, about the incest, and they bitterly resented the fact that their mothers did not intervene” (88, 89).

Sandra Butler who interviewed many incestuous victims and their mothers captures the situation like this:

In nearly all the families I interviewed, there was a painful estrangement between the mother and her victimized daughters. These breakdowns in mother/ daughter relationships came about in a number of ways. In some homes the mothers were partially or totally physically handicapped; other mothers had recurring histories of mental illness and either lived within their homes as invalids or frequently were absent from them during periods of hospitalization. Some were borderline alcoholics, while others simply chose to recede into the background of family life by withdrawing emotionally, taking jobs or becoming involved in activities that took them out of the home for long intervals (110).

Butler includes some excerpts from the interviews she conducted with incestuous victims, “I knew Mom couldn’t help it, getting sick that way. But it always fell on me every time she went away to take care of everything. And as it turned out, everything was really the right word” (qtd. in Butler 110). “I used to feel that if she had stayed at home, like a ‘real mother’, that my father wouldn’t have been sexual with me. In a real backwards way, I made her responsible for what he did” (qtd. in Butler 111).

I just could never understand why she continued to stay with him, why she kept making excuses and hoping he would change. That's most of all what made me mad. If she had just thrown him out like she should have years before, none of this would have happened. She should have just thrown him out (qtd. in Butler 110).

As Herman and Hirschman reveal how abused daughters feel irritation, revulsion and betrayal towards their mothers and themselves:

Whatever anger these women did feel was most commonly directed at women rather than men. With the exception of those who had become conscious feminists, most of the incest victims seemed to regard all women, including themselves, with contempt. At times, remembering their privileged position as their father's favorites, they exempted themselves from their general condemnation of women. In adult life, their only possible source of self-esteem was to maintain an identification with their powerful fathers. But more often, on a deeper level, they identified with the mothers they despised and included themselves among the ranks of fallen and worthless women (103).

Karen Meiselman also shows in her study on incest victims that forty percent of the abused daughters expressed sharp negative feelings towards their fathers while sixty percent were magnanimous enough to forgive them. At the same time, sixty percent of daughters were annoyed with their mothers while forty percent were ready to pardon them (261).

Reciprocated empathic attachment between mother and daughter plays a vital role in the daughter's strong psychosocial development. Nonetheless, the daughter's empathic growth is disrupted in the backdrop of the father's sexual abuse, consequently a rupture occurs in the mother-daughter bond and surprisingly wronged daughters show a tendency to have affinity with fathers, at the same time shifting their resentment and fury towards their mothers. The violent inroads into the secrecy of the child lead to an obligatory closeness between the child and the abuser, while natural separation is expected between them because of the betrayal of trust. At the same time this forced intimacy, a principal feature of incestuous relation, leads to the estrangement between daughter and mother, probably because of the betrayed feelings the daughter suffers in the changed circumstances. The abusive father becomes successful in receiving sympathy and ensuring secrecy from the child by presenting himself as a scapegoat within the family. He prompts the child's acquiescence with the abuse by playing upon her fear as well as sympathy. Father exploits the emotional susceptibility of the child thus leading her to the sexual utilization (Jacobs 127). As a result, he creates a shared identity and secret alliance with the daughter, which distances the daughter emotionally and psychologically from her mother. Eventually the daughter comes to believe that like her, her father is the alienated and wronged soul in the family and he is the only person who loves her and understands her. Thus, she becomes exclusively dependent on the father. As Alice Miller puts it, the interlinking of love and hate in the personality of the abused child is the result of her dependency on the manipulative and abusive parent (162). An ambivalent attitude is developed within the child, as she finds herself caught in the whirlpool of feelings; anger in the exploitation she suffers, fear of losing her father, sympathy towards

suffering father, rage towards the hostile mother and sacrifice she takes for the wronged father, placing herself in the position of mother. Consequently, one manifested characteristic of victimized daughters are their attempts to save those men who had ragged, harmed and dishonored them.

Daughters are not alone in blaming mothers. Popular men's magazines as well as psychiatric literature too hold mothers answerable for the abusive experience of their daughters. Mother has been held much responsible for the violence done to their children by someone else. In other words, mother is the person who gets the historic whipping or who becomes scapegoat in theories and literatures of childhood sexual abuse. Chastisement of mothers for their failure to fulfill their traditional roles in the family is a usual flavor in incest literature. In 1980s, studies centered on the intra familial abuses especially father – daughter incest, that too at the expense of extra familial abuses which constituted approximately 70% of the child sexual abuse cases. Though father –daughter incest ranged from 7% to 8%, plethora of literature flowed on it giving the impression that it is the most prevalent type of abuse, may be because of the shocking and disgusting element in it. Consequently, mothers came to be held responsible for child sexual abuse; they were often charged as co-offenders in the abuse, even when they did not commit the abuse, for their failure for protecting their children from the abuse. In nearly all incestuous literature, mother is described as colluding, the woman, who allows the incest to happen, either knowingly or unknowingly. Some even go to the extent of saying that mother is the unseen third partner in father –daughter incest. Mothers of incest victims are often presented as cold, submissive, introverted and reliant who had sacrificed their lives for

perpetuating the notion of patriarchy. Anyway, once the incident of intra familial abuse gets exposed, the mother has been blamed for the sexual abuse more so than the abuser in many cases. Thus, the concept of the collusive mother, the mother who is intentionally or mechanically conscious of her child's abuse yet does not protect the child because she considers herself as weak, deprived, reliant or because she plays the role of sacrificial victim, was generally acknowledged. Meiselman writes about mother as: "The family member who 'set up' the father and daughter for the incest relationship, usually by withdrawing from her sexual role in the marriage and ignoring the special relationship, that may then develop between husband and daughter" (112).

Sarah Nelson points out:

If the victim is not considered guilty, the search for responsibility more often passes to her mother than to the male offender. Mothers of incest victims often seem to be caught in a catch-22 and blamed for whatever they do for conscious and unconscious behavior, for dependence and dominance, for promiscuity and frigidity (53).

Over and over again the non-offending mother "is analyzed at once as the culpable figure for failing to guard her children, to deal with the perpetrator, and to protect her family, and as a subject of hope for saving the victim and sustaining the home" (Tamraz 76).

The professional community developed theories which held mothers responsible for the sexual promiscuities of their spouses. Some studies, following in footsteps of Freud, held that daughters, in their childhood, harbor incestuous feeling

towards their fathers. Mothers might have felt the same feeling in their childhood and in allowing their daughters to gratify their desires towards fathers, mothers are getting identified with their daughters. Contrary to this concept, it is also pointed out that mother knew very well that incest assault is going on which has assigned a pseudo maturity to the daughter. Yet she did not want to prevent it instead she was preparing the ground for the incest, so that she can foster a dependent relationship with her daughter, that she lacked in her own childhood with her mother. Once the daughter starts taking the responsibility of mother and assumes every role of mother, mother actually feels contented. There might be some practical reasons too for mother's silence. Mother may be inwardly wishing for separation with spouse for various reasons, including job interests, extramarital affair, emotional and physical aversion to her husband etc. So, she finds the occurrence of father- daughter incest as a good opportunity for them (Butler 113).

The family dysfunction approach towards incest also criticized mothers as responsible for fathers' crimes. The exponents of this theory held that incapability and disinclination of mothers to carry out their duties as wives and mothers, paved the way for incest in their families. Those who wanted to put all the blame on mothers, raised the argument that mothers are the silent conspirators, who deliberately or unintentionally sacrificed the virginity as well as the lifelong pleasure of their daughters on the altar of the malevolent deities at their home, to meet their own selfish ends. Thus, in almost every case, mother is considered equal culprit for a crime in which she is not a direct accomplice. If she is a flaccid one, she will be booked for not preparing her child to defend against incestuous moves. On the other hand, if she is

hard-hitting and uncompromising one, she is censured for causing her husband to feel weakened, thus driving him to seek for forbidden pastures to satisfy his emotional and sexual needs.

Society too is curious to side with sexually offensive father, for putting the whole blame on mother for driving her husband to her daughter's bed. Exponents of patriarchy hold mothers responsible for the father-daughter incest, by focusing on their sexual inability or sexual disinterestedness with their husbands. In most incestuous families, the sexual relationship between the spouses is either stressed or missing, and as the patriarchal society believes that it is the duty of wife to please her husband sexually and to keep him in good humor, the accusatory fingers of society turn towards mothers. Mothers of incestuous families are presented as cold, frosty, unreceptive and sexually incapable. The study conducted by Maisch argued that in a large number of families, prior to incest affair, there did not exist any kind of sexual relation between the husband and wife (141). Even if it occurred, it was unsatisfactory, as mothers were frigid, cold or uninterested in sex. These mothers themselves might have been preys to sexual abuse in their childhood that sometimes they experience sexual dysfunction in their marital life, which unconsciously forces them to keep husbands away. Mothers might be refraining from sexual relations with their spouses, because of the brutal and unaffectionate behavior of the men who caters to their earlier belief that sex is ugly and unpleasant. Many researchers even concluded that mothers were knowingly or unknowingly shifting their sexual responsibility to their children, and were playing noticeable roles in driving the husband's sexual energies towards their daughters (Butler 116). Weiner accuses mothers that they time and again support

incestuous activity by irritating their spouses, denying them sex, making them feel neglected, retreating from their own duties so that all responsibilities are shifted to the daughters. Heims and Kaufman blame that mothers in incestuous families are so ineffective and hopeless that they drive their daughters to the premature takeover of mother role, including sexual role (311). Several writers suggested that in an incestuous family, often a role reversal happens between mother and daughter when mother abstains herself from the sexual relations with her husband and pass on more and more household tasks to her eldest daughter, "The mother may overtly or covertly set the daughter up as her substitute in the marital relationship" (Kadushin and Martin 304).

These ways of thinking try to exonerate the culprit father completely giving the impression that, father would not have subjected his own daughter for sexual victimization, if mother had not worsened the emotional climate in the family by either her compliance or by her sadism. The child too would not have felt the helplessness to comply with the incestuous demands of her father, if she had not felt abandoned by her mother.

Some professional theorists are much more lenient to mothers. They trace the cause for the abusive or passive behavior of mothers to their own childhood trauma analyze that many mothers in incest families themselves are incest victims that they fail to intervene in the father - daughter relationship or other abusive relationships within the family. Mothers may fail to provide love and protection for the children and they may lack that skill, if they had not received adequate love and care in their childhood. Some mothers try to fill this vacuum in their lives by turning to their

daughters for the feeling of being mothered. In many incest literatures, mothers have been depicted as possessing defective individual traits that in a way necessitates an illicit affair between father and daughter. Researchers often presented these mothers as average women with middling intelligence and lower social status, often multiply married, keeping antagonistic and intimidating emotional dependence on other women, frustrated in sexual affairs, egotistical and self-absorbed attachment to their daughters, concomitant hostility towards their daughters and unconscious homosexual attractions towards their female children. Moreover, these mothers were often presented as having exceptionally hesitant attitude towards their mothers because of their physical and psychological abandonment in their childhoods. The neglected feeling, they harbored in their mind, made them much dependent on others and left them craving for a feeling of mothered.

Studies on the role of mothers provide a contrastive picture of an independent and strong mother too on whom father keeps emotional dependence. In such a family, mothers keep emotional distance from their husbands and daughters to such an extent that daughters become surrogate wives to their fathers. At least some mothers try to withhold their love and care towards their children, just because they feel hesitant to provide for their children what they missed in their own childhood. The ever-extolled sacrificial nature of mothers is the child of imaginative literature, real mothers, at least some will not comply with this image. As quoted by Sandra Butler in her work, *Conspiracy of Silence*, a mother expresses her resentment:

Sure, I love my kids, and I'd do anything for them. But there are times
I resent the fact that they have a patient and sacrificing and

understanding mother. I never had that, and it makes me mad that they have something I still wish I could have had with my own mother. I suppose it sounds like a contradiction, and it is, but there are times when I feel my tit is sucked dry and I have no place to go to get what I need for myself (115).

Thus, as Sandra Butler notes, the writings on incest centers on accusation of women, misogyny and justifications (114). While addressing the issue of father-daughter incest, sexist literature time and again holds the mother as the most blameworthy individual either through evasion or through direct involvement. In many cases reporting father-daughter incestuous relations, mothers become scapegoats for the assault perpetrated by fathers. And patriarchal doctrinaires find befitting framework for hooking mothers, by describing the family as a whole as troubled or pathological. As Herbert Maisch reports, “incest is not the cause but symptom or result of a disturbed family order (qtd. in McIntyre 462).

Lustig et al. defined incest as an act to ease tension within families, they considered dysfunctional, disordered and unsound. Thus, by functioning as a tension reliever, incest becomes the self-perpetuating facet of a need for constancy. In short, theoreticians on incest held that incest occurs only when the ordinary constrictions of the family or society collapses. Thus, in a social structure where the alleging focus shifts from the offender to the devastated state of the family, the role of mother is highlighted. As Lustig et al. write, “Despite the overt culpability of the fathers, we were impressed with their psychological passivity in the transactions leading to incest.

The mother appeared the cornerstone in the pathological family system” (qtd. in McIntyre 462)

Lustig et al. points out that an ego fusion occurs between mother and daughter, often resorting to complete role reversal with their daughters (40). Kaufman et al. elucidate that some of the mothers in incestuous families were immature and puerile in nature and pets of their mothers that they flee from their responsibilities to the laps of their mothers forcing their daughters to assume their roles (268). Lustig et al. explain the incestuous relationship between father and daughter as the father’s move to see in his daughter, his wife of their younger days, in whom he had sought a substitution for his first love, i.e. his mother. So, father was actually trying to get back to his original love (40).

Cohen even alleged that these fragile, incompetent and reliant mothers were keeping homosexual feelings towards their daughters (597). Swan accused that employed mothers were failing in their duties to look after their children and this fault of mothers made the poor children susceptible to abuses at home (64). Thus, the protection of children from incest too was considered the responsibility of mothers. Kevin McIntyre points out another prevailing yet a strange view that mothers in reality gains unconscious happiness and satisfaction from the sexual interaction through the voyeuristic role she assumes in the parent – child triangle. However, in most of the cases mother becomes the culprit, at whose expense; father enjoys some reduction in a crime for which he is solely responsible (462).

Seen in this light, mothers are held responsible for the incest in four ways i.e. their intentional or unintentional involvement in the abuse, the personality and

character traits of mothers, their failure to fulfill the society assigned roles of wife and mother and their responses to the heinous act on coming to know about it. Justice and Justice ascribed six features for non-participating mothers like exchange of role with their daughters, frigidity, constant complaint of weariness, compliance and passivity, mothering attitude to partners, unresponsiveness, neglect and promiscuousness (98). Susan Forward and Craig Buck recognized two types of mothers based on their involvement in incest: the silent accomplice, who does not do anything to avert it and the dynamically implicated mother (45). Joseph. J. Peters, by analyzing the matter further, argues that complicit mothers are not always conscious of their role or participation in the abuse. On the other hand, there was an unconscious sensational delight by the woman partner as she witnessed her husband's loss of sexual control. Peters also alleged that mothers in actual fact elicited the sexual attack, by their active actions like placing the child in bed between herself and her husband so that she can shield the sexual approaches of her husband (412). Thus, cold sexuality of mothers, comparatively powerless position of women in economic and social aspects and disturbing emotional aloofness from their daughters are said to be the driving factors for the father daughter incest.

It is said that mothers keep a culpable silence over the sexual aggression of their spouses in order to retain their sense of security, but for that they have to pay highest price of their lives- the sacrifice of their own flesh and blood. Mothers face a lot of limitations when perpetrator is her partner and many of them choose denial when faced with a situation in which their children are sexually abused by their partners. On the contrary they take the sides of fathers by blaming the daughters for

their seductive moves. Even when they are convinced that their partners are abusing their children, they remain silent and permit the abuse to be continued. This denial from mothers' part and their failure to recognize and believe their children bring great harm to the children than the physical abuse. But mothers cannot be considered real culprits as these denials are their defense mechanism to hide her upsetting actuality and their painful feelings. For the mothers who select the path of denial or rejection, it serves as the outlet from the pain of knowing the reality, from her wrath towards the abuser who happened to be her partner and from the feeling of guilt she has for not protecting her child (Hooper 40). Forward and Buck approached this denial in the same light, as they read it as an escape mechanism of mothers to hide, their disbelief over the shocking infidelity and bestiality of their spouses, feeling of culpability in their failure to prevent assault over their daughters, feeling of desperate helplessness and depression and their unwillingness to face financial insecurity by questioning their spouses and proceeding with legal measures (52). Justice and Justice pointed out that this denial came from mothers' emotional need to exchange roles with daughters (101). In some cases, mothers choose to deny the assault on their daughters as they feel a deep sense of devotion for their husbands, who give them financial protection and the comfort of a secure home. They do not want to face this bitter reality that the men on whom they have pinned their faith are incestuous fathers and thus to disrupt the apparently peaceful condition of the family. They do not want to risk the future of their families, especially when they have more kids to look after. Fear of the empty nest syndrome may influence response of mothers, especially when an older child is victimized. Mothers harbor the feeling that children may leave as years pass by but once they lose their spouses it will not be easy for them to fill the space. As Zuelzer

and Reposa establishes, for women, “Denial and repression of the realities of their family dysfunction and of their emotional pain is in the service of their own fragile self-esteem, and in the way they have typically learned to deal with unresolvable conflict in their early life (qtd. in Bolen 189).

An important category of researchers castigates mothers for their cold reaction upon discovering the incest. Mothers are blamed for not taking steps to stop the incest. Meiselman points out that though patriarchal set up expects inactive and subservient role from mothers, in the cases where incest is exposed, mothers are expected to protect their children from abusive experiences and her failure is projected as the failure of maternal role instead of wifely role. In such cases, women are expected to give importance to her duty as a mother than becoming a lifeless pawn in the hands of their spouses (118).

Critics like Joyce Spencer records how the incest literature reprimanded mothers for fleeing from their traditional responsibility at home by portraying them as self-centered, foolish and reckless. Mothers, who pursue career or education or turning to new interests for escaping the boredom or disappointment at home were seen as unloving or selfish. According to the established patriarchal norms, mothers are not expected to pursue their pleasure and they are supposed to serve the needs of family, often at the expense of their own comfort (585).

As Aaron Hoorwitz elucidates mother’s incompetence,

In one variant of the classic incest situation, the father is a dominant powerful man, keeping his wife in a dependent helpless role. She may

suffer from a disabling condition such as depression or physical infirmity. Although this may have been a reciprocal role relationship which satisfied both partners in the first years of marriage, the strain on the husband of his wife's dependency tends to anger the husband, who eventually distances his wife. He turns to a daughter, thereby obtaining emotional gratification (515).

The non-sexist approach centers mother as a victim in the incestuous family, instead of placing her in the position of offender. They completely negated the practice of putting the responsibility for perpetrator's actions on the shoulders of non-perpetrator. Greenberg noted that blaming mothers for the violence of fathers is equivalent to blaming daughters for the incestuous crime of fathers (22). Mothers do not contribute voluntarily to incest and even if they try to stand with fathers it is not because they approve of fathers' actions but because of their helpless conditions. As Knittle observes, "They often feel that their lives will be destroyed if they do not protect the men. A woman in this situation is in a double bind and believes that she loses whatever decision she makes (qtd. in McIntyre 464).

Feminist objected to the practice of assessing mothers as culpable and they put the father -daughter incest in the context of patriarchal society and culture. Researchers like Sandra Butler held that incestuous assaults are part of established social structure and daughters and mothers are the mere victims in the male dominated society which controls the lives of women. Father is the sole authority over the family system, having ultimate power over the women folk of the family (118). Feminist studies places child sexual abuse within a continuum of men's violence, including

rape, domestic violence and sexual harassment and argues that the personal accountability of the perpetrator for the abuse cannot be lessened at the expense of mothers.

In a male dominated society, man holds the central position in the family too where all family members are expected to show allegiance to him. So, once he is denied the care from wife, he seeks for the same in other family members as the women in the family are considered his property. In other words, other women in the family may meet the emotional and sexual needs of the man, once his own wife become unhealthy or unfit. While mother becomes answerable for the incestuous abuse of her daughter, there remains a question, i.e. even if she is sexually dysfunctional, alcoholic, ailing and irresponsible, can it be a right and apt justification for father's abusive behavior towards his own child.

Thus, the great expectations, society have on mothers are the real reason for the blames they receive even if the culprits are men who stand in same capacity of parents. Culturally conditioned society has defined special roles for men and women in a family system. A mother is expected to play the role of all-rounder, tending to the needs of all in the family, except hers. Everyone expect sacrifice from her, and her primary obligation is not towards herself, not towards the society, but towards the family. If someone is to make sacrifice for the family it is the mother. It is she who has to shoulder the responsibility for the dysfunction and disintegration of family, and if she is employed, the blame will be doubled for forgetting her primary duty, i.e. duty towards the family.

Mothers seem to suffer shock at the start and are considerably distraught upon learning about their children's victimization. They do experience numerous losses in the family and social circle. Hooper also analyzed that mothers of intrafamilial abuse victims experience severe sorrow and loss as they begin to lose trust in their partner, their own parental abilities and right to maintain and control families (18). The shocking angst and severe losses, mothers experience when they learn about their children's abuse appear to pessimistically influence their view of self as mother and wife. As Sandra Butler observes:

The weight and sudden revelation of the incestuous assault paralyzes other mothers, and their feelings of frustration and powerlessness often are turned upon their children in anger, blame or dismissal of the effects of abuse, thus heightening the victim's confusion and exacerbating the estrangement between mother and child. Such a defensive response by the mother is compounded when the aggressor is her husband or partner and she feels she must choose between keeping her family intact and protecting her child (120).

McCullum found that the reactions of mothers whose close partners subjected their daughters to the abuse were influenced by their feelings of accountability, bewilderment, remorse, disgrace, hostility, and vulnerability. These helpless mothers find themselves in the predicament of having to select between victim child and their abusive partners, and they had to carry on the duty of dealing with extended family and household issues (328). Allagia found that mothers experienced conflicts due to their cultural and religious convictions which often extolled patriarchal values. These

mothers experienced divided loyalties between their children and their partners and they were afraid of being alienated from their families and communities (42).

Thus, along with the child victims, these non-offending guardians experience major distress and trauma when they come to know the abusive experiences undergone by their children. Their responses may be different, varying from experiencing psychological distress to clinical symptoms of depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder which may become detrimental in their capacity to care for their children's needs. Some studies point out the far-reaching risks to mothers' health on discovering the sexual abuse of a child. It is found that in some mothers mental and physical health problems may crop up, including migraine, digestive issues, nervous problem, acute depression, attempts of self-mutilation and heightened anxiety attacks. Some mothers attempt suicide as the immediate outcome of discovery.

Besides the victim of abuse in a family, it is the mother who bears most the burden and trauma of abuse, as along with the feeling of shame, helplessness and guilt, they have to face criticism from the other family members and society, and even unintended delay to respond, resulting from the initial shock, will brand her as the silent accomplice in the crime. Mothers have to balance between the feelings of children and existence of the family, as most of the families might be dependent on the perpetrator for their living. Along with the emotional insecurity, they have to endure financial insecurity too, and thus undergo traumatic stress.

Attachment theory can be used as a constructive and positive framework for examining the risk involved in child sexual abuse in the backdrop of child's

relationship with the mother and it will prove a solid ground for approaching the problem clinically. Emphasis given to the role of mother and her relationship with child does not mean that onus of child abuse should be taken by mother alone. Mother cannot be blamed wholly for the abuse her child endures. But the mother can reduce the impact of the traumatic experience on her child and her healthy relationship with her child can make the child less vulnerable to the sexual abuse.

John Bowlby observes that the child's first relationship lays the foundation for future interpersonal relationship. Usually this first relationship turns out to be mother, though it does not need to be the mother but can be any adult who fills the role of primary caregiver for the child. According to Bowlby, attachment is the association between child and mother that is shaped and sustained by attachment behavior. The purpose of attachment is to shield and shelter the infant from harm. The set of behaviors like sucking, clinging, smiling and crying exhibited by the infant play a vital role in the child's attachment with its mother. This attachment behavior is meant to draw attention from the caregiver to the child's needs, without which the child would not be able to survive. He further observes that while attachment behavior serves its most vital function in infancy, it adapts and develops and continues to be a natural and necessary tool throughout life.

Mother's attachment to the child is influenced by many factors, including her own childhood experiences of attachment relationships. Whether the child is securely or insecurely attached is decided by the value and reliability of the care given by mother and the nature of that care helps the child to develop his or her own sense of the self and identity. Bowlby hypothesizes that if the child has healthy attachment in

infancy, there forms a safe and sound relationship between child and mother, one in which the child feels confident enough that the mother is a secure base. The child, who grows in a secure and confident atmosphere, faces the world positively, as the child believes in this eternal source of support. The strong mother promotes the child to explore, while preserving a shielding watch over the child, and intervening only when needed. Bowlby postulates that, the child develops through these experiences, a sense of competence, worth and security. On the contrary, the child develops a negative and unhealthy attitude towards life and world if the child lacks an attached figure in his or her infancy. Later on, these attachment basis and structure become relatively fixed and are reenacted in relationships with others (Bolen 154).

Thus, researches done in the field of pediatrics, underline the role of the healthy relationship between the child and the caregiver in preparing child to face the trauma arising out of abuse. Children's trauma and response systems are matured through their attachment with their immediate caregivers, and children are reliant on their primary caregivers for their basic requirements and security. An important factor that wields positive influence without fail on children's psychological attitude to child sexual is the immediate caregivers' healthy response to the child's disclosure of abuse, creating in the victims a belief that they will not be emotionally abandoned. Moreover, available data shows that child sexual abuse is nerve-racking for both the child and the caregiver, as it affects the child-caregiver relationship (Elliott and Carnes 314). Bowlby opines that, if a mother herself suffered serious emotional deprivation in her childhood, essential mother love component is lacking and the baby in turn is subjected to the same pathogenic experiences as herself (Bolen 154).

In a nut shell, the role of mother seems to be crucial once the sexual abuse of her child is reported. Lot of research studies have recognized the vital role played by maternal support in alleviating the problems faced by child after sexual abuse experience and in the recovery of the child from the trauma. Maternal support has been associated with a child's ability and confidence to disclose sexual abuse and treatment outcome (Everson, et al. 199).

Whether mothers were aware or not that a child is being sexually abused has been an important question throughout the discussion over the role of mothers in abuse and recovery. Kempe and Kempe argued that mothers always knew about abuse in the family at some level but the mothers are too reliant on their spouses both emotionally and financially that she sacrifices her daughter willingly to her husband so that he will not go outside the family for sexual satisfaction (66). It is more or less recognized nowadays that mothers often do not come to know the abuse, as the abuse usually takes place in their absence, and children are usually sworn to confidentiality by the abuser, or by threatened with destruction and harm to themselves, to their mother or to other members if they tell. Children often make intense attempts not to let their mothers know. Children's hesitancy to reveal derives mainly from fear of losing fondness or benevolence of the abuser and fear that they will be held responsible or blamed. If the children are not that much loyal or obedient to the abuser, chances are high that they may reveal the abuse. Children are least likely to tell when the abuser is a natural parent (Gomes-Schwartz et al. 19).

Everson et al analyze that the level of maternal support is more prophetic of the child's early psychological functioning than the type, severity or duration of abuse,

or the abuser's relationship to the child (199). Gomes-Schwartz et al, reports that negative reactions from mothers such as anger and indifference cause greater anguish and lower self-worth in children (19). Long-term trauma of abuse is not always related to the brutality of abuse they had experienced as children, provided that children get constant support from parents and others. Support at home can mitigate the effects of trauma of sexual abuse on children. Adolescent and adult women, all of whom had been sexually abused by their fathers, showed greater psychological disturbance if they believed that their mothers knew about the abuse they suffered at the hands of their fathers. The child's feeling of having been deceived by the mother by keeping the secret was as damaging as her thought of the mother betraying her by not shielding her.

Gomes-Schwartz et al. found that mothers who usually kept a caring relationship with their children were likely to be worried over their child's abuse and extended support to them wholeheartedly (117). Mothers shorn of any soft feelings and those who already harbor overstrained feelings towards her children may desist from showing care and consolation to children. Such women, who keep innate antagonism towards children and feel overtaxed by them, will more or less, react unconstructively to the exposition of sexual abuse.

Everson et al. report mothers are found to be least considerate and appreciative if the abuser is a present partner. Mothers are unlikely to believe that abuse had occurred where the perpetrator is a stepfather or live-in parent than the child's biological fathers. Mothers are more likely to be supportive to children where the perpetrator admits the abuse than where he denies it.

Faller observes that,

Mothers in stepfather/ boyfriend cases can usually be differentiated from mothers in the classical incest family by their ability to extricate themselves from relationships with problematic men. They do this by separation and divorce, throwing them out, or having them arrested (16).

Various reasons can be ascribed for that. They have crossed the divorce taboo already once that they can do it again if situation demanded so. Mothers in step families are more employed outside may be because they might have forced for that to meet the needs of family after their divorce. They are independent economically and psychologically so they can easily sever the marital ties. But there is another side for this. Some women choose to subsist in the marriage with the abusive husband, as the fear makes them believe that remarriage is riskier and they do not want to live alone.

La Fontaine thinks that the realization of their mother's financial dependency on their spouses makes children hesitant to reveal the abuse to their mothers. The mother's choice to continue or discontinue their relationship with the abusive spouses becomes decisive in children's decision to reveal the abuse. If the mothers are socially, economically and emotionally independent, children will find it easy to disclose the secret of abuse (112).

Herman and Hirschman surmised that daughters of powerful and influential mothers, who have got a voice in their family, are less likely to be abused. Herman

attributed the healing of trauma to two factors, the power of the mother in the family and her relationship with the daughter. A father who is certain that the daughter will not rely on her mother and that the mother will not believe her daughter will definitely follow his internal voices to pursue his incestuous desire (92).

Thus, taking into consideration both sides i.e. arguments for and against the mothers, this part of chapter also revolves on the premise that role of mother cannot be neglected simply, because, even if in majority of the cases mother is not the culprit and does not even know the incident of abuse, till it is too late, she has got a crucial role in alleviating the pain of the child and in helping the child to overcome the trauma. The support of mothers is an extremely important factor - if not the most significant factor - affecting the child's healing. The absence of support from the mother has considerably damaging effects on the children.

The role of mothers in each work will be analyzed with regard to their response to the abuse, how much they helped the children to survive and how their negative reaction affected children. Definitely, the mothers are assessed from the view points of the children, from their expectations and from their disappointments, even if from the feminist point of view, it might be overtaxing the mother as an individual.

In *Bastard out of Carolina*, Anney, Bone's mother, gives the impression of being a collusive mother. Bone is born out of wedlock to the sixteen-year-old Anney and Anney at first appears as a loving and devoted mother in her frantic attempts to remove the stamp of bastard from Bone's birth certificate. But Anney, by the end of the novel, emerges as a cruel, selfish and impassive mother as she does not leave her

husband, Glen even after witnessing his brutal molestation of her daughter. She is not dependent on him for livelihood. Yet she chooses him over Bone.

Though Anney gets many signs about the trauma her daughter endures even before the violent rape, Anney ignores the physical and the psychological scars on Bone. She averts every chance which may tear off his gentleman mask, and protects him. Anney swallows the excuses of Glen, thus belittling the pain of her daughter. It is true that Anney was in labor room, when Glen first raped Bone and Anney does not know about it. But, later, when Glen hits Bone savagely, Anney is there. Anney screams at Glen occasionally and begs him to stop hurting Bone but at the end of the day, she forgives him, advising Bone never to provoke Glen, “How could you do that?” Mama asked me. It was my fault; I wasn’t supposed to run in the house”. (111) Anney tries to conceal the evidences of Bone’s abuse at the hands of Glen and continues to be silent to her family. But when her family sees the marks of the abuse, the bruises, on Bone’s body, the family intervenes for her and questions the wicked thrashing. Bone’s uncles beat Glen. Even though Anney gets her family’s support to resist and leave the abuser, Anney chooses to stand with Glen. She prefers the legitimacy her marriage bestows on her and she hopes she will get social recognition by protecting her marriage. Anney chooses the pleasure of the conjugal life and the legitimacy it offers, at the expense of her own daughter.

Anney continually defends Glen and tries to find justification even for his ill behavior with Bone. She understands Glen’s desperate yearning for love, but she fails to hear the sobs of lonely and victimized daughter:

Anybody can see how Glen got bent, what his daddy's done to him. I an't never seen a boy wanted his daddy's love so much and had so little of it. All Glen really needs is to know himself loved, to get out from under his daddy's meanness...you never saw him when he used to come down and wait for me to get off work at the diner. That was when I started to love him, when I saw him look at Bone and Reese with his face so open, I could see right into his soul. You could see the kind of man he wanted to be so plain. It was like looking at a little boy, a desperate hurt little boy. That's when I knew I loved him (132, 133).

Bone wants her mother to prefer her to Glen. she says, "I wanted her to love me enough to leave him, to pack us up and take us away from him, to kill him if need be." (107) But at the end of the novel, it is Bone who is cruelly abandoned.

Anney does not leave Glen on any occasion but in an attempt to protect Bone from Glen, Anney, sends Bone to live with various family members. Anney does not adjust to a life without Glen, but she prefers a life without her daughter. She often goes eloquent over her love to Bone, but she fails to leave Glen for her daughter. Anney seeks assurance of love from Bone and pleads with Bone to forgive her. She desolately implores, "Oh God, Bone! I can't just go back; I can't have you hating me" (275). Bone understands Anney's predicament and realizes that Anney loves Glen more. So, she tells her mother that,

"I an't never gonna hate you." I took a deep breath, and made myself speak with no intonation at all. "I know you love him. I know you

need him. And he's good to you. He's good to Reese. He just ...' I thought a minute. 'I don't know.'" (276)

Bone again and again realizes and accepts that Anney is helpless to protect her and even more powerless to leave Daddy Glen. Bone says:

When I spoke this time, my voice was strong, the words clear. "I know you'll go back, Mama, and maybe you should. I don't know what's right for you, just what I have to do. I can't go back to live with Daddy Glen. I won't. I could stay with Aunt Carr for a while or move in with Raylene. I think she'd be glad to keep me. But no matter what you decide, when you go back to Daddy Glen, I can't go with you." (276)

Anney's love towards Bone seems insincere when Anney heeds to Glen's wailings to forgive him after raping Bone. In a sudden outrage, Anney initially reacts to Glen calling him, "*You bastard! You monster!*" (287). Anney rejects Glen, commanding "*Don't you touch me. Don't you touch her!*" (287). As Glen begs that he cannot survive without Anney, Anney slowly changes her place as protector of her daughter to protector of Glen. Anney holds Glen and embraces him in his pain. Anney becomes unconscious to the pain of Bone and signals the ultimate desertion of her role as mother and her full grip of her role as wife. Anney no longer seems to hear Bone's whispers to leave the scene immediately, and her mother's duplicity becomes clear to Bone as she watches her mother hold on Glen:

I could see her fingers on Glen's shoulder, see the white knuckles holding him tight. My mouth closed over the shout I would not let go.

Rage burned in my belly and came up my throat. I'd said I could never hate her, but I hated her now for the way she held him, the way she stood there crying over him. Could she love me and still hold him like that? I let my head fall back. I did not want to see this. I wanted Travis's shotgun, or my sharp killing hook. I wanted everything to stop, the world to end, anything, but not to lie bleeding while she held him and cried. I looked up into white sky going gray. The first stars would come out as the sky darkened. I wanted to see that, the darkness and the stars. I heard a roar far off, a wave of night and despair waiting for me, and followed it out into the darkness (291).

From her previous experience, Bone knows that Anney will forgive Glenn, so she is ambivalent towards Anney's present reaction. Bone knows that her mother has always been maneuvered by Glen. Anney has repeatedly chosen her role as wife as more important than her role as Bone's mother. This fear of desertion by her mother makes Bone long for death.

But the worst part of Anney as a mother comes out when she leaves the terribly injured and bleeding daughter at the hospital alone:

Mama had been there, had carried me in from the car and made the doctor look at me right away. The nurse took me out of her arms, and Mama stepped back, her bloody knuckles still outstretched, touching my cheek lightly. I looked into the nurse's face and then looked back for Mama, but she was gone. Before she could give her name or mine, she had disappeared (294).

Anney leaves Bone alone to reveal her own suffering and pain to strangers.

Bone keeps wondering,

where Mama had gone. What had happened to Daddy Glen? I didn't remember the ride in from Alma's place, didn't remember Mama saying anything to me. Had she told them what had happened? Did anyone know? Where was Mama, and why wasn't she with me?" (295).

Thus, left alone in the hospital bed first and later in the protection of her aunt, Bone starts hating herself and feels she is an unwanted kid, "I was full of hate. I had spit on the glass, spit on my life, not caring anymore who I was or would be". (301) Bone occasionally whispers, "I hate her" (302) while Aunt Raylene asks her to forgive Anney. Bone thinks:

How do you forgive somebody when you cannot even speak her name, when you cannot stand to close your eyes and see her face? I did not understand. If I thought of Mama, I thought of her with her head thrown back and her mouth open, Glen's bloody face pressed to her belly. I could not stand to remember that, could not watch it again. I turned away, closed my eyes, and prayed for the darkness to come back. I wanted to die. I refused to eat, refused to speak, covered my face, and would not let Aunt Raylene coax me out of bed (303).

Anney comes to see Bone at Aunt Raylene's home after her discharge from the hospital. She tries to ensure Bone repeatedly of her love but Bone remains emotionless:

I wanted to tell her lies, tell her that I had never doubted her, that nothing could make any difference to my love for her, but I couldn't. I had lost my mama. She was a stranger, and I was so old my insides had turned to dust and stone. Every time I closed my eyes, I could see again the blood on Glen's hairline, his face pressed to her belly, feel that black despair whose only relief would be death. I had prayed for death. Maybe it wasn't her fault. It wasn't mine. Maybe it wasn't a matter of anybody's fault...I wanted my life back, my mama, but I knew I would never have that. The child I had been was gone with the child she had been. We were new people, and we didn't know each other anymore (307).

Anney thinks that her only duty towards Bone is gaining for her a legitimacy certificate. After Bone is brutally raped, Anney procures one for her. But for a girl like Bone, this does not make any difference, as society already considers her an illegitimate one. Moreover, she is considered a Boatwright girl as Anne has completely cut her off from her paternal legacy, keeping her in ignorance regarding her father. Anney completely rejects the paternal side of Bones, so Bone remains a bastard child in the minds of people. More shame is attached to Bone when Anney leaves her like an orphan.

Actually, in the case of Bone it is always the surrogates who stand with her in the place of mother. Anney leaves Bone's wellbeing to a surrogate who will take her responsibility. In every stage in Bone's life, the space of mother is filled by the surrogates. It is her Aunt Ruth who asks Bone about the possibility of abuse, it is her uncles who mete out punishment to Glen, it is her Aunt Raylene who stands with Bone on being questioned by Sheriff at hospital after the rape and later too when Anney abandons Bone, she is taken care of by aunts.

Bone is not orphaned in the literal sense, as her uncles and aunties are there. But what hurts Bone more is the desertion of her mother and mother's love cannot be substituted by anything else, "my Mama had abandoned me, and that was the only thing that mattered" (302).

In *Lolita*, though Lolita's mother, Charlotte Haze is full of complaints against Lolita and desperately wants to avoid Lolita from her newly formed family with Humbert and plans to send her to boarding school, once she sees Humbert's diary and comes to know the evil intentions of Humbert that he married her only to be near to Lolita and to possess her, she reacts furiously:

"The Haze woman, the big bitch, the old cat, the obnoxious mamma, the-the old stupid Haze is no longer your dupe. She has-she has..."

My fair accuser stopped, swallowing her venom and her tears. Whatever Humbert Humbert said- or attempted to say- is inessential. She went on:

You're a monster. You're a detestable, abominable, criminal fraud. If you come near- I'll scream out the window. Get back!" (107).

Charlotte gets killed in an accident within an hour of this outburst, so it is left to the imagination of readers what steps she would have taken to avoid Humbert. But her last reaction gives the impression that she would have protected Lolita from Humbert.

Unlike in other incest narratives where mother is either colluding or silent partner, in the novel, *Push*, Precious's mother is a direct sexual abuser, and thus Precious is denied joy and peace in the maternal sphere too. The character of Mary Johnson, Precious' mother is depicted grotesquely, surpassing any literary precedents in the form of black matriarch. Critics used to blame the socio-economic conditions of Black American community for the path of neglect and abandonment, the mothers of victims chose. Critics interpreted the silence of mothers as the result of their helplessness and powerlessness in a patriarchal society. But a mother abusing her own daughter was a matter of shock for any community that they could attribute that to nothing short of madness or sadism.

Precious' mother comes as the byword of selfishness. She does not protect Precious from her husband's sexual advances, she does not harbor much resentment to her husband over that except that she misses him in bed, she feigns ignorance over her pregnancy and brutally beats her, does not care for her even in post-delivery days but she chooses to live on the money she gets from Welfare Department for Precious' daughter:

She look like whale on couch. My muver have not left the house in, let's see- 1983, '84, '85, '86, 'n now '87. Ever since Little Mongo was born. Social worker come here. I be at school. My grandmuver, Toosie, bring Little Mongo over on days social worker come; game is Little Mongo live here, my mama take care of Little Mongo and me. My mama get check 'n food stamps for me 'n Lil Mongo. But it's *my* baby. Little Mongo is money for me! (55).

Precious repeatedly focuses that her mother is just exploiting her financially even all the while brutally beating and kicking her for her incestuous pregnancy, "Sometimes I can't breathe. I'm a good girl. I don't fucks boyz but I'm pregnant. My fahver fuck me. And she know it. She kick me in my head when I'm pregnant. She take *my* money. Money for Little Mongo should be mine" (57).

Precious' mother keeps grudges against her daughter for stealing her husband and for ruining her life. Yet she adjusts with Precious for the money she gets in the name of that illegitimate grandchild. Mary and Precious do not keep any loving bond and their interactions revolve around sex, money and aggression. Though Mary chooses to depend on the welfare system, Mary does not bother about Precious's well-being or education. She rather manipulates the abject condition of her family. Mary is concerned about her own welfare and seeks the ways to exploit Precious maximum. But once Precious confronts her and cuts the chances for her mother to live on that money, her mother gets furious:

I got new baby boy in my arms 'n she calling me bitch hoe slut say she gonna kill me 'cause I ruin her life. Gonna kill me wif her "BARE

HANDS!'. It's like a black wall gonna crash down on me, nuthin' to do but run. "First you steal my husband! Then you get me cut off welfare!" She MAD! No time to say nothin'. Once I'm outside the door I stop at top of the stairs, look hard at her. She still foaming at mouf, talking about her husband I spoze to steal. I do tell her one thing as I going down the stairs. I say, "Nigger rape me. I not steal shit fat bitch your husband RAPE me RAPE ME!" (74).

Precious lives as a domestic servant in her own home who is supposed to cook for her mother, give money for her mother that she gets from welfare department for her and her child and even to satisfy the sexual needs of her mother. A mother who is not physically protective, a mother who is emotionally inconsiderate and a mother who is financially exploitative may not be a shocking character. But a mother subjecting her daughter to sexual needs comes as a real shock and the very fact deprives her mother of any kind of sympathy that might have been extended to her at the expense of male chauvinistic society:

So *back* to the kitchen, git her pies, pile my own plate higher than the first time, know if I don't, she just gonna make me go back again. I sit her pies down on the tray. Try not to look at her. Try to watch the white people on TV running down Mama's chin, try not to see her grab whole ham hock wif her hand, try not to see myself doing the same thing. Eating, first' cause she make me, beat me if I don't, then eating hoping pain, the gray TV light, and Mama is a blur; and I just fall back on the couch so full it like I'm dyin' and I go to sleep, like I

always do; almost. *Almost*, go to sleep; it's the pain in my shoulder keep me from totally conking out this time. I feel Mama's hand between my legs, moving up my thigh. Her hand stop, she getting ready to pinch me if I move. I just lay still still, keep my eyes close. I can tell Mama's other hand between her legs now' cause the smell fill room. Mama can't fit into bathtub no more. Go sleep, go sleep, go to sleep, I tells myself. Mama's hand creepy spider, up my legs, in my pussy. God please! Thank you, god I say, as I fall asleep (21).

Precious misses a considerate mother figure throughout her life. She never remembers a loving gesture from her mother, nor kind words and when she meets good natured and caring women later in life, she longs for them in her life to substitute her own mother, "It's Aretha. I always did wish she was my mother or Miss Rain or Tina Turner; a mother I be proud of, love me" (88).

Precious' disappointment over her mother is quite deep and it comes to the fore frequently:

What is a normal life? A life where you not 'shamed of your mother. Where your friends come over after school and watch TV and do homework. Where your mother is normal looking and don't hit you over the head wif iron skillet. I would wish for in my fantasy a second chance. Since my first chance go to Mama and Daddy (115).

Precious' yearning for mother love and her anguish over the rape by father comes out on the occasion of her first delivery, when she is informed by Nurse Butter that her daughter have Down's syndrome:

Nurse Butter nod to little black nurse who take baby away. Nurse Butter hike herself up on side of the bed. She tryin' to hole me in her arms. I don't want that. She touch side of my face. "I'm so sorry, Ms Jones, so *so* sorry." I try to turn away from her Mississippi self but she *in* the bed now pulling my chest and shoulders into her arms. I can smell her lotion smell and Juicy Fruit gum breath. I feel warm kindness from her I never feel from Mama and I start to cry. A little at first, then on and on, *everything* hurt- between my legs, the black-blue on the side of my head where Mama kick me, but Butter don't see it and she squeezing me there. I crying for ugly baby, then I forget about ugly baby, I crying for me who no one never hold before. Daddy put his pee-pee smelling thing in my mouth, my pussy, but never hold me. I see me, first grade, pink dress dirty sperm stuffs on it. No one comb my hair. Second grade, third grade, fourth grade seem like one dark night. Carl is the night and I disappear in it. And the daytimes don't make no sense. Don't make sense talking, bouncing balls, filling in between dotted lines. Shape? Color? Who care whether purple shit a square or a circle, whether it purple or blue? What difference it make whether gingerbread house on top or bottom of the page. I disappears from the day, I jus' put it all down- book, doll, jump rope, my head,

myself. I don't think I look up again till EMS find me on floor, and now this little nurse telling me, "Look at me, sweetie, you gonna get through this. You really are gonna get through this" (18).

The counselor asks Precious to write down whatever comes in to her mind about her mother between the counseling session, "I mean you can use it specifically for something like this, trying to recover your first memory of your mother." And Precious thinks, "I already know what I'm gonna recover, the smell of Mama's pussy in my face" (117).

Later Precious writes down her first memory of her Mama:

Whut is my earliest ~~memory~~ memory of my mother? a room that's small fillt up wif my parents. It smell. can of mackerel left open in kitchen on hot day that's what make me remember. that smell. he put his ball in my face. Years lie wash machine aroun and around. Mama jaw open like evil wolf. the smell deeper than toilet. Her fingers pick apart my pussy. Night. Poisoned rat. Don't have dreams (133).

Precious' mother does not even feel compunction over her failure as a mother, rather, she boasts to the counselor about the love she lavished on her daughter:

I guess, he come over you know. I wake up at night, moring he not wif me, I know he in there wif her. When it first start? I don' know. I'm a good mother. She had everything. I done tole her that. Pink 'n white baby carriage, little pink bootie socks, dresses; everything I put on her

pink. Precious, she, so smiling and healthy. A day don't go by I don't take her out wheeling in the air. Even when it's cold I take her out, to church, to somewhere, me 'n Carl – my husband, I call him – loves Precious. I loves him. I dream of day we gonna you know, git married, git house wif grass, color TVs in all the rooms... I put on Kool and the Gang, remember Precious, you remember? I put on Kool and the Gang and you disco to that? She had a happy childhood all 'n all, Carl jus' a high natured man... (133- 4).

Precious' mother really fits to the description of collusive mother too as she was not oblivious to what was happening between her husband and daughter, as Precious says, "this time I know Mama know. Umm hmmm, she know. She bring him to me. I ain' crazy, that stinky hoe give me to him. Probably thas' what he require to fuck her, some of me" (24). But shockingly, what was hurting her more was the loss of man she loved, though she agrees she didn't want him to hurt her. But he did it in front of her. But what bothered her most was that she wanted him to do that to her, instead of doing on her child:

So, he on me. Then he reach over to Precious! Start wif his finger between her legs. I say Carl what you doing! He say shut your big ass up! This is good for her. Then he get off me, take off her Pampers and try to stick his thing in Precious. You know what trip me out is it almost can go in Precious! I think she some kinda freak baby then. I say stop Carl stop! I want him on *me!* I never wanted him to hurt her. I didn't want him doing *anything* to her. I wanted my man for myself. Sex me

up, not my chile. So you cain't blame all that shit happen to Precious on *me*. I love Carl, I love him. He her daddy, but he was my man! (135-6).

Lukianowicz comments that women are controlled by their fear that they may lose their husbands if they do not allow them to use their daughters and so such women permit men to do anything for the price of their presence (305). Precious' mother comes in that category of mothers. Apart from victimizing her daughter sexually, Mary Johnson, hits her brutally now and then with whatever things she get in hand. She fails to question her husband and does not dare to throw him out, instead she harms her daughter, accusing her for the crime of her husband. She takes revenge on her daughter for seducing her husband:

After I come home from hospital baby go live over on 150th and St Nicholas Avenue with my grandmother, even though Mama tell welfare the baby live with us and she care of it while I'm in school. About three months after baby born, I'm still twelve when all this happen, Mama slap me. HARD. Then she pick up cast-iron skillet, thank god it was no hot grease in it, and she hit me so hard on back I fall on floor. Then she kick me in ribs. Then she say, "Thank you Miz Claireece Precious Jones for fucking my husband you nasty little slut!" I feel like I'm gonna die, can't breathe, from where I have baby start to hurt.

“Fat cunt bucket slut! Nigger pig bitch! He done quit me! He done left me’ cause of you. What you tell them mutherfuckers at the damn hospital? I should KILL you!” she screaming at me (19).

The character of Mary takes apart the historical picture of the strong black matriarch, who shoulders the burdens of the family and strives for its welfare. Trudier Harris explains that the depiction of the matriarch in literature is often paradoxical and destructive and defines some strong black women characters as “sinning against their families and their communities when their motives are more self-absorbed and selfishly individualistic, in spite of claims to the contrary” (19).

Mary uses her own daughter for personal and sexual satisfaction and tries in every way to impede her daughter’s development in order to maintain her own position as a nonworking woman on welfare. Mary tries to deceive the society by giving a rosy picture of her family to the outside world. Just like a patriarch who tries to subjugate and subordinate the female members of his family, physically and socially, Mary tries to subdue Precious mentally, physically and sexually. Mary views Precious as a sexual being alone which affects the identity formation of Precious. She even calls Precious, “Fat cunt bucket,” “Nigger pig bitch,” “Miss Hot-to-Trot”, “nasty little slut”, “Nasty ass tramp”, “fuckin’ cow” and “Jezebel” (9,19).

Food becomes a tool of mistreatment in the novel and kitchen becomes a site of abuse. Motherhood image and memory is connected with kitchen too. But that place of nurturing becomes a place of torturing for Precious. Mary uses food as a weapon to imprison Precious in the image of Mammy. Mary herself, a gigantic and unattractive figure might have felt that her form made her unappealing in her

husband's eye and she wanted Precious to become her prototype. In order to make Precious obese, she forces food into Precious' mouth even when she is not hungry. Mothers' feeding their children is an act of love, but in Precious's case it is used as a punishment which disfigures her by the increased weight and makes her resemble the mammy figure. Precious's father refers to her weight during the time of rape, addressing her as big mama and other demeaning weight associated names like "Butter Ball Big Mama Two Ton of Fun" (35); "Big Mama" (58); "Fat Mama, Big Hole!" (111). This makes Precious think herself of as a sexual object. Precious starts to feel disgust towards food since her mother forces Precious to do oral sex with her. Mary makes Precious gorge before rape. Precious is paralyzed with fear to oppose her mother as she knows Mary will go to extreme physical violence.

In short, Carl's primary rape of Precious at first shocks Mary, but she does not confront it sincerely and does not try to protect Precious, as she was conscious of her own secondary status in the family and does not want to lose her comfort. She succumbs to Carl's threats. Mary uses Precious as a sexual object in place of her husband and sexually assaults her in her husband's absence. Precious becomes a sexual captive and prisoner victim at her own home, where she is overfed according to the interests of her parents and it leaves her an undesirable and abhorrent object in the eyes of society. Thus, Precious loses an ideal childhood. Perhaps, Mary's unconscious revenge against her husband and sense of helplessness come out in the form of physical mistreatment of her daughter.

Mahesh Dattani's play, *Thirty Days in September*, senses the feeling of betrayal inherent in incestuous abuse cases. In most of the cases, men are the primary

abusers but there are silent accomplices in the crime and surprisingly they are women in the family, who fearing the repercussions of revealing, choose to blame the girl and to instill guilt in her mind instead of confronting the abuser. Many incest narratives have called attention to this silence of mothers, who assumed silence either in their failure to recognize the abuse happened or happening at their home, or in their hesitancy to believe the shocking truth. In the play, Mala accuses Shanta for betraying her trust in her, for not caring her, not protecting her and not hearing her complaints. And Shanta is presented as a failed mother especially through Mala's heart rendering wails on her present and direct accusations against Shanta for spoiling her life. But this impression on Shanta that readers form from Mala gets changed and along with Mala, readers too feel sympathy towards Shanta, once it is known that she is the poor victim of the same perpetrator. It can be argued Mala's mother cannot be fully exonerated because she knows the nature of her brother, who had raped her too and so she is sure that Mala is not lying. She tries to hide his crime instead of exposing him for the offenses he inflicts on his daughter. But it is her helpless condition in the patriarchal society which forces her to be a mute spectator, and Mala forgives her realizing her predicament.

In the beginning of the play one can see that, Mala's trauma from sexual abuse is aggravated by the sense of betrayal she feels from her mother's side. The pain or abandoned feeling that Mala suffers because of Shanta's silence, grows into a feeling of hatred and anger towards her mother and it leads to clash between the mother and the daughter:

... (*Listening to the counselor.*) I don't know. I can't explain it. The only person who can, who could have prevented all this is my mother. Sometimes I wish she would just tell me to stop. She could have prevented a lot from happening... Here are all the names of people whom I have been with. And the outline...well I just wanted a line that would put them all altogether. But if you ask me, whose face I think it is- it must be my mother's (18)

Mala's memories of her molestation are so excruciating that she cannot keep silence over it. She painfully realizes that her trauma is the product of the experience of child sexual abuse and the complicity of her mother in it. So whenever confronted with her mother Mala accuses her mother of her silence, "By staying silent doesn't mean I can forget! This is my hell. . . It is your creation, Maa! You created it for me. With your silence!! You didn't forget anything, you only remained silent!" (54)

Mala harbors strong complaints against her mother as she feels that her mother is responsible for the injustice done to her. She always thinks that her mother has never been cooperative to her and never took care of her as she inwardly knew what was happening to Mala:

if only you had looked into my eyes and seen the hurt, or asked me 'beta, what's wrong?' Then may be, I would have told you . . . But ma, I did look to you for help, while you were praying, your eyes avoiding mine, and I knew, deep down I must have known, that you will never ask me that question. Because you already knew the answer (53).

Mala feels that her mother deliberately neglected her duties of protecting her daughter and accuses her for that,

Where were you when he locked the door to your bed room while I was napping in there? Where were you during those fifteen minutes when he was destroying my soul? Fifteen minutes every day of my summer holidays, add them up. Fifteen minutes multiplied by thirty or thirty-one or whatever. That's how long or how little it took for you to send me to hell for the rest of my life! Surely you must have known, Ma (53).

Mala also gets irritated over Shanta's habit of finding asylum in the pooja room whenever she faces a problem, thinking that Lord Krishna will save her. Mala feels contemptuous towards her mother and she feels she cannot forgive her mother for the hellish experience she underwent as a child and an adolescent.

Mala feels that Shanta had never been there for her and that thought drives Mala to seek consolation outside,

MALA: I won't tell you... I don't have to tell you anything. Go to bed.

SHANTA: You can tell me what is troubling you. I am always there for you.

MALA: It is true. It did happen, but you never believed me.

SHANTA (Turning away). I don't know what you are talking about. I will prepare alu paratha for you tomorrow, you always like that for breakfast.

MALA: That is how you always pacified me and that is how I know that you believe me, deep down. Oh yes, you would remember that I always like alu parathas because that's what I got whenever I came to you, hurt and crying. Instead of listening to what I had to say, you stuffed me with food. I couldn't speak because I was being fed all the time, and you know what? I began to like them. I thought that was the cure for my pain. That if I ate till, I was stuffed, the pain would go away. Every time I came to you mummy; you were ready with something to feed me. You knew. Otherwise you wouldn't have been so prepared. You knew all along what was happening to me, and I won't ever let you forget that! (23)

Even when Mala hints the abusive incident to her mother, Shanta feigns ignorance and tells Mala is creating stories:

MALA. I am not talking about a bad dream! I am talking about the time when uncle Vinay would molest me. When I was seven. Then eight. Nine. Ten. Every vacation when we went to visit him or when he came to stay with us. You were busy in either the pooja room or the kitchen. I would go to papa and cry. Before I could even tell him why I was crying he would tell me to go to you. You always fed me and- and you never said it but I knew what you were saying to me

without words. That I should eat well and go to sleep and the pain will go away. And, and –Oh God! It did go away. But it comes back. It didn't go away forever! (23)

Mala blames Santa that Santa flees from her issues by seeking refuge in front of Krishna statue and Mala breaks the painting of Krishna saying that if she had done that earlier, Shanta might have noticed her woes. When Shanta is shaken off her convenient world, she turns the accusation against Mala.

SHANTA: No, no, I want to talk. I remember, but what I remember is not what you remember. I had forgotten it, but now...

MALA. It doesn't matter now. I just have to learn to live with the pain.

SHANTA: Not just the pain. I remember, much as I was trying to forget, what I saw. Not when you were seven but when you were thirteen. (Gently). Please don't misunderstand me, Mala. I remember, seeing you with my brother during the summer holidays. You were pushing yourself on him in the bedroom.

MALA: No! That's not true!

SHANTA: I remember, Mala. You want me to remember? You were telling him to kiss you.

MALA: No.

SHANTA. To touch you.

MALA. I didn't-

SHANTA. To pinch your –breasts.

MALA. Stop it!

SHANTA. You were forcing him to say things to you.

MALA. Stop it, I said!

SHANTA. To do things to you.

MALA. I did not! I did not!

SHANTA. That is why I forget. I went to the kitchen to vomit. Then I prayed. I prayed for you Mala. (Pointing to the portrait) That is what I was praying to. To our God, so He could send his Sudarshan Chakra to defend you, to defend us from the demon inside you, not outside you. But you wouldn't let me. You don't let me. (28)

Once Shanta is provoked and questioned of her integrity, like most of the mothers in the incestuous stories, she turns accusatory fingers against Mala:

SHANTA. But Mala, I have seen it with my own eyes. You enjoyed it. You were an average child but you had my brother and your cousins dancing around you. That is what you wanted. Yes! How can I forget? I am trying to forget, please help me forget.

Silence.

MALA (quietly). Yes, you are right.

SHANTA. And please don't talk about trying to forget the pain... Try to forget the pleasure.

Mala. That is part of the pain, Ma. The pleasure is part of the pain.
(*Composing herself*) I-I will try, Ma. I can only try.

Shanta. I forget. I forget everything. Be like me.

MALA. Yes.

SHANTA. You have been a very bad girl; you have gone astray. But Krishna will show you the way. (28,29)

But once Mala realizes the real reason for her mother's silence and understands the agony endured by her, Mala feels pity and compassion for her. Actually, her mother's disclosure comes as a relief for Mala as it reduces her betrayed feeling caused by her mother's silence. As a mother, Shanta cannot be considered a complete failure, as she expresses remorse and longs and tries to get a better life for Mala. She even shoulders the responsibility for Mala's wayward life, "It is always my fault . . . I-I forget things. I am the one to blame. But she is a very nice girl at heart" (15).

The novel *The Bluest Eye* depicts a very bizarre and atypical kind of mother daughter relationship bereft of empathy, compassion, love and sympathy which result in Pecola's dysfunctional personality. Economic conditions, domestic disharmony and racial inferiority directly hamper the mother child relationship in the novel. Pauline as a mother fails her daughter because she has been already trapped by the beauty standard of the West. Pauline herself feels alienated from the society as she experiences the bitter reality of racial stigmatization. Incapable of overcoming her

own complexes and worries, Pauline neglects her children, completely denying any scope of survival for them. Pauline hands over to her children her own pessimistic views on society, while she enjoys a beautiful and ordered life at Fisher house:

Pauline kept this order, this beauty, for herself, a private world, and never introduced it into her storefront, or to her children. Then she bent toward respectability, and in so doing taught them fear: fear of being clumsy, fear of being like their father, fear of not being loved by God, fear of madness like Cholly's mother's. Into her son she beat a fear a loud desire to run away, and into her daughter she beat a fear of growing up, fear of people, fear of life (102).

Pauline definitely understands that her daughter is raped, "so when the child regained consciousness, she was lying on the kitchen floor under a heavy quilt, trying to connect the pain between her legs with the face of her mother looming over her" (129).

But the reaction of Pauline on seeing Pecola in her unconscious state after the brutal rape by Cholly is quite shocking. She severely beats Pecola instead of taking care of her. As the people say, "they say the way her mama beat her she lucky to be alive herself" (149).

As it can be gathered from Pecola's conversation with her imaginary self:

Then why didn't you tell Mrs. Breedlove?

I did tell her!

I don't mean about the first time. I mean about the second time, when you were sleeping on the couch.

I wasn't sleeping! I was reading!

You don't have to shout.

You don't understand anything, do you? She didn't even believe me when I told her.

So that's why you didn't tell her about the second time?

She wouldn't have believed me then either.

You're right. No use telling her when she wouldn't believe you (158).

In Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Maya's mother is presented as an awe-inspiring woman, whom her children admire blindly. She is a very bold and independent woman. Though her children miss her throughout their childhood after she gets separated from their biological father, once she comes to know that her daughter had been raped by her second husband, she immediately turns him down and files police case against him. Even when he is murdered, she does not blame Maya.

Maya describes many moments in her childhood and teenage too when her mother showers love and care on her. She takes care of Maya when she falls ill, she gives confidence to her when Maya is brutally raped, she accepts Maya whenever Maya returns to her, she stands like a friend to Maya and clears patiently Maya's doubts regarding sexuality and even when Maya informs of her pregnancy she accepts it patiently:

Mother asked, "Who is the boy? I told her. She recalled him, faintly.

‘Do you want to marry him?’

‘No.’

‘Does he want to marry you?’ The father had stopped speaking to me during my fourth month.

‘No.’

‘Well, that’s that. No use ruining three lives.’ There was no overt or subtle condemnation. She was Vivian Baxter Jackson. Hoping for the best, prepared for the worst, and unsurprised by anything in between (Maya 308).

Maya’s mother takes care of her after delivery and assists her to look after the baby. She gives Maya confidence to face those days of trial patiently.

In *The Color Purple*, in the case of Celie, her mother is physically very weak, emotionally delicate and suffers from the shock caused by the murder of her first husband, a successful farmer, whose accomplishments instigated the jealousy of the White merchants. That murder murders the prospect of happy life for Celie, as it causes the twin presence of a vicious stepfather and that of a mother who is mentally and physically too ailing to look after her children, quite detrimental to the development of a girl’s psyche. So, at the age of two itself Celie loses her father and mother, though she loses mother physically only at the age of fourteen, “Although the widow’s body recovered, her mind was never the same. She continued to fix her husband’s plate at mealtimes just as she’d always done and was always full of talk about the plans she and her husband had made” (158).

From the letters Celie writes, one cannot be sure whether her mother is aware of Celie's rape by her father (later revealed as step-father). As Celie writes:

My mama dead. She die screaming and cussing. She scream at me. She cuss at me. I'm big. I can't move fast enough...She ast me bout the first one Whose it is? I say God's. I don't know no other man or what else to say...She got sicker an sicker. Finally she ast Where it is? I say God took it. (4)

But it can be learnt that Celie's mother kept some suspicions on her husband as she asks her husband about his hair been seen in the girls' room. But he accuses Celie of entertaining some boys there. Whether she believes his tale or not is not clear from the narrative.

Even after Celie's first pregnancy and delivery, her mother fails to understand what is happening to her daughter. She does not keep a healthy attachment to her daughter to ask her even about her pathetic condition and to protect her. It is also not specific whether she curses Celie for snatching her husband from her or for bringing dishonor for the family by hanging around with boys. Though she may be partially exonerated on account of her physical ailment, yet it cannot be done completely, taking into consideration Celie's traumatic situation. Her mother could have cleared doubts on her second husband by talking to Celie, she could have told Celie that he is Celie's stepfather and the store and the other wealth and fortune of family actually belong to Celie's biological father. If her mother was healthy and strong-willed, she could have saved Celie and Nettie by ousting her wicked husband. But instead, readers

are left with a doubt that whether her mother deliberately exchanged her role with Celie to retain the stability of the family.

In *The God of Small Things*, Ammu' screaming at her children, "If it wasn't for you I wouldn't be here! None of this would have happened! I wouldn't be here! I would have been free! I should have dumped you in an orphanage the day you were born! *You're* the millstones around my neck" (253), might make one think that she is not loving and considerate to her children. In other way too, Ammu's love affair plays a pivotal role in her children's sufferings, but Ammu is more or less a victim of patriarchy. She does not want to abandon her children rather she makes all frantic attempts to protect them. Even her occasional outburst at her twins was under the mental strain she was suffering in her family. Though Ammu is often presented as a strict disciplinarian, at the end she turns out to be a poor and helpless mother and her children miss her throughout their life.

So, categorizing mothers included in this study strictly as either colluding or protective is not easy. Anne in *The Bastard out of Carolina* does not deserve much sympathy as Bone continues to wail for her internally and what shatters Bone more, than the brutalities she suffers at the hands of Glen, is the abandonment by Anne. A mother deserting her brutally raped daughter at hospital to go with the abuser is unacceptable as mother is still considered as the primary caregiver to a child. Precious' mother in the novel *Push*, can be considered the most inhuman kind of mother as she does not try to protect her daughter from her husband though she sees the abuse in front of her eyes. Instead she harms her daughter physically and sexually. In *Thirty Days in September*, though Mala accuses Shanta for her failure to protect Mala, once

it is known that Shanta herself was a victim of abuse, she emerges as a helpless victim. In *The Bluest Eye*, Pauline Breedlove cannot be forgiven or cannot be considered a powerless mother because she sees what her husband has done to her daughter and she could have consoled her daughter as she knows her daughter is innocent; rather she rejects Pecola thus driving her to insanity. In *The Color Purple*, we are not sure about the mental state of Celie's ailing mother, so she cannot be blamed blindly. In *Lolita*, Charlotte gives the impression that she will strongly deal with Humbert. In *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Maya's mother acts as a bold and loving mother which plays a crucial role in Maya's recovery. In *The God of Small Things*, Ammu seems too helpless socially and financially which distances her children from her. But in every case, victimized children are much bothered about the response of their mothers, they long for their mothers and their fall and recovery is much dependent on the presence/ absence of their mothers. Children first turn to their mothers for the help and consolation than to any other family member, so the failure of mothers to offer them care hurt them deep. In all these cases, presence of a strong mother could have reduced their mental trauma, which itself validates my point that mothers have got the primary role in the recovery of their abused children.

“Of course, I could never have hated my mother so much, enough to allow her husband to fuck me, had I not loved her so desperately. I would have done anything to get her attention” (Harrison 238). A mention to Harrison's work becomes relevant here as it shows the role of mother in aggravating the impact of trauma on youngsters and to throw the light on the factors that lead to their silent sufferings. Harrison makes outrageous yet oblique suggestion that she was out to take revenge

on her mother than on her father for the neglect she suffered at the hands of her mother in her formative years. As Harrison records,” Through my father I have begun at last to penetrate my mother, to tear away the masks that divide us. And now, even as I draw closer to her to judge the level of her suspicions, she comes closer to me to monitor what she fears” (140).

Actually, Harrison used father as a ploy to get the consideration and care from her mother, for whom she was craving from her childhood and her father could easily maneuver her anger towards her mother. Pondering over the subject, Harrison implies that in hetero-patriarchal society, mother –daughter relationship is decisive than any other factor for the emotional well-being of the children. Strong bonds between mother and daughter, plays a vigorous role in protecting daughters from sexual abuse and its trauma. On the other hand, daughters become easy victims to the exploitation even within family if their attachment with mother is weak.

“Incest is a product of family pathology and, except on the rarest occasions, all family members contribute in some way to the pathology that breeds the incest” (de Young 9)

So far the relationship between the mother and the victimized child, the response of mother to the child’s trauma and their interference either in negative or in positive way have been discussed and now the nature of their families will be analyzed to find out how far the domestic disharmony and consequent neglect have caused and intensified the sufferings of the child.

The major hazards to the development of a perception of a benign, trustworthy and predictable world in which the children initiate their own independence –and perceive their actions as having meaningful consequences are neglect, abuse, indifference, extreme inconsistency and other conditions – social and physical- which interfere with the child's sense of personal adequacy or which hinder the acquisition skills. Such contingencies are likely to produce a child who behaves dysfunctionally (Gale and Chapman 33)

The socio biological theories, on incestuous or intra familial abuse focus on the relationship between the secure family system and incest avoidance. Finnish anthropologist, Edward Westermarck gave one explanation for the incest taboo which later came to be known as the Westermarck effect or reverse sexual imprinting. According to this theory, people who live in close domestic proximity during the first few years of their lives become desensitized to sexual desirability. Some practices like the Israeli Kibbutz system, and the Chinese Shim Pua marriage customs, are cited as evidences for Westermarck effect. In Israeli Kibbutzim systems, children were reared communally in peer groups, the criteria for selection being age, not biological relation. Later, a study conducted to analyze the marriage patterns of these children revealed that out of the nearly three thousand marriages that occurred across the Kibbutz system, only fourteen children married from the same peer group. Even of these fourteen, none of them had been raised together during the first six years of life. On the other hand, where a brother and sister are brought up separately, i.e. when proximity do not occur from birth to the age of six, they may find one another highly

sexually attractive when they meet as adults or adolescents, according to the hypothesis of genetic sexual attraction (255). A study conducted in 2009 by Eran Shor and Dalit Simchai expressed the argument that childhood proximity cannot in itself produce sexual avoidance, unless there are enough social pressures and norms. While Westermarck raised the argument that the taboos themselves arise unsurprisingly as products of inherent attitudes, Sigmund Freud disputed that as children, members of the same family naturally long for one another that societies were compelled to create incest taboos. Freud further explained that the repression of the inherent incestuous tendencies leads to a universal neurosis which he tagged as the Oedipus complex. Later, critics like Parker and Parker and Erickson advanced an approach that set the value of the attachment bond in intrafamilial relationship as the touchstone for incest avoidance. As Erickson puts it, safe and sheltered attachment among family members is “the foundation of adaptive kin-directed behavior including incest avoidance” (413). In other words, individuals with more apprehensive familial relationship are assumed to be more likely to engage in incestuous behaviors. Parker and Parker moved a step forward and suggested that those fathers who are more engaged in the early care of their daughters, especially during the first three years of the child’s life are less likely to resort to incest as some biological mechanism restrains them from harboring any sexual feeling towards the daughter (540). Later Williams and Finkelhor found that fathers who were actively involved with their daughters during a portion of the first six years of their daughters’ lives were at lesser risk to commit incest. The supporters of socio biological theory of incest put forward the argument that children are at greater risk of abuse by stepfathers, as stepfathers are characteristically less involved in early care giving than biological fathers. Finkelhor

analyzed that the presence of non-biological father in the family increased the risk for all types of sexual abuse. Later Russell analyzed that children were seven times more likely to be abused by a stepfather than a biological father. Thus, early theories inclined to approach child sexual abuse as a simple family problem and the solution prescribed was the repairing of family dysfunction.

Questioning the biosocial rationalizations, Williams and Finkelhor, in a careful study of fathers, have found that early caretaking reduce incestuous misuse but that other factors in the fathers' experiences such as physical or sexual abuse or denunciation by their own parents supplants the caretaking feature and conspicuously amplifies the risk of incestuous abuse for daughters. They ascertain that the utmost security for the daughter associates with high participation at ages four to five, giving credence to an explanation that giving protection may be due to better parenting skills and feelings of nurturance, protectiveness, and recognition with the daughter, rather than reticence over sexual excitement. Williams and Finkelhor reach the conclusion that need for protection for the daughter is the result of complex social and psychological factors, including cultural beliefs and customs, than a simple biological mechanism engendered by propinquity (112).

Though natural fathers sexually abused their daughters often, it was not always the case. Moreover, the types of abuse committed by stepfathers were graver and violent in nature often in the form of increased number of intercourses, fellatio, cunnilingus, and anal intercourse. Researchers postulated that one of the reasons for increased percentage of stepfather abuse is that of the less harsh taboo on stepfather-stepdaughter sexual relation. As this feeling of bonding is wanting in stepfathers, they

do not hesitate to use the child sexually. Finkelhor's research made a detailed finding on this subject revealed that girls having stepfathers might be abused by other men as well in various ways. Stepfathers may not be that much protective or concerned towards their stepdaughters and they may bring step relatives to the homes who do not hesitate to exploit these young girls. Those men, with whom the mothers were dating, might be sexually opportunistic men who covet the bodies of their daughters too.

While harmful effects of child sexual abuse itself is grave and quite distressing, a lot of critics continue to emphasize the fact that a dysfunctional family environment is more censurable for creating damages to the child's psyche. Family systems theory or functional theory proposes that incest begins because of the dysfunctional dynamics inside the family (Alexander 82) and that incest is a sign of the more encompassing pathology within the family.

While explaining family systems theory, Kadushin and Martin pointed out that father – daughter incest is indicative of a disturbed family stability and equilibrium and sometimes it occurs as a move to reestablish family ties which are already on wane. The incestuous family is likely to be a complicatedly entangled one; often it may be socially discriminated. The family in which there exists marital disharmony, an attempt is made to reinstate the harmonious condition by reallocating the roles of members in the family, often resulting in the sacrifice of female child on the altar of family solidity and peaceful existence. Girls or even mothers are fed with the idea that incest is preferable to family collapse. Unlike in the case of abuse by a stranger, the incestuous affair is kept secretive by different members of the family for

different interests. They even pointed out that even girls are reluctant to disclose and stop the incestuous affair as they do not want to lose the special status and powers bestowed on them by their fathers or stepfathers (298-300).

Family systems theory found that in families where father daughter incest exists, the relationship between the parents is over and over again discernible by disagreement as well as emotional and sexual abandonment by the mother (Cohen 155). Another study revealed that families with marital disharmony had a seven times greater threat of father –daughter incest. (Paveza 292). The theory also recommends that the husband’s lack of sexual contentment can be an underlying agent for the incest (Frude 222).

So, the role of parents in causing and aggravating the plight of sexual abuse victims is not negligible. There are many factors including parental absence, poor relationship with parents, parental fights, or the presence of stepfather. Researchers found out that women, who lived without their natural mothers or fathers at some time during their childhood, showed higher susceptibility to sexual abuse.

Statistics discloses that, there has been and continues to be considerable menace of father-daughter incest in nuclear family structures under certain conditions (Russell 118) and that father daughter incest leads to strong psychological consequences for the daughter (Herman and Hirschman 72). Different forms of abuse, especially previous history of sexual abuse or a disturbed home life can lead to a child being more vulnerable to being sexually abused. Some abusers target children who are ignored by their parents or children who do not have many friends as they are more likely to be amenable to the attentions of an adult (Elliot et al 579). The increasing

divorce rate and increase in the number of single mothers might have accelerated the decline of traditional family which caused threat to the children at home. Children of single parents are particularly defenseless as parents might not be able to preserve a steady atmosphere. Single mothers often had to depend on multiple care takers which increase the possibility of child abuse (Gomes-Schwartz et al. 19). A disrupted home life can make children predominantly defenseless to sexual abuse. Domestic violence can push children out of the home and make them disposed to people who seem kind and show them love and care. A general medical supposition is that those children who are denied consideration, fondness and love in more or less way, are easy victims to child sexual abuse. The children of divorced or remarried parents may experience anguish, insecurity and lack of self-confidence which make them extra needy and vulnerable even to such an extent that they find it difficult to resist stepfathers.

Furniss elaborates that dysfunctional family atmosphere, in which parents undergo emotio- sexual conflicts i.e. uncertainty and puzzlement between emotional needs and sexual needs, leads to father-daughter incest. What a child comes in search for in the adult is the fulfillment of her emotional needs, but the adult, in most cases, father or father figure, responds with sexual activities. It is found that children who responded to sexual abuse meekly mistaking sexual activity for emotional care may later show sexualized behavior in fact when they are in need of emotional care and attention (305). Poor parental relationships often lead children to more distress than those children who have good relationship with their parents. A child with poor parental relationship is more needy, therefore vulnerable, and less likely to ask for parental assistance when needed. A child who is in more need of attention and receives

less support from parents might be more susceptible to improper approaches than a child who is less needy and feels supported by parents. Emotional disturbances in children, and loneliness they had to endure made them vulnerable to abusive adults. Either the children might have been tempted by the closeness and admiration that the molesters show and which they lack at their own home or they might be enticed by the material rewards offered by the abusers.

Thus, numerous studies show that the families, in which fathers abuse the daughters, demonstrates high levels of overall family dysfunction, even more so than families where other types of abuse occur, either intra familial or extra familial. Families where father–daughter incest occur are very poor in community involvement and are socially secluded too. While approaching the problem of father- daughter incest, Herman and Hirschman found that in the families where mothers are afflicted due to alcoholism, despair or psychosis, chances are higher for the girls to fall victims to fathers (92). Child's poor relationship with either mother or both parents, resulted in their vulnerability to predator. Children who received little affection and attention from their mothers and kept distant relationship with their mothers were higher risk as they tended to seek consolation outside (Sourcebook 127).

Thus, almost all critics reach to consensus that those families, where parents do not keep healthy relationship between them, are likely to produce more sexual abuse victims. They argue that lack of mutual affection among parents is the most compelling forecaster for sexual abuse of children.

In a study of 15 victims of father- daughter incest, Judith Herman and Lisa Hirschman, report certain common features within families prior to the incidence of

incest. Major predisposing conditions include a separation between the mother and daughter, extreme paternal supremacy, the mother's inability to fulfill her traditional parental role and reassignment of some of the mother's major family accountability to the daughter. In incestuous families, oldest or only daughters are supposed to be more vulnerable and daughters are falsely burdened with notion that the preservation of the integrity of the family is their responsibility. In this situation, she may feel obliged to fulfill her mother's sexual role as well as other maternal duties (120).

Incest occurs in families characterized by a high degree of social isolation. These families, whether high class or low class, whether from cities or villages, shrink back from social interaction and are engrossed within themselves that sexual attachments which should have been grown outside the family, happened to be become strong within the family or among the family members. They hesitate to go for outside sources. Critics also pointed out that incest happens as a result of role confusion between family members. (Summit and Kryso, 238). Parents in these families typically have unhappy marriages, and sex between partners is distasteful or absent. Mothers, for their part, are either reluctant or incapable to accomplish parental functions (Browning and Boatman 70). Mothers may be ill, strictly under the rule of their own family or they might be uncomfortable with the responsibilities of motherhood, which results in estranged relationship with their daughters. Incest usually occurs in families where mothers are alcoholic, disheartened, debilitated and submissive and fail to safeguard their daughters. In such cases, in the absence of strong mother figures, the daughter assumes mother's duties and responsibilities and later sexual role too as an extension.

Some theoreticians have maintained that incest may occur in families where emotional detachment and abandonment fear persists. In such families, where family members are afraid that they will be neglected by others, sexuality may be the last resource to fend off the trauma (Henderson 35).

Family dysfunctional theory on child sexual abuse thrives on the idealistic view on the family that families love, supportive and protective and incestuous families are aberration from it. In every works chosen here, the family background of the victim is more or less detrimental for the healthy growth and development of the children.

Research on marital conflicts has proved that it leaves children in the family vulnerable to sexual exploitation as the children feel confused and insecure not knowing where to turn for protection. When a child feels isolated and unguarded, chances are more for the child to get knotted in a sexual relation with an adult, where it feels feeble and helpless (Weiss et al. 24) Taking into consideration the given social context, where marriage and family are the only retreat for women, especially if they do not feel a sense of belonging in their own family, they try to find an alternative for their abusive marriage in another relationship. The more powerless the woman, the possibilities are high that she will seek another lover as a way out of her abusive marriage, which may turn detrimental for her children.

In four works selected for the study, i.e. in *Bastard Out of Carolina*, *The Color Purple*, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* and *Lolita* girls are raped by their stepfathers and the vulnerable and precarious position of the girls in the family due to the presence of their stepfathers will be studied in detail. In *Bastard out of Carolina*,

Anney has already got two daughters in two different affairs and when Glen approaches her promising to look after her two daughters, Anney readily agrees for the marriage. Anney expects that Daddy Glen will keep his word. But Bone, her elder daughter, is physically, sexually and psychologically mistreated by Daddy Glen.

Bone's biological father is said to be a womanizer who had fathered a lot of illegitimate children and none from Anney's family have anything good to say on him.

As Bone says:

There weren't any pictures of my real daddy, and Mama wouldn't talk to me about him- no more than she would about the rest of the family. It was Granny who told me what a pissant he was; told me he lived up near Blackburn with a wife and six children who didn't even know I existed. (25)

At the same time, her step sister, Reese is much proud about her father Lyle and his family and Bone feels jealous of her. Daddy Glen beats Bone violently with belt very often while he spares Reese. When Anney objects to this, he lies to her that Bone provoked him by denying his paternal love. Anney too believes him making Bone desperate. Reese too advises her to be careful leaving Bone to wonder what her fault is, "I tried to be careful, but something had come apart. Something had gotten loose like the wild strands of Aunt Marvella's hair unraveling in the dust. There was no way I could be careful enough, no way to keep Daddy Glen from exploding into rage" (108).

Bone also feels alienated at her home especially after she is sexually used by Daddy Glen:

Reese put her fat little hands on his arm and said, “Daddy,” and the two of them lifted her up between them.

“Daddy,” I tried to say, but it sounded funny in my head. I remembered those moments in the hospital parking lot like a bad dream, hazy and shadowed. When Daddy Glen looked at me, I saw no sign that he ever thought about it at all. Maybe it had not happened. Maybe he really did love us. I wanted him to love us. I wanted to be able to love him. I wanted him to pick me up gently and tell Mama again how much he loved us all. I wanted to be locked with Reese in the safe circle of their arms (52).

Russell concluded that mother’s employment outside the home, amplified risk considerably in household with stepfathers. This can be substantiated by what Bone says in *Bastard Out of Carolina*:

He had one of the short routes, not much money to be made on it, and not enough work to make it full- time. He came home at odd hours, early and late. Mama started working later and later, for whatever money she could get, and I stayed out of the house as much as I could. If I went home when he was there and Mama wasn’t, he was always finding something I’d done, something I had to be told, something he just had to do because he loved me. And he did love me. He told me

so over and over again, holding my body tight to his, his hands shaking as they moved restlessly, endlessly, over my belly, ass, and thighs.

“You’re just like your mama,” he’d say, and press his stubbly cheek to mine.

I would stand rigid, ashamed but unable to pull away, afraid of making him angry, afraid of what he might tell Mama, and at the same time, afraid of hurting his feelings. “Daddy,” I would start to whisper, and he would whisper back, “Don’t you know how I love you?” And I would recoil. No, I did not know (108).

Bone knows that Daddy Glen doesn’t like her as Anney expects. And her mental agony is kept to herself. Bone longs for a daddy’s love and for the comfort a happy family may bestow on her:

The worst thing in the world was the way I felt when I wanted us to be like the families in the books in the library, when I just wanted Daady Glen to love me like the father in Robinson Crusoe... love would make me beautiful; a father’s love would purify my heart, turn my bitter soul sweet, and lighten my Cherokee eyes. If he loved me, if he only loved me. Why didn’t he love me? (209).

In *Lolita*, Humbert even confesses that though he was tired of the seductive ways of Mrs. Haze and finds the house terribly unattractive he decides to stay there in order to be near to Lolita, with whom he gets infatuated in the first view itself. He

even accepts the marriage proposal of Mrs. Haze in order to be near to Lolita and to exploit the opportunity and advantages, his new position of stepfather will bestow on him:

Suddenly, gentlemen of the jury, I felt a Dostoevskian grin dawning (through the very grimace that twisted my lips) like a distant and terrible sun. I imagined (under conditions of new and perfect visibility) all the casual caresses her mother's husband would be able to lavish on his Lolita. I would hold her against me three times a day, every day. All my troubles would be expelled, I would be a healthy man. "To hold thee lightly on a gentle knee and print on thy soft cheek a parent's kiss..." Well- read Humbert! (78)

He continues to comment that,

So Humbert the Cubus schemed and dreamed- and the red sun of desire and decision (the two things that create a live world) rose higher and higher, Then, figuratively speaking, I shattered the glass, and boldly imagined (for I was drunk on those visions by then and underrated the gentleness of my nature) how eventually I might blackmail- no, that is too strong a word- mauve mail big Haze into letting me consort with little Haze by gently threatening the poor doting Big Dove with desertion if tried to bar me from playing with my legal step-daughter (79).

The scheming nature of Humbert is seen throughout the novel and it is again and again reinforced that the pedophile in Humbert is interested only in Lolita and the marriage arrangement he makes with her mother is solely to possess Lolita. Family values, conjugal pleasures, having a child of his own etc. never become his concern yet he is ready to adjust with everything provided that it will give him a chance to be with his Lolita:

And although I felt no special urge to supply the Humbert line with a replica of Harold's production (Lolita, with an incestuous thrill, I had grown to regard as my child), it occurred to me that a prolonged confinement, with a nice Caesarean operation and other complications in a safe maternity ward sometime next spring, would give me a chance to be alone with my Lolita for weeks, perhaps-and gorge the limp nymphet with sleeping pills (90).

To break Charlotte's will, I would have to break her heart. If I broke her heart, her image of me would break too. If I said: "Either I have my way with Lolita, and you help me to keep the matter quiet, or we part at once," she would have turned as pale as a woman of clouded glass and slowly replied: All right, whatever you add or retract, this is the end." And the end it would be (94).

Lolita misses a protective father and caring mother and even Humbert recognizes that. It is only through his eyes that readers get to know the emotions of Lolita who has otherwise become a symbol of seductive young girls in the popular literature with Humbert's famous description of her, "Lolita, light of my life, fire of

my loins. My sin, my soul. Lo-lee-ta.” (7). Lolita gets upset and is on the verge of tears when she sees her friend’s loving moments with her father:

While fat Avis sidled up to her Papa, Lolita gently beamed at a fruit knife that she fingered on the edge of the table, whereon she leaned, many miles away from me. Suddenly, as Avis clung to her father’s neck and ear while, with a casual arm, the man enveloped his lumpy and large offspring, I saw Lolita’s smile lose all its light and become a frozen little shadow of itself, and the fruit knife slipped off the table and struck her with its silver handle a freak blow on the ankle which made her gasp, and crouch head forward, and then, jumping on one leg, her face awful with the preparatory grimace which children hold till the tears gush, she was gone- to be followed at once and consoled in the kitchen by Avis who had such a wonderful fat pink dad and a small chubby brother, and a brand- new baby sister, and a home, and two grinning dogs, and Lolita had nothing (326).

Humbert even confesses that:

I may also have relied too much on the abnormally chill relations between Charlotte and her daughter. But the awful point of the whole argument is this. It had become gradually clear to my conventional Lolita during our singular and bestial cohabitation that even the most miserable of family lives was better than the parody of incest, which, in the long run, was the best I could offer the waif (327).

The Color Purple begins with the threat from a stepfather: “You better not never tell nobody but God. It ‘d kill your mammy” (3). Celie writes that he was compelling her mother to have sex immediately after the delivery and she desists saying she is weak. And when she goes to her sister leaving her other children with Celie, Celie’s stepfather rapes her,

He never had a kine word to say to me. Just say You gonna do what your mammy wouldn’t. First, he put his thing up gainst my hip and sort of wiggle it around. Then he grab hold my titties. Then he push his thing inside my pussy. When that hurt, I cry. he start to choke me, saying You better shut up and git used to it.

But I don’t never git used to it. And now I feels sick every time I be the one to cook. My mama she fuss at me an look at me. She happy, cause he good to her now. But too sick to last long (3).

Celie’s mother dies soon and her stepfather brings a young girl as his wife. Even then he does not leave Celie and he eyes her sister Nettie. To save Nettie, Celie willingly offers herself to him whenever he wants.

In *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, when Mr. Freeman, Maya’s stepfather masturbates against her and she knows it is something bad which should be hidden from others, yet she feels some intimacy to him as if he were her real father:

Finally, he was quiet, and then came the nice part. He held me so softly that I wished he wouldn’t ever let me go. I felt at home. From the way he was holding me I knew he’d never let me go or let anything bad

ever happen to me. This was probably my real father and we had found each other at last (79).

Maya misses paternal touch in her life and the warmth a father can provide her, as what she has got to think of her own father is, “our father left St. Louis a few days later for California, and I was neither glad nor sorry. He was a stranger, and if he chose to leave us with a stranger, it was all of one piece” (65) and it is search for paternal love which prompts her to go to him again:

I began to feel lonely for Mr. Freeman and the encasement in his big arms. Before, my world had been Bailey, food, Momma, the Store, reading books and Uncle Willie. Now, for the first time, it included physical contact.

I began to wait for Mr. Freeman to come in from the yards, but when he did, he never noticed me, although I put a lot of feeling into ‘Good evening, Mr. Freeman.’

One evening, when I couldn’t concentrate on anything, I went over to him and sat quickly on his lap. He had been waiting for Mother again. Bailey was listening to *The Shadow* and didn’t miss me. At first Mr. Freeman sat still, not holding me or anything, then I felt a soft lump under my thigh begin to move. It twitched against me and started to harden. Then he pulled me to his chest. He smelled of coal dust and grease and he was so close I buried my face in his shirt and listened to his heart, it was beating just for me. Only I could hear the thud,

only I could feel the jumping on my face. He said, 'Sit still, stop squirming.' But all the time, he pushed me around on his lap, then suddenly he stood up and I slipped down to the floor. He ran to the bathroom.

For months he stopped speaking to me again. I was hurt and for time felt lonelier than ever. But then I forgot about him, and even the memory of his holding me precious melted into the general darkness just beyond the great blinkers of childhood. (81)

Maya Angelou comes from a dysfunctional family and the abandoned feeling she and her brother felt as children comes to the fore now and then in her writings. Her autobiography begins with the words,

When I was three and Bailey four, we had arrived in the musty little town, wearing tags on our wrists which instructed- 'To Whom It May Concern'- that we were Marguerite and Bailey Johnson Jr., from Long Beach, California, en route to Stamps, Arkansas, c/o Mrs. Annie Henderson.

Our parents had decided to put an end to their calamitous marriage, and Father shipped us home to his mother. A porter had been charged with our welfare- he got off the train the next day in Arizona-and our tickets were pinned to my brother's inside coat pocket. (7)

Both of them spend their childhood longing for the love of parents, crying in their loneliness, when what they get from their parents are just gifts:

Frost was still on the bench but I sat down and cried. I looked up and Bailey was coming from the outhouse, wiping his eyes. He had been crying too. I didn't know if he had also told himself they were dead and had been rudely awakened to the truth or whether he was just feeling lonely. The gifts opened the door to questions that neither of us wanted to ask. Why did they send us away? And what did we do so wrong? So Wrong? Why, at three and four, did we have tags put on our arms to be sent by train alone from Long Beach, California, to Stamps, Arkansas, with only the porter to look after us? Besides, he got off in Arizona (57).

Their childhood is spent in constant anxiety and searching for the reasons of their cruel abandonment by their parents and ascribing self-blame to them, "Later Bailey and I talked. He said if the things really did come from Mother maybe it meant that she was getting ready to come and get us. Maybe she had just been angry at something we had done, but was forgiving us and would send for us soon." (58) And once they see their mother, they get awe struck by her beauty that they forget "the loneliness and the nights when we had cried together because we were 'unwanted children.'" (65)

In *The Bluest Eye*, Pecola's family condition too is so pathetic. The fight between Cholly and Pauline is so frequent that after one such fight, Cholly sets fire to his house, thus putting his family outdoors. He lives somewhere with animals, while Pauline lives with the family whom she is working for. Pecola's brother lives with

some other family as Pecola joins Claudia's family. Though she lives there for weeks neither Cholly nor Pauline enquires after her.

They live socially isolated thinking themselves inferior because of their blackness. Cholly is a habitual alcoholic, irresponsible husband always fighting with his wife. In such fighting episodes Sammy used to run away from home. But "Pecola, on the other hand, restricted by youth and sex, experimented with methods of endurance. Though the methods varied, the pain was as consistent as it was deep. She struggled between an overwhelming desire that one would kill the other, and a profound wish that she herself could die" (32)

Pecola inherits the inferiority feeling on her blackness from her mother, and believes every problem around her originates from her blackness. She feels if she were beautiful like the white girls and if she had blue eyes like them, her life would have been better, "if she looked different, beautiful, maybe Cholly would be different, and Mrs. Breedlove too. Maybe they'd say, "Why, look at at pretty-eyed Pecola. We mustn't do bad things in front of those pretty eyes" (34).

Cholly too has got a disharmonious family background. Critics have opined that Cholly's rape is the result of his depressing past and his consequent hatred of women and what he did to his daughter was the only mode of expression of love. The harrowing experiences from the childhood of Cholly played a significant role in shaping his adult personality. Cholly's father left the town after impregnating Cholly's mother. Cholly's mother also deserted Cholly in a trash pile immediately after the birth. Cholly was brought up by his elderly Aunt Jimmy, whom he could not count as a real parent. Cholly used to bother Aunt Jimmy asking her about his parents that Aunt

Jimmy explicitly tells Cholly, “He wasn’t nowhere around when you was born. Your mama didn’t name you nothing. The nine days wasn’t up before she throwed you on the junk heap. When I got you, I named you myself on the ninth day” (104)

With this reply Cholly stopped asking about her parents.

Cholly’s first sexual experience turns out to be catastrophic for him. While making sex with a girl called Darlene, he is interrupted by two white men who urge him to continue the sex in their presence till he climaxes. But instead of feeling vengeful towards the men, he feels hatred towards Darlene. He “looked at Darlene. He hated her. He almost wished he could do it— hard, long, and painfully, he hated her so much” (117). His anger towards the girl persists even after they were left alone and he wants to throttle her. This bitter incident makes Cholly feel indirectly that not only the lust but anger too can be ventilated through sexual act. He views female body only with disgust.

Just before Cholly rapes his daughter, he has returned home drunk and sees her washing dishes. His first reaction to her is “revulsion,” which is “a reaction to her young, helpless, hopeless presence” (117). He thinks that “if he looked her in the face, he would see those haunted, loving eyes. The hauntedness would irritate him; the love would move him to fury. How dare she love him?” (117). On seeing Pecola, Cholly might be getting reminded of the love that was absent in his relation with his own father. He is so upset over his past that hinders the free mingling with his children:

Having no idea of how to raise a children, and having never watched any parent raise himself, he could not even comprehend what such a

relationship should be...Had he not been alone in the world since he was thirteen, knowing a dying woman who felt responsible for him, but whose age, sex, and interests were so remote from his own, he might have felt a stable connection between himself and the children” (126).

Cholly realizes that he is a failure in parenting which instills in him hatred towards himself and Pecola. Cholly at first feels loathing and repugnance towards his daughter, but this soon is softened into feelings of tenderness. Pecola’s actions remind Cholly of the first time he saw Pauline. This action causes Cholly a different emotion, which ends up in his rape of her.

Cholly and Pauline are victims of their own dissatisfactions and failures in their life that they fail to care their children. Both her parents betray Pecola, her father by raping her and her mother by abandoning her emotionally.

In *Push*, the domestic situation of Precious is not at all hopeful as her father, Carl is not a responsible one, who looks after his family. As her mother later reveals, he has got another wife and children. He comes to Precious and her mother rarely. He runs away when he comes to know that Precious is pregnant first time. Then he returns after years and makes her pregnant again. Later it is heard that he died of AIDS. Her mother too, as already discussed, is not a considerate one.

In *Thirty Days in September*, Mala’s father deserts them and marries another woman. Mala’s mother is a poor home maker, so she has to depend on her brother,

who had abused her and her daughter. She is caught up in her own trauma that she fails to protect Mala which disrupts the mother-daughter relationship.

Though Virginia was born in an upper class and well-educated family, her familial background is not at all happy and congenial for the girls:

Virginia Stephen was raised in a household in which incest, sexual violence, and abusive behavior were a common, rather than a singular or rare occurrence, a family in which there is evidence that virtually all were involved in either incest or violence or both, a family in which each parent had lived through childhood trauma (De Salvo 1).

Like many Victorian families of the time, Stephen household was not free from patriarchal violence, which was manifested in various forms like harrying, physical violence, threatening, child sexual abuse and even rape.

Virtually every male member of the Stephen household was engaged in this behavior; without exception, all of the women within the family were the victims of abuse or sexual violence- Virginia herself, her sister Vanessa, her half-sisters Laura and Stella, her mother Julia. But their stories were hidden, and rationalized, revised, and recast, both in the versions which the family told themselves and each other, and in the versions of their lives that were written after their deaths (2).

The sexual abuse Virginia and her sister suffered at the hands of their half brothers, George Duckworth and Gerald Duckworth were buried within the family

walls. The Victorian family neglected their girls and confined in them in the roles of angels in the house, completely negating their individuality. Virginia's sisters, Laura, Stella and Vanessa, none of them were free from the clutches of patriarchy. The early death of her mother, insanity and death of her two sisters, abuse by brothers, authoritative nature of her father- all scheme to leave her life miserable.

In *The God of Small Things*, Ammu and her twins in her parental home are already considered unwanted in their ancestral home for the humiliating marital situation of Ammu. As Baby Kochamma, Ammu's aunt, points out a married daughter has no position in her parent's home and conveys her bitterness always. Moreover, Ammu is a divorcee from inter community love marriage, which is a great sin according to their family values. Even Kochu Maria, the servant in the Ayemenem house, warns Estha that they do not have any rights in the family. The children never enjoy paternal love too. The only memory they have of their father is "being pushed around a room once, from Ammu to Baba and from Baba to Ammu like billiard balls" (84). As their grandmother remarks "what her grandchildren suffered from was far worse than inbreeding. She meant having parents who were divorced" (61). Neglected by all, especially after the arrival of SophieMol, their cousin from England, they get attached to Velutha, a lower-class worker who makes toys for them and plays with them. Ammu too gets attracted to Velutha. They begin to meet at night which is found out by Velutha's father. Ammu is locked in the house while Velutha is killed in police custody. After that Ammu is forced to leave her home. Estha is separated from his twin sister and sent back to his father and stepmother. Thus, Ammu's liaison with

Velutha, the untouchable becomes the final nail in the coffin of the pleasures of Estha and Rahel:

once he was inside her, fear was derailed and biology took over. The cost of living climbed to unaffordable heights; though later, Baby Kochamma would say it was a Small Price to Pay

Was it?

Two lives. Two children's childhoods.

And a history lesson for future offenders (336).

In the backdrop of works selected for study, it can be seen that, domestic situation was despondent and wretched in every case. It does not mean that incestuous abuse or external sexual abuse happen only in dysfunctional families. But, the disharmonious situation within the family due to marital discord, the history of past abuse, domestic violence, feeble nature of mother and failure of mother, presence of stepfather, or psychologically unhealthy father etc somehow lead to the abuse of children and it affects to the large extent the recovery process of children. Dissonance between family members means the destruction of the happiness and enjoyment of children. Domestic violence researchers claim that although the child may not be the direct victim, disclosure to uncontainable violence may have negative psychological outcomes. Pecola's dysfunctional family causes the most harm to her because of the everyday violence and because it engenders a series of other negative events. Pecola witnesses but has no control over these disturbing events. Astounded and shocked by these everyday scenes Pecola tries finding alternative ways to escape this misery. She experiments with methods of endurance trying to escape her pain, sometimes even

wishing her parents would kill each other. Mrs. Breedlove's neglect of Pecola comes as a consequence of this family dysfunction and leads to her failure to prepare Pecola for life's hardships. Psychologists claim that the abused mothers, struggling with the distress of their own lives, may be unable to meet their children's emotional needs. Not only does Pauline fail to prepare Pecola for life but she also neglects her child after Cholly's terrible act. This happens with Shanta also. She fails to protect Mala.

The suffering ensuing from the sexual torture increases when the children lack emotional support from their own family. Children find no one who might assure them that they are not the sinners but they are just the victims of someone else's sin. Children miss an understanding being in aggressive parents within the home or the divorced parents living separately. Children are mainly vulnerable to social forces. Children who are exposed to an environment which is encouraging and supportive are more likely to develop optimistic and confident outlook towards themselves and the society than are children placed in an environment in which reverse is the case. Malevolent influence wields irretrievable effect on them and causes behavioral problems.

When the family fails in providing appropriate and consistent socialization experiences, the child seems to be particularly vulnerable to the development of conduct and delinquent disorders. Typically, the children with persistent disorders come from families where there is discord and quarrelling, where affection is lacking, where discipline is inconsistent, ineffective and either extremely severe or lax (Gale and Chapman 40).

Children never forget their childhood never forget what happened to them, good or bad, for all their lives

-Virginia Woolf, Light House

Chapter 5

An Epilogue to the Open and Unending Palimpsest of Trauma

For those who aspire to an image of free womanhood, incest is as destructive to women as genital mutilation or the binding of feet.

-Herman and Hirschman

What happens to the abused children later in their life? Even if their case is not brought to the public, how they overcome the traumatic memory? How far does it affect their life and psychological well-being? The thesis tries to study changes in the physiological, psychological and sociological domain of the children in the post abuse period.

It has been found that the lives of children are affected in one way or other and the memories haunt them rest of their lives, the gravity of which is dependent on the support, the children receive later. Nightmares, phobias, hyper vigilance, clinging and dependent behavior and somatic complaints are repeatedly reported from sexually abused children. In some cases, it continues to influence their adult life too. Their impaired feeling is reflected in the learning problems and running away, employment difficulties, inability to cope with the environments etc. Some sexual abuse victims, especially male victims, show harsh, authoritative and frightening nature to hide their insecure and powerless feeling and from this stem their belligerent and aberrant nature. They believe that their own abusers are authoritative and overriding and by reenacting the abuse they have endured; they too can regain the power and supremacy.

Every person whether he or she is the adult or the child should have the autonomy over his or her body. But when one is sexually abused, he feels that his own terrain and body spaces are continuously overran by an outsider against his wishes and he conceives himself as a powerless being. This feeling is aggravated when the child is repeatedly maneuvered, manipulated and sometimes forced to the abuse by the offender. The child's sense of helplessness and weakness is exacerbated when his repeated attempts to thwart the movements of the abuser are aborted. The child is left with a feeling of disempowered as he feels his spirit; wishes and sense of worthiness and efficiency are flouted according to someone else's fancies. The child recognizes that his dependent position has ensnared him and even the other responsible adults are not considerate to his feelings, and this painful realization leads to his depression and vulnerability. The child suffers from severe disillusionment and bitterness and he feels a passionate desire to recuperate the lost confidence and protection. He shows a tendency to develop a blighted opinion on the loyalty of others and he lives in a frantic search for abiding relationship. Studies conducted on the subject of female incest victims, show that these girls prove themselves susceptible to more than one relationship, in which they are physically, psychologically and sexually abused. They develop the dependent nature to such an extent that they fail to believe even when their partners subject their children to sexual abuse. Diana Russell writes that in the case of adult women, they might have experienced trust in intimate relationships, and their sexual perceptions might have already been formed. But in the case of children, their capacity to trust people can be destroyed. Sexual abuse experience also adversely affects their notions of sex. Children may not appear that much upset or hurt at the time of sexual abuse; especially in the cases of intrafamilial abuse either because they

do not understand what is happening to them or because they consider it as an expression of love unless force is perpetrated on them. The effects may only reveal themselves years or even decades later (157).

As, an author and incest survivor, Sylvia Fraser remembers her experience in her work, *My Father's House: A Memoir of Incest and of Healing* (1987):

Did I truly wish to open the Pandora's box under my father's bed? How would I feel to discover that the prize, after four decades of tracing clues and solving riddles, was the knowledge that my father had sexually abused me? Could I reconcile myself without bitterness to the amount of my life's energy that had gone into the cover-up of a crime? ...I believe many unexpected deaths occur when a person finishes one phase of life and must become a different sort of person in order to continue. The phoenix goes down into the fire with the best intention of rising, then falters on the upswing. At the point of transition, I came close to dying along with my other self (211-12).

Children are often blamed for their silence, or accused of willing participation with the abusers. Rush states that:

Any attempt on the part of the child or her family to expose the violator also exposes her own alleged innate sexual motives and shames her more than the offender; concealment is the only recourse. The dilemma of the sexual abuse of children has provided a system of foolproof

emotional blackmail: if the victim incriminates the abuser, she incriminates herself (75)

Sandra Butler observes,

These children submerge their true feelings, distrust their perceptions and deny their own reality. They tell no one about the relationship and behave as though nothing is happening. The tacit consent they appear to give by keeping silent does not preclude feelings of deep uncertainty and confusion. They are fearful of discovery and whatever might be the result of others 'knowing' (30).

As Richard Farson points out in his work, *Birthrights*, children should have the chance or option to refuse the perpetrator. The freedom not to succumb to the sexual interests of others is as important as any other right or aspect of freedom. But our children are brought up in such a way that they are afraid of disobeying adults. As Celie in *The Color Purple* is forced to believe that as Bible tells to honor father and mother, she should not resist her pa.

Summit too explains that the children's responses to sexual abuse are usually marked by concealment, vulnerability, entrapment, deferred confession and withdrawal. Children resort to silence and secrecy as they are threatened by the abuser on whom the children are dependent. When the offender is especially from family or from immediate circle, children fear that once the abuse is revealed, they might be punished, or might be removed from the home and the family will break up if the abuser go to jail. This burden of secret harms and hinders the natural and healthy

development of the children. Children are taught to show obedience and respect to adults and children's disadvantaged position in the power structure compel them to cope with the abuse silently. This helplessness and suppressed emotions come out in another form, that is self-accusation and it results in the delayed disclosure of the abuse. The child sexual abuse accommodation syndrome, as suggested by Summit has been raised by a number of researchers too to explain the delay in children's disclosures following abuse and sometimes the withdrawal of revealing. The reality is that the child is forced to keep the sexual abuse a secret as he/ she feels trapped by the abuser and thus feeling helpless. These feelings of vulnerability and the child's fear that no one will believe the revelation of abuse, lead to accommodative behavior. Even if the child does disclose, failure of family and professionals to protect and support the child adequately, may augment the child's suffering and may lead to withdrawal of the confession (178).

As Armstrong puts it people restrained themselves from openly discussing the topic because of the general tendency to keep silence on sexual matters. The large number of people who have had such experiences in their early life kept them secret even from their intimate confidants (*Rocking the Cradle* 45).

As it is in the case of rape, child sexual abuse is also marked by the patterns of aggression and brutality existing in the patriarchal power structure; it also emphasizes the powerful/ powerless binary visible in the adult- child relation. Usually men are considered to be the abusers and girls are deemed as the victims. But it is also established that, though considered comparatively very few, women too abuse children and boys are also victimized at home and outside, though reporting might be

less. So along with the patriarchal structure with its imbibed power notions, the power vested in the independent adult and the power missing in the dependent child accounts for the helpless situation children face in any abusive relation. In works selected for study, this power construction is evident, as none of the children enjoy, nor they seduce the adults as it was alleged earlier. All of the victims suffer despair and desolation at the time of abuse, immediately after the abuse and later in their life. Feminist reading considers rape and child sexual abuse as the product of sexually starving, deviant, and power blind patriarchal society. Though present study too agrees with the domination of patriarchy and its erroneously captured rights over female bodies, pointing out the case of Precious and her mother, and considering the fact that boys too are sexually exploited, the power concept regulating both male-female relationship and adult-child relationship are given emphasis. Here in this study, the novel *The Kite Runner* shows an instance of abuse with peer, but this episode rather comes as a revenge on the powerless child by the powerful peer, the power basis being the caste and class. Hassan is a powerless Hazara, a servant boy and his perpetrator is Assef, a vindictive Pashtun boy. Assef forces himself upon this Hazara boy as a punishment for not giving him the kite, that originally belonged to Amir, Hassan's friend and son of his father's master. Assef loathes Hazaras so he wants to teach Hassan a lesson:

“It's just a Hazara,” Assef said. But Kamal kept looking away.

“fine,” Assef snapped. “All I want you weaklings to do is hold him down. Can you manage that?”

Wali and Kamal nodded. They looked relieved.

Assef knelt behind Hassan, put his hands on Hassan's hips and lifted his bare buttocks. He kept one hand on Hassan's back and undid his own belt buckle with his free hand. He unzipped his jeans. Dropped his underwear. He positioned himself behind Hassan. Hassan didn't struggle. Didn't even whimper. He moved his head slightly and I caught a glimpse of his face. Saw the resignation in it. It was a look I had seen before. It was the look of the lamb (Hosseini 66).

But this argument of child sexual abuse as a site of power does not exonerate patriarchy in any way. Patriarchy and the sexual rights granted to men, or men believe society has granted to them, play a pivotal role in what the children suffer. Analysts on incest narratives might have so many reasons to point out for the abuse like domestic disharmony, marital conflict, sexual non-cooperation of mother, her deliberate role exchange with her daughter etc. it is true that as pointed out in chapter 4, such factors existed in the background of those children who were abused. But that does not mean that in every dysfunctional family child abuse might happen and in a dysfunctional family, mothers too suffer the impairment of disharmony, but that do not give them any kind of license to do whatever they want. 'Even if a Daughter does experience her Mother as rejecting, neither she nor the Mother are asking for the Father to rape her' (Ward 174).

As Susan Brownmiller states in *Against Our Will*,

The unholy silence that shrouds the inter-family sexual abuse of children and prevents a realistic appraisal of its true incidence and meaning is rooted in the same patriarchal philosophy of sexual private

property that shaped and determined historic male attitudes toward rape. For if a woman was a man's corporal property, then children were and are a wholly owned subsidiary" (281).

So, it is the power granted by male dominated society which prompts the perpetrators to take control of the women under their safety and to silence them. Moreover, the perpetrators do not deserve any kind of sympathy too because it is their uncontrollable lust that raped and robbed the entire childhood and to some extent the adulthood of the victims. Though in *The Bluest Eye* and *Bastard out of Carolina*, Toni Morrison and Dorothy Allison try to give a sympathetic touch to characters of Cholly and Glen respectively by throwing light to their suppressed and humiliated background, it does not become sufficient reason for what they do to their daughters. Glen rapes Bone last time as revenge to her for he takes her as an obstacle to his happy life with Anne and Bone does not agree to go and live with them again.

One of the important limitations or drawbacks of the thesis might be the lack of the study on the cultural background of the victims. I have not selected works from a particular cultural setting as I wanted to show that incest happens everywhere, with every class, caste and creed, in every nation and every society. There might be difference in the resilient capacity of children according to the backup they receive in a society and the way in which the society views the child sexual abuse. The victim in a society where silence over the abuse is shattered may show higher capacity to overcome the trauma. But the truth is that victims suffer everywhere and there is no discrimination among them at least in the way they are chosen for the fulfillment of lust by the adults. As Precious realizes in *Push*:

Listen to girl rape by brother, listen to old woman rape by her father; don't remember till he die when she is 65 years old. Girls, old women, white women, lotta white women. Girl's younger sister murdered by the *cult*? Jewish girl, we had money on Long Island (like Westchester), my father was a prominent child psychiatrist. It started when I was about nine years old...can this be done happen to so many people? I know I am not lying! But is they? I thought cult was in movie. What kinda world this babies raped. A father break a girl's arm. Sweet talk you suck his dick. All kinda women here. Princess girls, some fat girls, old women. One thing we got in common, no *the* thing, is we was rape (130).

Another omission is the focus on the psychological abuse arising from racial segregation of children at the expense of the trauma arising from sexual abuse experiences. It was a deliberate oversight to avoid the shift of focus and diversion from the subject.

Florence Rush remarked once that "victims were as shocked and disturbed by the lack of sympathy and acknowledgement of the problem as by the incidents of sexual abuse itself." (qtd. in Clancy 173). The reaction of the primary caregivers, immediate family and people around, matters more, once the sexual abuse is revealed. Children get more upset by the immediate negative response of the caregivers. The negative reactions of mother and family will produce more psychological harm than the severity of sexual abuse itself. As Herman and Hirschman write, "the horror of incest is not in the sexual act, but in the exploitation of children and the corruption of

parental love” (4). The resilience capacity of the children is dependent upon the familial and social support they receive. The mind to believe the children, the caring, empathy and concern the caregivers extend determine the pace of the recovery of the children. Emotional and social support offered by mothers derives to be the most influential factor as it is shown by the present thesis itself. “Support from a non-abusing mother is one of if not the most significant factor(s) in uncoupling abuse from both short-term and long-term effects,” says Everson et al. (199). The role ascribed by society to mothers as the caregivers and nurturers make the children long for the mother’s support. This yearning for mother’s love and support are shown by almost all child victims in our study, Pecola is bothered by the response of her mother, Pauline who neglected her after the brutal rape of Pecola by Cholly. Though Precious is abused by her mother too, she also longs for mother’s care occasionally. Bone wails for the care of her mother’s love and wants her mother to leave her stepfather. Maya is bothered about the response of her mother on being raped by her stepfather. Lolita longs for her mother and weeps for her. The terrible reactions are shown by Mala on her mother’s neglect of her complaints. Estha and Sohrab are concerned about the reaction of mother and family. It shows if emotional support is not provided for children immediately after the abuse, the child may suffer mental breakdown and it will affect his self-esteem.

Jeffrey Alexander points out that for a strong and vigorous personal development, a sense of protection, order, affection and bond are needed. By missing any of these, the individual stoops to distress, which may cause intense trauma depending on the duration of the abuse (8). Research studies have shown that child

sexual experiences may intervene in human growth and development in different ways and the methods of survival too are varied. As Wright et al. points out, some victims of child sexual abuse are able to overcome the consequences and they show resiliency and posttraumatic growth, provided that circumstances are favorable (598). As Miller writes that an unacknowledged trauma is like a wound that never heals over and may start to bleed again at any time. In a supportive environment the wound can become visible and finally heal completely (182).

As Herman writes,

The core experiences of psychological trauma are disempowerment and disconnection from others. Recovery, therefore, is based upon the empowerment of the survivor and the creation of new connections. Recovery can take place only within the context of relationships; it cannot occur in isolation. In her renewed connections with other people, the survivor re-creates the psychological faculties that were damaged or deformed by the traumatic experience. These faculties include the basic capacities for trust, autonomy, initiative, competence, identity, and intimacy. Just as these capabilities are originally formed in relationships with other people, they must be reformed in such relationships (133).

Herman provides a theoretical frame work for the recovery process of the abuse victim which is extended in three stages- safety, remembrance and mourning and last one is reconnection. In a case of successful recovery, there will occur three slow yet steady shifts- from unstable dangerous situation to dependable safety

environment, from dissociated trauma to recognized and retrieved memory and from stigmatized social isolation and alienation to repaired and reinstated social connection.

Trauma arising from abuse steals the victim's feeling of self-control and power and the recovering process of any kind need to focus on the reestablishment of the victim's safety and security. Once the sense of safety is achieved, victim may be able to go to the therapeutic process.

The second facet of healing and revival comes with the victim's readiness to tell the story of traumatic event. This telling of story transforms the traumatic memory to a part of victim's life story. Once, the survivor gets the courage to speak the unspeakable either to the therapist or to the intimate friends or relatives, the process of recovery starts. When the abused child gets the back up to view the traumatic incident, not as his fault, but as a crime perpetrated on him and when he realizes that he is not the sinner, but the sin is done to him, he gets adjusted to a mental state to approach trauma as a mere illness which needs to be cured. As Freud writes:

[The patient] must find the courage to direct his attention to the phenomena of his illness. His illness must no longer seem to him contemptible, but must become an enemy worthy of his mettle, a piece of his personality, which has solid ground for its existence, and out of which things of value for his future life have to be derived. The way is thus paved...for a reconciliation with the repressed material which is coming to expression in his symptoms, while at the same time place is found for a certain tolerance for the state of being ill (qtd. in Herman 175-176).

As Herman notes:

...the patient must reconstruct not only what happened but also what she felt. The description of emotional states must be as painstakingly detailed as the description of facts. As the patient explores her feelings, she may become either agitated or withdrawn. She is not simply describing what she felt in the past but is reliving those feelings in the present. The therapist must help the patient move back and forth in time, from her protected anchorage in the present to immersion in the past, so that she can simultaneously reexperience the feelings in all their intensity while holding on to the sense of safe connection that was destroyed in the traumatic moment (178).

The telling process may lead to the mourning of loss and also to revenge fantasies, but the repeated telling of abusive experience takes the reader to a state in which the intensity and pain of the abuse is not felt as it was before. It becomes victim's one of many experiences in life, one of many memories which in course of time fades. It does not mean that victims will forget everything in a day but it will cease to be the decisive factor in her life.

The important and final stage of recovery is that of reconnection i.e. developing new self and new relationships where defenselessness and segregation of the early days give place to empowerment and reconnection:

Survivors whose personality has been shaped in the traumatic environment often feel at this stage of recovery as though they are

refugees entering a new country. For political exiles, this may be literally true; but for many others, such as battered women or survivors of childhood abuse, the psychological experience can only be compared to immigration. They must build a new life within a radically different culture from the one they have left behind. Emerging from an environment of total control, they feel simultaneously the wonder and uncertainty of freedom. They speak of losing and regaining the world (197).

Victims often resort to silence over abuse to protect the honor of family. But once the recovery process starts, they break the silence, thus delivering themselves of the unbearable burden they so far carried. At this stage they handover the weight of shame, guilt and responsibility from their shoulders to the perpetrators' shoulder.

Applying Herman's method of trauma reading to Pecola in *The Bluest Eye*, shows why she fails to survive and falls into destruction. The first survival means as postulated by Herman i.e. safety itself is missing in Pecola's case. She does not feel safe at home because she is physically raped by her father and emotionally raped by her mother. The second stage of remembrance and mourning too is missing for her as even her mother is not ready to speak to her. Pecola has only got the imaginary self she has created to share her feelings. The third stage of reconnection with the society is also not available for Pecola as she is rejected by her family, friends, classmates and community.

Same stages can be applied to other main characters in the study too. Along with Pecola another character who falters in life is Estha in *The God of Small Things*.

Estha's experience with Orange drink Lemon drink man makes him anxious and panic and he fails to share the same with his mother in the fear that she will get angry with him. He is also afraid that as the man has taken his address, he may visit Estha there. This makes Estha search for an alternative stay at History house. He does not feel safe there and he does not get an option to tell this secret to anyone. Shortly after this incident Sophie Mol, his cousin from England dies and Velutha is brutally killed at police station against whom he is forced to give false testimony. This doubled trauma along with his separation from his twin sister and mother disconnects him from his familiar circumstances which gradually leads to his silence and detachment to society. He loses all smartness, stops education and leads a servant like life at his home.

Taking the case of Precious in *Push*, though her parents were cruel and abusive to her, Precious's recovery happens as a result of the alternative school program, Higher Education Alternative/Each One Teach One and through the influence of her main mother-surrogate, Ms. Rain who is also her teacher, and the community of women who help Precious, her class room friends, and the various support groups that help her face her life realities with self-respect and support: Incest Survivors' Group, HIV/AIDS Support Group, and a supportive housemother at her group home. Though traditional institutions and family system connive against her, Precious is able to face bravely the pathetic state of an HIV patient and the sad predicament of giving birth to two babies conceived in an incestuous relationship with her father and to become an independent, and a successful young mother. Precious recognizes that her abusive experience at home and lack of mother care does not render her incapable to love and to mother her own children. With the support of a surrogate-mother, Precious is able

to provide her own mother love not only for her children, but also for herself and for the surrounding new home and community of women. But for the timely interference of supporting group, Precious would have remained ignorant and completely reliant on her mother and the welfare system.

Her recovery stages can be evaluated like this. Precious recovery process starts once she feels safe from her mother and abusive environment including her home and school. She joins a new school, Higher Education Alternative/Each One Teach One, according to the instruction of Ms. Rain she starts writing diary, talks about her feelings to Ms. Rain and friends at new school and shares her story in incest survivor's group as seen in the scene,

Girl say, "Thank you for letting me share." She say, "This is a Tuesday night beginner's meeting. To share raise your hand." I raise my hand. My hand is going up through the smell of Mama, my hand is pushing Daddy's dick out my face.

"I was rape by my father. And beat." No one is talking except me. "Mama push my head down in her..." I can't talk no more. Beautiful girl whisper to me, "Are you through" (130).

Herman points out that, survivors try to speak about the disgusting secret in public especially in survivor's group so that they can empower themselves and others (199). This is exemplified by Precious' case. Precious is astonished to hear similar experiences from a lot of women gathered there, not only black and lower-class women, but from White women also. Thus, she enters the third stage of recovery

perfectly, i.e. the reconnection with the society. Though she is HIV patient, she does not feel alienated rather she feels a sense of belonging in the community, which makes her write poems, gives confidence to face the life and fills hopes in her mind about her children.

In *The Kite Runner*, Sohrab shows the symptoms of recovery as passes the first stage of safety with Amir who saves him from the torture and abuse of military general. He tells Amir about his guilt of being sexually abused. He hopes to go to America with Amir and starts schooling there. But before recovering fully, it is informed that his papers are not ready for the journey which means he might have to go back to orphanage. Sohrab dreads it like anything and he attempts suicide. Amir saves him and takes him to America, but this time Sohrab responds slowly to the recovery. He stoops to silence. But the novel ends on a positive note giving the signs of recovery for Sohrab:

I looked down at Sohrab. One corner of his mouth had curled up just so.

A smile.

Lopsided.

Hardly there.

But there.

It was only a smile, nothing more. It didn't make everything all right. It didn't make anything all right. Only a smile. A tiny thing. A leaf in the woods, shaking in the wake of a startled bird's flight. (Hosseini 324)

But Amir takes it a sign of hope that Sohrab is coming back to life.

Applying Herman's theory to Maya in *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Maya recovers from trauma just because she is given whole hearted support by her mother and the entire family. Though Mr. Freeman had threatened to kill Maya's brother, if she reveals the truth to anyone, once Maya feel safe with her mother and her family, she is able to tell the truth and though slowly she comes back to life, the news of murder of Mr. Freeman drives her to silence. But Maya meets a kind soul, Mrs. Flowers and with the help of Mrs. Flowers who urges her to speak, she comes back to the world of words. She advises Maya that, "Language is a man's way of communicating with his fellow man and it is language alone which separates him from the lower animals" (106).

In *Thirty Days in September*, Mala feels the shadow of her uncle following her all time, living in her subconscious leading to dirty reflections. And this malignant presence destructs the girl's psyche, impedes her natural mental development, prevents her from pursuing her love interests beyond the menacing thirty-day phase and pricks her conscience every now and then with the questions of morality. The psychological and emotional weight dries up Mala, yet her mother deliberately remains deaf and dumb to her daughter's feelings, as she feels.

Mala is well employed but she feels emotional insecurity as her mother does not lend her ears to Mala's problem. Deepak her fiancée understands her problem, and offers her his genuine support. Once Mala confronts her mother with the truth and things are settled between them, she starts feeling calm especially when she understands the agony endured by her mother in the patriarchal family where no one

heard her problems but had to depend on the very abuser of her daughter and herself for the subsistence. Deepak encourages Mala to meet the counselor again, and the difference in her feelings before and after the confrontation with her mother is visible in her voice recorded by the therapist:

MALA'S VOICE ON TAPE. I have been so bad; I can't tell you where to begin! It's not just the men in the office I told you about, but before...much before! I –oh God! I –I seduced my uncle when I was thirteen! I- slept with my cousin-and- anyone who was available... No, there is nothing to tell about my uncle, forget all that, please help me stop this behavior...My father left us, for another woman... I feel if I were more lovable, he would have at least visited us...We continue to get money from him every month, and he pays the rent...but I haven't seen him in fifteen years ...I...don't think my mother and he get along-that way. Again, because of me... (33).

This guilt and self-blame of Mala vanishes once she speaks up her mind to her mother. She also feels safe when Deepak marries her and when her uncle dies. She describes the day of his death as Freedom Day. She commits the symbolic killing of the man which is actually the killing of the guilty feelings in her mind. The man's words do not upset her now. She forgives her mother too and realizes that her mother too should be survived from painful memories. Her sense of safety and telling process leads to her recovery as it is clear from Mala's voice:

MALA. I can smile again. I can be a little girl, again. Not again, but for the first time. At thirty plus I am the little girl I never was. I want

to see movies, taste ice cream. Really taste it, feel the high from the sugar. Tell the difference between flavors. I hear sounds I never cared to hear before- birds, temple bells... My senses are working again. I can touch this chair and feel the chair touch me. My whole body can feel!

In the last session with her therapist, Mala reveals her name confidently as she realizes, the abuse she endured was not because of her fault,

There's nothing to hide. Not for me. After all, it is he who must hide. He should change his name, not me. ... I wish he were here now, so I could see his face when I tell him I have nothing to hide. Because I know it wasn't my fault... Now. I know now. (8)

Shanta, another victim of abuse could not escape from her trauma as no one was there to hear her:

I remained silent not because I wanted to speak. I-I cannot speak. I cannot say anything. My tongue was cut off.... My tongue was cut off years ago... You say I could not help you. Same as you could not help me. Did you ever see the pain in my eyes? No. Nobody said anything. Not my brothers, not my parents. Only (pointing to the Man) he spoke. Only he said, only he saw and he did (54).

In *The Color Purple*, Celie does not get any kind of support at home after being raped by her stepfather whom she had believed at that time to be her father. She gives birth to two children who have been snatched away from her. She is silenced by the

abusive father first by his threat then by marrying her off to a widower with four children, with the warning that Celie has got the bad habit of lying, thus blocking the ways of revealing of abuse by Celie. Though she is humiliated and crushed in her conjugal life, even to the extent of nursing the concubine of her husband, once Celie finds out that she had been distanced from her sister by the unscrupulous way of her husband, she gathers courage to break the barriers. This becomes possible by the female bonding she comes to enjoy. Celie's female bonding paves the way for her recovery.

Celie leads a despicable and sullied life in the beginning, but once she gets support from her fellow sisters, she raises above all adverse circumstances to become a self-earning member. From a used and abused woman, Celie emerges as an independent, creative business woman. She moves from being ugly duckling to a figuratively beautiful swan. She moves from being Hurston's mule, the beast of burden, to physical and mental declarations of independence, to reunion with her children and her sister. She moves from seeing God as the center of her universe to redefining the concept of the supernatural as an, 'it,' that dwells in everyone. She moves from being beaten and used by others to establishing her own business. She moves from being a straight – laced church woman to being a reefer smoker. She moves from the back room of the house in which her stepfather has violated her to sharing a huge house, property; and a store she has

inherited. She moves from being Albert's footstool to demanding his respect and teaching him how to sew (Harris14).

Celie comes to know the pleasurable aspect of sex when she enters into a sexual relationship with Shug, her husband's lover, an unconventional, free-willed and liberated woman, and it awakens a feeling of self-esteem in her. Celie had lost all feelings of self-worth because of the sexual, emotional and psychological abuse from her father and the consequent physical abuse and neglect from her husband.

Shug teaches Celie to understand her value and to love her body. The famous mirror scene, in which Shug asks Celie to examine her body, "Listen, she say, right down there in your pussy is a little button that gits real hot when you do you know what with somebody. It git hotter and hotter and then it melt. That the good part. Tongue work" (77).

This mirror lesson that Shug imparts to Celie has got an awakening purpose too. It comes as a first step towards the identity formation or her recognition of individuality. Celie has always been derided as the ugly one by her stepfather and her husband, which she also internalizes. Celie adored the beauty of Shug throughout her life and she viewed her body with contempt. She looks into her own body and enjoys its beauty in the mirror while Shug stands as a guard outside the room,

I lie back on the bed and haul up my dress. Yank down my bloomers. Stick the looking glass between my legs. Ugh. Al! that hair. Then my pussy lips be black. Then inside look like a wet rose...I look at her and touch it with my finger. A little shiver go through me (78).

The relationship with Shug not only awakens Celie from her sexual inertia, but also equips her with a feeling of wanted. After her sister leaves her, Celie comes to feel that she is loved by someone. Shug dedicates a song to Celie in her performance and even names a song after Celie, which makes Celie proud, 'First time somebody made something and name it after me' (73).

As Proudfoot observes Celie's bonding with other women is supposed to substitute immature mother/ daughter relationship, which is actually needed for the growth and development of healthy female identity. Though Celie misses a considerate mother figure first by the sickness and weakness of Celie's mother and then by her hatred towards Celie for her illegitimate pregnancies, Celie's bond with Nettie is extraordinarily strong. Though she loses connection with Nettie through the conspiracy of her husband, Celie recovers from her childhood trauma and subsequent depression and numbness with the help of Shug Avery. Celie feels at home with Shug and tells her about her trauma she suffered Shug provides deliverance to the crushed identity of Celie, teaches her to love her body, gives her courage to be defiant to her husband, and to leave him to become a confident, self-built entrepreneur.

In *Bastard out of Carolina*, Bone's recovery begins the moment she bursts out at Daddy Glen and finds voice to oppose him. Till then Daddy Glen had made her silent. She never speaks or screams when he abuses her thinking it will make him more abusive. She is so particular that her voice should not come out and in one instance; she puts fingers in her mouth so that sounds or words will not escape her lips. But once she starts speaking, she gets the courage to come back to life defying

Daddy Glen. After the desertion by her mother she lives in the company of aunts and uncles and she starts singing gospel songs which becomes a healing process for her.

The research of James Pennebaker demonstrates giving outlet to emotions in writing is a powerful method of healing. Once the victims recollect and write about their abusive experiences for a certain amount of time, they become able to leave their traumatic pasts behind them to some extent. This is visible in the case of Precious in *Push*. She starts writing diary and writes poems on her experience to avoid her mental agony. As her poem on Aids:

DON'T ALWAYS RHYME/Ms Rain say

walk on/go in to the poem

the HEART of it/beating

like/a clock/a virus

tick/tock.

As Kali Tal writes “Literature of trauma is written from the need to tell and retell the story of the traumatic experience, to make it “real” both to the victim and to the community. Such writing serves both as validation and cathartic vehicle for the traumatized author” (21).

Writing gives constructive outlet and telling itself becomes a recovery process from trauma is shown by the cases of Dorothy Allison, Sapphire, Virginia Woolf and Maya Angelou whose works are included in the study. Narrative testimony did for them a therapeutic effect in facing trauma. In *The Color Purple*, Celie’s letters serve as an

outlet for her internal conflict, often giving her deliverance from her suffering or it serves as her coping mechanism to stand against traumatic experiences and to keep her sane. Celie's ashamed and depressed self get a means of self-expression through these letters.

Imaginative tales and fantasies play a positive role in coping up the trauma arising from the horror of child sexual abuse. Bone in *Bastard out of Carolina* seeks a kind of relief in her imaginary realm. She makes up terrifying tales involving sexual fantasies to horrify children in her family, but it gives her a feeling of control over her life. She imagines killing Daddy Glen, "Let Daddy Glen yell at Mama again, let him hurt her, let him hurt me, just let him...if I had a razor, I would surely cut his throat in the dead of night, then run away to live naked and alone in the western hills like someone in a Zane Grey novel" (Allison 208). Pecola lives in a world of fantasy imagining herself as a beauty with bluest eyes. Precious often imagines herself to be a lover of charming boy and visualizes herself as walking on a ramp, "I...in my inside world, I am so pretty, like an advertisement girl on commercial, 'n someone ride up here in car, someone look like the son of that guy that got kilt when he was president a long time ago or Tom Cuise" (35). Maya Angelou too resorts to such day dreaming on beauty and people's recognition of her:

I was going to look like one of the sweet little white girls who were everybody's dream of what was right with the world. Hanging softly over the black Singer sewing machine, it looked like magic, and when people saw me wearing it they were going to run up to me and say, 'Marguerite [sometimes it was dear Marguerite'], forgive us, please

we didn't know who you were,' and I would answer generously, 'No, you couldn't have known. Of course, I forgive you' (4).

Dori Laub also points out the importance of telling and the role of narrative in the recovery process by affirming that to escape from the enslavement of the trauma, a therapeutic process is needed i.e. a method of creating a narrative and re – externalizing the traumatic event is needed.

This re-externalization of the event can occur and take effect only when one can articulate and *transmit* the story, literally transfer it to another outside oneself and then take it back again, inside. Telling thus entails a reassertion of the hegemony of reality, and a re-externalization of the evil that affected and contaminated the trauma victim (69)

As Schwab opines, “writing of trauma opens up a paradox: there are traumatic experiences that are unrepresentable, yet narrative, storytelling and testimonies “are necessary for healing trauma” (48). Trauma narratives attempt to maneuver “the paradox of telling what cannot be told” (Schwab 48).

Apgar also emphasizes that the recovery of the trauma is much dependent on the victim's relation with their community and accentuates the role of personal testimonies and incest narratives. According to her the personal outburst is a good survival technique as it emboldens the victim “by confronting denial, sorting out the cultural narratives, that cast women as victims and reinscribing herself as self-

empowered and resistant to attack” (51). Apgar also maintains that this telling process serves a social purpose too as long as it resists the silencing process going on:

By (re) inscribing a positive sense of self- identity and (re) constructing her subject position through writing, a survivor empowers herself; by sharing these texts, communities of survivors can empower themselves; and by (re)formulating the metanarratives they can gradually transform the culture (57).

Henke also calls attention to the potential of writing for the victim’s recovery process, "The act of life-writing serves as its own testimony and, in so doing, carries through the work of reinventing the shattered self as a coherent subject capable of meaningful resistance to received ideologies and effective agency in the world" (14). Henke further adds that even the fictional rendering of the trauma may serve the process of healing, “testimonial life writing allows the author to share an unutterable tale of pain and suffering, of transgression or victimization, in a discursive medium that can be addressed to everyone or no-one to a world that will judge the personal testimony as accurate historical witnessing or thinly disguised fiction” (14). Daly also shows the therapeutic effect of telling and writing as they serve a social purpose of bringing the matter to the attention of the public thus uncovering the skeleton in the closet (139).

Sharing the tale of trauma with others is a prerequisite for the restoration of the lost realm of social relations of the victim. So, in this course of telling, victim is assisted not only by her close relatives or friends but by the community too. The reaction of the community has got a pivotal role in the eventual recovery from trauma.

The lost relation between the afflicted person and the immediate surroundings can be improved by the public acceptance of the trauma and consequent action in the case. “Once it is publicly recognized that a person has been harmed, the community must take action to assign responsibility for the harm and to repair the injury. These two responses-recognition and restitution- are necessary to rebuild the survivor’s sense of order and justice” (Herman 70).

In the case of Precious in *Push*, her recovery process is ensured and accentuated by her new school teacher, class mates, members at incest survivors groups etc. She finds herself acceptable in a world which acknowledges her pain and that strength and support offered by the community helps her to face even the painful reality of impending death. In Maya’s case too in the work, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, her recovery is made possible as the community accepts that a crime is done to the girl and she needs to be supported instead of blamed. As Dori Laub writes, “The absence of an empathetic listener, or more radically, the absence of an addressable other, an other who can hear the anguish of one’s memories and thus affirm and recognize their realness, annihilates the story” (69).

It can be observed from the recovery and non-recovery of the characters taken for study that though children expect primary care from their mothers and family, it need not be the case always. Even if the mother love is missing, surrogates can do something to alleviate the pain of the children. In *Bastard out of Carolina*, after Anney chooses Glen over her daughter, Bone is taken care of by her Aunt Raylene, who acts as a mother substitute. Her mother’s extended family including Aunt Raylene and Aunt Ruth help Anney to overcome the trauma of her life after Anney leaves Bone

for Glen. In the case of Sohrab in *The Kite Runner*, Amir till then a stranger, comes for the help. In *Push*, Precious is deserted by her mother and grandmother but get surrogate mother in the form of Ms. Rain. In *The Color Purple*, Celie gets ultimate deliverance from her trauma through her bond with Shug Avery, Sophie and Nettie. Pecola, Estha, Lolita and Mala miss a considerate being in their immediate surrounding which leave their childhood days as the days of unalleviated misery.

Thus seen, in the recovery process, what children need most is someone to reassure them that abuse was not their fault and it was not in their grasp to stop it. Shame should not be the feeling of victim, but should be felt by the abuser. Victim need not hide her face; it should be done by the abuser. Shifting the responsibility from the shoulder of victim to that of the abuser is the critical step in the recovery of the victim. To make children feel that they are not alone in their predicament is the best thing that can be done to them.

As Morrison asserts in “Remarks Given at Howard University Charter Day Convocation,” a speech she delivered on March 2, 1995:

It’s important to know that nothing is more important than our children. And if our children don’t think they are important to us, if they don’t think they are important to themselves, if they don’t think they are important to the world, it’s because we have not told them. We have not told them that they are our immortality (760).

And I conclude the thesis with what George Eliot wrote in *The Mill on the Floss* “We could never have loved the earth so well if we had had no childhood in it” (30). So no one does have the right to steal it from children.

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